

SHOSTAKOVICH: THE PUBLIC AND
PRIVATE MAN-
Adiscussion of his Eighth Symphony and
Eighth Quartet

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SHOSTAKOVICH: THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE MAN-
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The Eighth Quartet (1960) is closely related to the Eighth Symphony (1943), and discussion of these two works, will reveal the ways in which Shostakovich communicates as a public spokesman, and as a private man within the context of Communist Russia.

The Eighth Symphony was written during World War II, a time in which Shostakovich did not feel that he had to disguise the tone of 'resignation and pessimism' that the work embodies. Timothy Day suggests that Shostakovich wrote in this way because he felt that during wartime, it would be accepted by the authorities, since the 'cause of sorrow and despair was an external agent and a wicked enemy of the Soviets'. This was not to be, as the work was branded as being 'formalistic distortions of anti-democratic tendencies alien to the soviet people' (Day p.2).

By September 1943, when the Symphony was written, 'the tide of war was changing', and the Soviets had started to repel the Germans. As a result, Stalin expected a Symphony of optimism and celebration, not the 'pessimistic tragedy', that the Eighth became. Shostakovich was coming to realise, that 'victory over the Germans would give Stalin opportunities to abuse his immense power and feared a return to the prewar policies of lawlessness and terror' (Wilson p.175).

Russian conductor Vladimir Ashkenazy said of the Symphony: "...Shostakovich knew the war was going well. His mind turned back to the stark reality of the country, as it would be again after the war. The oppressiveness of the system and the suffering of the individual, both in the first movement and in the slow movement-you can hear them strongly." (Stratford/Riley, 1991 p.3)

In the Rhombus Media film, "The War Symphonies: Shostakovich against Stalin" (1997), Shostakovich himself states that although he could never say it publicly, all fascism was repugnant to him, not just German fascism. He saw Stalin in the same light that he saw Hitler. According to the film, Shostakovich suffered for all victims, whether they were victims of Hitler or Stalin. He claimed his symphonies to be tombstones."

The Eighth Quartet, composed seventeen years later, harbouring similar pessimistic material to the Eighth Symphony, went almost unnoticed by the authorities, purely because 'chamber music was not seen as a threat'. This allowed Shostakovich to expose his private thoughts, without having to abide by Soviet guidelines.

In these shorter, less ambitious works he could, it seems, say things he did not dare to utter in the big, 'attention-getting' compositions. Partly this is because the form itself dictates a certain intimacy but it was also true that those who censored the symphonies largely ignored the chamber music. (Revenyi, p.16)

The Eighth Quartet is a highly autobiographical work, as thematic material has been taken from his musical signature, D, E-flat, C, B, (spelling DSCH in German notation)

and from quotations of his previous works. This shows that this work is representative of the man as an individual, and not as a 'public spokesperson'.

Score Extract 1- Signature Motif in Movt. One, Quartet.

The image shows a musical score extract for the first movement of Shostakovich's Eighth Quartet. It features four staves: Violino I, Violino II, Viola, and Violoncello. The tempo is marked 'Largo' and the time signature is '3/4'. The key signature has one flat. The first phrase of the DSCH motif is highlighted in the cello line, with a bracket and a line pointing to a handwritten note on the right.

1st phrase heard -
DSCH motif in
cello line

Stephen Johnson (p.7) suggested that despite being established as a 'War Requiem' in memory of the victims of Fascism, because of the work's thematic sources (DSCH motif), the Eighth Quartet was actually a direct reaction against the Fascism of Communism. Only through the freedom the quartet form gave Shostakovich could he possibly have expressed this.

