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World War II Music Webquest

**Dmitri Shostakovich Note Guide**

Part 1 – Russian History (4 points)

1. Who overthrew the Provisional Government (government established after the fall of the czar) in Russia in 1917?

2. Who was the leader of this party?

3. Who was the leader of the Bolsheviks after Lenin?

4. In the 1920’s what kind of control did Stalin demonstrate? Who/what had control of everything in Russia?

Part 2 – Symphony No. 5

**Video #1**

1. When you hear the opening notes of the video, what comes to your mind? Is the sound dark and somber or bright and happy? What do you think the piece might be like just from the opening notes?

2. When was Symphony No. 5 premiered? Who was ruling Russia during this year?

3. True or False: Shostakovich never felt his life was in jeopardy as a musician.

4. True or False: People believe that there is a secret message hidden in Shostakovich’s piece.

5. True or False: During the beginning of the Bolshevik reign artists had total freedom in their creations and older artists were banned.

6. Who was the only traditional composer (not current) not banned in Russia at the beginning of the Bolshevik reign?

 7. True or False: Young Shostakovich was able to try new techniques in composing that actually shocked his teachers.

8. True or False: Artist could keep “experimenting” with their ideas and have freedom with them until 1930 when those in power felt they were using those freedoms to make political statements.

9. True or False: Shostakovich discovered while reading the Soviet newspaper, *Pravda Review*, that he was being accused of corrupting and endangering the Soviet people.

10. True or False: Shostakovich didn’t care what the newspaper said about him and felt he could continue to express himself however he wanted and wrote the *Symphony No. 5*.

11. True or False: Symphony No. 5 was deemed acceptable by the Soviet leadership.

12. Did Shostakovich put any musical expressive markings in the score (music)? Why or why not?

13. Who did Shostakovich model his piece after? Why is that important to the Russian government?

**Video #2**

1. Describe the rhythm in the opening of the symphony. Does it feel militaristic or majestic? How? Does it sound happy or sad? Does it feel/sound like something the Russian leaders would like? Why?

2. How does the mood change after the 3 note motive ends? What causes the mood to change?

3. True or False: Shostakovich tried to create music that could cause the listeners to “remember” and express what he and his audience wanted to say out loud but couldn’t.

4. How would you feel if you couldn’t express yourself (listen to music you liked, read books that you liked, or attending church) because of fear of being arrested or even killed? Would you try to “get away” with rebelling or would you conform to the government standards?

5. Does the 1st movement go back to the sound of the opening or does it stay melodic? How does the rhythm change?

6. Does the development section use strings or is it like a band – no strings?

7. As you hear the winds, listen to how they play in and not in harmony. Does this sound create an emotion within you? Do you feel that Shostakovich was expressing himself? Does he sound happy, sad, angry, bitter, excited? Why do you get that feeling?

8. True or False: Shostakovich did not write for theatre, ballet, circus, or films, only for symphony orchestras.

**Video #3 & Biography Link**

1. The 2nd movement is a:

 a. sonata form c. waltz

 b. scherzo d. ballet

2. True or False: The 2nd movement is to be serious.

3. How does the music sound like it could be background in a movie?

4. How is the mood of this movement different from the opening and ending of the 1st movement? Does the 2nd movement make you smile or become angry? Why?

5. How did Stalin know Shostakovich as? The composer of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

6. What probably saved Shostakovich’s life?

7. True or False: Shostakovich never feared for his life since Stalin loved the song he wrote for the movie, *Counterplan*.

8. Based on the biography from Classics for Kids, do you think Stalin may have changed his liking for Shostakovich? Why? What did Stalin do?

9. Could you get used to seeing people being taken to concentration camps or being taken to be exiled or executed or living in a hallway so your family would not have to see you being taken?

**Video #4**

1. According to the Russian concertmaster, the 3rd movement is supposed to be a:

1. Dance c. Scherzo
2. Avant garde d. Requiem

2. How can you sense that the music of the 3rd movement brought people to tears? What musical elements cause this?

3. True or False: The music was to represent music from the Orthodox Church (lituragy: church service).

4. In this space, draw the emotion that the 3rd movement creates.

5. How does the timbre of the oboe in the 3rd movement affect the emotion of the music? How does it add or take away from the emotion?

6. A celeste is used as a “the ghostly reference” at the end of the 3rd movement (video time of 7:59). What other instrument is used before and after the celeste?

**Video #5**

1. True or False: In 1937, Shostakovich was called in for questioning by the authorities of the head security agency and was immediately imprisoned.

2. Do you think music was an outlet for Shostakovich for all that he had gone through in his life? Why or why not?

3. When you hear the start of the 4th movement, do you hear triumph or tragedy? Do you hear both? Why or why not?

4. What made you experience tension near the end of the 4th movement when it felt like the piece would end sad (at the video time of 8:02)? Were you thinking it was going to end without hope? Why?

**Video #6**

1. When you hear the ending of the piece (end of the 4th movement), how do you feel? Do you have a sense for the people and their oppression? Do you think that everything will be alright? Were you hoping for something happy or settled to end the piece? Why?

2. As Mr. Thomas says at the end, “How did this piece speak to you?”