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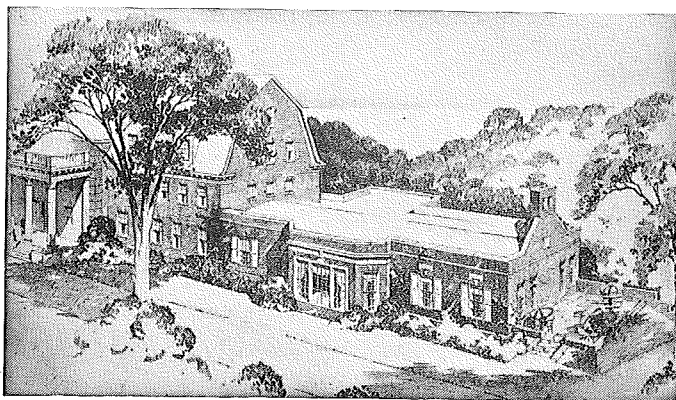
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DIMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH

Dimitri Shostakovich was born at Leningrad in 1906. His parents were fond of music, and his mother insisted that he receive a thorough musical education. Although Shostakovich attributes his early interest in music to his mother, it was apparent from the start that his gifts were unusual. He made rapid progress at his musical studies, and entered the Leningrad Conservatory in 1919. Here Alexander Glazunoff, then director of the Conservatory, singled Shostakovich out as a talent of exceptional promise. By 1925 the young musician had completed his studies at the Conservatory. His first symphony, completed in 1927, quickly won international notice. Since that time the successive works of Shostakovich have found a ready audience on both sides of the Atlantic. Before the war, the composer was teaching at the Leningrad Conservatory. At the outbreak of the war he was serving as a volunteer fire fighter. When events of the war caused him to move to Kuibyshev he continued to combine war work with composing and teaching. His wife describes him as unusually modest, and unable to stand having his photograph taken.

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PROGRAM NOTES

Dimitri Shostakovich began work on his Seventh Symphony in Leningrad early in July, 1941, not more than a fortnight after the German troops initiated their invasion of Russia. In between trips to the front line, as head of the musical department of the People's Voluntary Army, he found time, between July and October, to complete the first three movements, and most of the fourth. The finale was completed in Kuibyshev, the city which became the provisional Soviet capital during the days when Moscow was most seriously menaced by the advancing German army.

The first performance of the symphony took place in Kuibyshev on March 5, 1942. Performances followed in Moscow, Leningrad, and smaller Russian cities. The fame of the composition spread to the United States, and, despite wartime difficulties of transportation, copies of the score, photographed on microfilm, were successfully dispatched to this country. The American premiere was given over the radio on July 19, with Arturo Toscanini conducting the National Broadcasting Company Symphony Orchestra.

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Dimitri Shostakovich

Moderato poco allegretto.

Allegro non troppo—Moderato.

in the middle west)

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The first concert performance was played on Friday, August 14, at Tanglewood, Mass., by the student orchestra of the Berkshire Music Centre, conducted by Serge Koussevitsky. Tonight's Ravinia presentation is the second concert performance in this country.

Shostakovich dedicated the Seventh Symphony to "the plain people of Leningrad," in tribute to their bravery under siege. "My work is wholly at the service of my country," he writes, "and everything I conceive now is inspired by the magnificent spirit of our people in this war. I could no more separate it from myself than I could stop composing. . . . Like everything and everyone today, my ideas are closely bound up with emotions and thoughts born of this war. They must serve with all the power at my command in the cause of art for victory over savage Hitlerism—that fiercest and bitterest enemy of human civilization. This is the aim to which I have dedicated all my creative work since the morning of June 22, 1941."

(Continued on Page 7)



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PROGRAM NOTES—Continued

In an article in the Russian newspaper Pravda, Shostakovich described more specifically his work on the symphony in besieged Leningrad: "The city was bombarded from the air and shelled by enemy artillery. All the residents of Leningrad rallied as one man and, together with the valiant Red Army, vowed to stop the arrogant foe. It was in such days that I worked on the symphony. I worked long hours, intensely and swiftly. I wanted to create the story of our days, our life, our people, who are becoming heroes and victors, who fight for the cause of triumph over the enemy. Working on the symphony I thought about the greatness of our people and its heroism, about humanity's loftiest ideals, about the fine qualities of man, about our fair land, about humanism and beauty. We are waging our grim struggle in the name of all this."

In Russia the Seventh Symphony has found a tremendous response in the hearts of the people. "The Muscovites have grown enamored of Shostakovich's Seventh Symphony," reports Constantin Finn. "They are enthusiastic about it. Only people enamored and enthusiastic can cheer and applaud as Moscow audiences cheer and applaud the composer Shostakovich. These ovations, I might say, are of a special kind. They are brought about not only because of the musical merits of the Seventh Symphony, which are undoubtedly extremely great. They are explained by the fact that the composer here speaks on behalf of his people. He speaks of our country's hatred for the enemy and of the coming of victory."

Without going into elaborate detail, Shostakovich has given a general description of the patriotic meaning he attaches to the Seventh Symphony: "A central place in the first part of the symphony is given to a requiem in memory of the heroes who sacrificed their lives so that justice and reason might triumph. A single bassoon mourns the death of the heroes, followed by a lyrical conclusion. The second part is a scherzo recalling glorious episodes of the recent past. The thrill of living, the wonder of nature—this is the meaning of the third part. This part leads directly into the fourth, which, with the first, is the fundamental part of the symphony. The first part is devoted to the struggle and the fourth is devoted to victory. A moving and solemn theme rises to the apotheosis of the whole composition—the presentiment of victory."