During 1960 when the Eighth Quartet was written, Shostakovich was being placed under much pressure to join the Communist party. Elizabeth Wilson asserts that this was pressure that he finally succumbed to, creating shock amongst his friends. (p.332)

It is in light of this that Shostakovich's Eighth Quartet can be seen as autobiographical, depicting the way in which his life had been shaped by the repression of Stalin. "When I die it's hardly likely that someone will write a quartet dedicated to my memory. So I decided to write it myself. One could write on the frontispiece, 'dedicated to the author of this quartet.'" (Wilson, p.340)

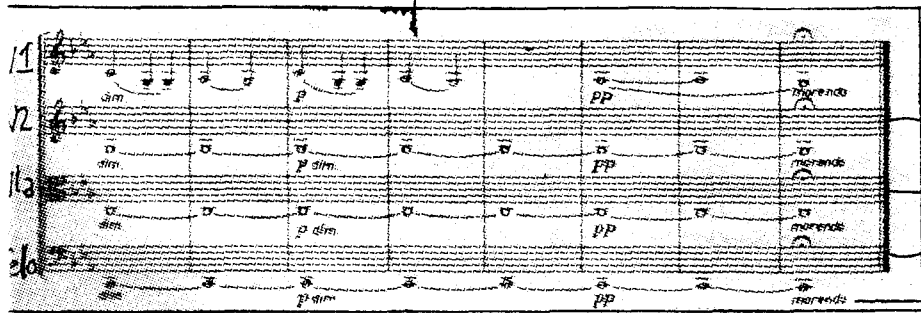
Similarities between the two works lie in their overall structure, and pitch, and the resulting mood created by the manipulation of these two concepts. In this discussion, the Third and Fifth movements of both works will be the main focus of analysis.

Both works consist of five continuous movements (an adagio, two scherzos, and two Lutos).

Revenyi suggests that the structure of the quartet (in relation to the Largo finale) communicates the personal intentions behind the work, stating it to be, "quasi-autobiographical". "No work with such an unconventional shape could possibly be responding to the needs of the state." (p.20)

The fifth and final movements of both these works are, 'Largo' movements, featuring strings only, both marked 'Morendo', trailing off to nothing.

Score Extract 2-ending of Quartet.

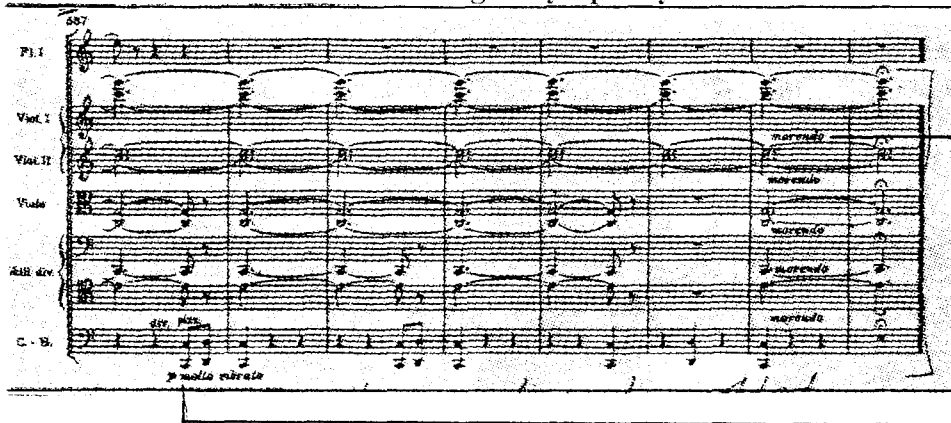


Diminuendo of Ostinato pattern - final moving line in piece, resolves to sustained notes.

sustained notes across quartet.

Morendo marking - to trail off to nothing.

Score Extract 3-ending of Symphony.



Morendo marking.

- sustained notes prominent.
- no melodic material.
- piano pizz. ostinato - final moving line, also trailing off to nothing.

A difference between the public and private Shostakovich is seen through the work's endings. Whilst the Quartet finishes in C-minor, the Symphony finishes in C-major. Perhaps the major resolution of the symphony was an attempt by the composer to appease the Party, or even an attempt at giving hope to the Russian people; communicating that despite the dark future they must hold their heads high. Perhaps this reveals how Shostakovich had to adapt his work, when acting as a public spokesman.

Boris Schwarz suggested that despite this, the endings of the works were still criticised. He states that critics saw the Largo ending as anti-climactic, dispersing tension rather than resolving it. The Symphony came under greater criticism for this than the quartet, a result of its more public nature. (p.269)

Timothy Day, a modern critic, sees the Symphony's ending as a strong point in the communication of Shostakovich's ideas. At the end of five long movements the tension is not resolved; rather a kind of hypnotised stillness falls. Horror remains, but all emotion is spent. (p.4)

Yakov Milkis recalls that for him the most remarkable thing in the work is the transition to the finale where the music resolves into C major "like a ray of sunlight".

you only knew how much blood that C major cost me.' (Wilson, p.316) One cannot assume to know what Shostakovich meant by this comment, except to suggest that attempting to fit into the guidelines of the Stalinist regime was felt to be a great trial for his own ethics. His quartet however, was allowed to finish in a minor key, being performed without criticism from the regime.

Similarities in tonality lie in the use of the same C-minor key. The use of dissonant harmony and chromatic melodic lines enabled Shostakovich to create tension and a similar tragic atmosphere found in both works.

An example of Shostakovich's use of dissonances to build tension in the Symphony is found in the third, 'Allegro non-tropo' movement.

Score Extract 4-from bar 477 of Movt. Three, Symphony.

aug. 4th - cause of diss.
 Pedal D - 7th of Eminor
 → adding to diss.

The key at this point is E minor. Dissonance is found in the pedal D in the c-bassoon line, and the augmented 4th in bassoons 1 and 2. This dissonance is left unresolved.

The very last sound of the movement is also one of unresolved dissonance, perhaps mirroring the uneasiness Shostakovich felt about Stalin.
 7 Score Extract 5- ending of Movt. Three, Symphony.

The image shows a page of a musical score for an orchestra. The parts are arranged vertically from top to bottom: Flute (Piccolo), Flute, Oboe, Clarinet in G, Clarinet in Bb, Bassoon, Contrabassoon, Trumpet I, Trumpet II, Trombone I, Trombone II, Trombone III, Timpani, Snare Drum, Cymbals, Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Contrabass. The score is in E minor. Handwritten annotations in black ink are present throughout the score, primarily in the right-hand side, indicating specific chords and textures. A large bracket on the right side of the score spans from the top of the woodwind section down to the strings, with a line pointing to the handwritten text 'repeated chord across orchestra - consisting of all notes of chromatic scale.' Another line points to the timpani part with the text 'ostinato based on E minor triad.' A third line points to the string parts with the text 'strings all tremolo - adding to tension created by dissonance.' A final line points to the very end of the score with the text 'Final sound - chromatic chord, diss. left unresolved'. The annotations include chord symbols such as Bb, C#, D#, E#, F#, G#, and Bb, and some specific notes like D# and E#.

repeated chord across orchestra - consisting of all notes of chromatic scale.

ostinato based on E minor triad.

strings all tremolo - adding to tension created by dissonance.

Final sound - chromatic chord, diss. left unresolved

The key is still E-minor and in the bars preceding the final dissonant chord, played across the whole orchestra, tension has been consistently building. The timpani plays an ostinato pattern based on the E-minor triad, whilst the rest of the orchestra plays a repeated chord; the strings marked tremolo add to the tension. The repeated chord consists of all the notes of a chromatic scale, resulting in a dissonance that is not resolved. The final sound of the movement is the same chord, played short, accented and sforzando, across the orchestra.

In the Quartet, Shostakovich uses constant passing dissonances to create underlying tension, a more subtle use of dissonance than seen in the Symphony.

Score Extract 6- Movt. 1, Quartet.

E Major chord.

when chord changes - 1st Violin's B \natural remains, creating aug. 4th - diss. within chord.

Chord change - appears to be E \flat Major chord.

The first half of this bar is an E-major chord, and the second half appears to change to an E-flat-major chord. However, as the first violin does not change notes, the B-natural remains consistent, resulting in an augmented fifth, creating dissonance within the chord.

Score Extract 7-Movt. Three, Quartet.

melodic line - chromatic sequence.

ACCOMPANIMENT consists of:

- sustained B \natural trill - semi-tone movement, B \natural /C \sharp
- Cello/Viola - A \flat , D, C \flat + B \natural /C \sharp trill

results in tone cluster - causing dissonance.

Here dissonance is found in the clash between the accompaniment and the chromatic movement of the melodic line. The accompaniment features a tone cluster, created by C-flat and D in the viola line, A-flat in the cello line, and a sustained B-natural-C-natural trill played by violin two. The melodic material exists as a chromatic sequence in the Violin one line, also an example of Shostakovich's use of chromaticism. When the chromatic melodic line is combined with the already clashing accompaniment, dissonance is achieved, and repeated exactly, another four times in the movement (10 bars after figure 36, 6 bars after figure 38, 5 bars after figure 41, and 6 bars after figure 47).