The symphony is scored for a very large orchestra; 99 players are participating in tonight's performance. The score requires two flutes and piccolo, two oboes and English horn, two clarinets, E-flat clarinet, bass clarinet, two bassoons, double bassoon, eight horns, six trumpets, six trombones, bass tuba, two harps, piano, percussion, and strings. Five players are required in the percussion section.

The following is an analysis of the four movements constituting the Seventh Symphony:

(Continued on Page 8)



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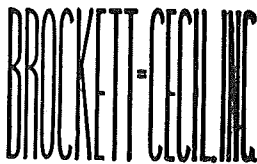
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PROGRAM NOTES—Continued

I. Allegretto, C major. The symphony opens with a broad theme, stated over fundamental harmony. A bridge passage leads to the lyric second theme, given out softly by the first violins, over a repeated drone bass figure in the accompaniment. After considerable development of these materials, the tempo changes to Moderato, and a military rhythmic figure is introduced in the snare drum, with a pizzicato theme in the viola, and violins accompanying *col legno* (tapping the strings with the wooden back of the bow). The theme and the drum figure are reiterated again and again thruout a constant crescendo lasting for many minutes and rising to a great climax. After the military theme has reached the peak of its development, the first theme returns. Its progress is interrupted by the return of the military theme, which, however, soon gives way to development of the lyric second theme. The tempo changes to Adagio, and a solo bassoon presents a new melody of dirge-like character, in which the composer "mourns the death of the heroes." At the close of the dirge, the first theme returns in slow tempo. Suggestions of the second theme lead to a final reminiscence of the military rhythm in the snare drum, and the movement ends quietly.

II. Moderato poco allegretto, B minor. This movement, tho large in scale, is cast in the three part form characteristic of traditional symphonic scherzos. A jovial theme in 4-4 time, played by the second violins, opens the movement. Soon the first violins join, continuing the light, graceful mood. As the strings continue the theme and extend its rhythmic and melodic pattern into a figuration, a solo oboe states a melodic theme against the patterned accompaniment of the strings. The new theme is taken over by the English horn, and then dropped; but the first theme continues on in the strings. The time changes to 3-8, and the sharp tone of the high E-flat clarinet introduces the theme of the middle section, against a counter-theme in the bassoon and bass clarinet. The rhythm takes on a suggestion of waltz movement. Soon repeated notes are introduced in the brass; these become the center of expanding orchestral treatment, which ultimately brings the material of the middle section to a great climax. Following the climax, a diminuendo leads to the recapitulation of the first theme. A coda of unusual instrumental texture presents the second theme (stated by the oboe at the beginning of the movement) in the bass clarinet, with a flutter-tongue accompaniment by two flutes and a bass flute. The movement ends with a soft reiteration of the rhythmic pattern of the first theme played by the strings, with quiet notes in the harp.

III. Adagio, D major. A hymn-like introduction, scored for woodwinds, horns, and two harps, precedes the main material of the movement. The tempo changes to Largo, and a quasi-Handelian subject—the principal theme—is stated by the first violins. The Adagio introduction recurs



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PROGRAM NOTES—Continued

in its original scoring, and the Handelian theme is repeated without essential change. A third appearance of the introductory material serves as a bridge passage to a new theme, played by a solo flute. This theme is remarkably long, requiring 64 bars to complete itself. The cellos, and then the first violins, take over the flute theme. The Handelian theme is heard again, with very thin scoring. It serves as a transition to an altogether new section, *Marcato risoluto*, in which a 42-measure theme is presented over a syncopated accompaniment. Soon the horns introduce a majestic passage, above a pulsating, Verdi-like accompaniment in the strings. The 42-measure *Marcato* theme is shortened, and reiterated until a large climax is attained. As the climax approaches, still another new theme is added above the continuing rhythmic repetition of the *Marcato* theme. After the climax, the Handelian theme from the first part of the movement returns in its original scoring. The second theme, which had originally been awarded to the flute, is now played by the violas. An extensive coda employs the hymn-like theme from the introduction in alternation with the Handelian theme. A final peaceful statement of the hymn-like theme in two clarinets, bass clarinet and double bass, ends the movement.

IV. *Allegro non troppo*, G major. The finale begins with a portentous pedal point, a sustained G in the cellos, basses and timpani. A broad introductory theme is introduced somewhat mysteriously in the first violins. Its progress is broken by a dotted figure in the bass, which will play an important part in later development. Working over of the broad theme and the dotted figure provides a transition to the real first theme of the movement, a strongly rhythmic subject of somewhat Bach-like nature. The dotted figure from the introduction is combined with the Bach-like subject. With characteristic reiteration, these materials are treated with cumulative force, and with constantly increasing orchestral sonority. From this point forward the movement becomes exceedingly free and rhapsodic in structure, and a series of new ideas are introduced. A new hymn-like melody is briefly presented, leading shortly to a dance-like section in 7-4 time. This material lasts for only 21 measures, making way for a 10 measure clarinet melody, which dies away into a *diminuendo*. A quick *crescendo* prepares for the final peroration of the symphony. A bold and animated theme in 3-4 time creates great dynamic energy. Soon the horns shout forth another brilliant theme. This is taken over by the rest of the orchestra, treated reiteratively, and built into a heroic affirmation for the full orchestra. A great *crescendo* leads to a majestic return to the original key of C major. Against an amplification of the heroic, affirmative theme, the first theme of the first movement is sounded by three trombones in unison. The symphony closes spaciouly upon a great C major chord.

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