Score Extract 8-Movt. Five, Quartet.

1st chord - B \flat /C \sharp / F \sharp plus Ab in viola results in dissonance.

chromatic movement - Ab dominant.

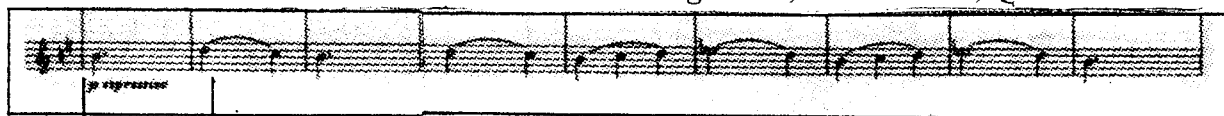
2nd chord - dissonance resolves to E minor chord.

The first half of both bars leading into figure 69, feature B-natural in the cello part, C-natural in violin two, F-sharp in violin one, and chromatic movement in the viola line. The A-flat in this line is dominant, (the G and F-sharp are passing notes that move the viola line into the E-minor resolution). Therefore, the chord exists as F-sharp, A-flat, B-natural and C-natural, where the dissonance is found. The passing of the dissonance into the E-minor resolution is similar to the passing dissonance seen in Movement 1.

The bar of figure 69 exists as an E-flat minor chord, however the presence of an A-flat in the cello line creates dissonance. Also, because the intervals between the G-flat, A-flat and B-flat are all tones, a tone cluster is also created. The second half of the bar exists as a D-minor chord. However, the A-flat in the cello line carries over, creating a semi-tone relationship with the 5th of the chord, continuing the dissonance.

In Movement Three of the quartet, Shostakovich uses chromaticism to emphasise the emotion present in a melodic line.

Score Extract 9-Isolated cello line at figure 44, Movt. Three, Quartet.



minor 3rd - largest interval used.

The cello melody has been isolated from the rest of the score, to point out that it is already filled with anguish, as it appears to be based around the B-harmonic minor scale, developing from minor third movement (an interval also commonly used to communicate anguish, pain and loss).

Score extract 10-Figure 44 in full, Movt. 3, Quartet.

Accompaniment
- chromatic runs in 5ths → Chromaticism assists in communicating anguish in cello melody, melodic line - anguish communicated through the use of minor intervals.

The anguish of the cello melody is supported and emphasised by the accompaniment which exists as slurred chromatic runs in 5ths in the first and second violin lines.

In contrast to the short chromatic sections found in the Quartet, in the Symphony, the entire third movement is built around chromaticism, seen to evolve through the crotchet rhythm motif, introduced by the viola line.

Score extract 11-Isolated crotchet rhythm, viola line. Movt. Three, Symphony.

crotchet rhythmic motif → prominent throughout work.

At this stage in the movement, the composer has not yet made use of any chromaticism, and although the key is clearly E-minor, the overall mood is one of optimism, due to the continuous driving force of the motif. However Shostakovich creates growing unrest through the gradual build up of chromatic material. Perhaps he did this to communicate the growing unrest the end of the war was bringing to the people, in relation to the greater stronghold victory would give Stalin.

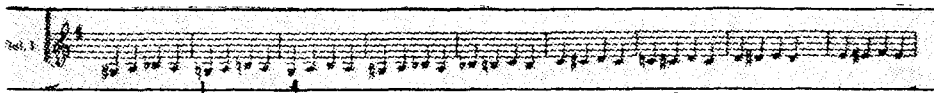
Score Extract 12-Viola line from bar 18, Movt. Three, Symphony.



chromatic movement
- semi-tone interval
between F4 & E4.

In bars 21, 23 and 25, the first chromatic inserts appear (semi-tone movement between F-naturals and E-naturals), which almost go unnoticed by the listener, as these moments are not yet the focus, they are at first only chromatic passing.

Score Extract 13-Isolated violin line, bar 54, Movt. Three, Symphony.

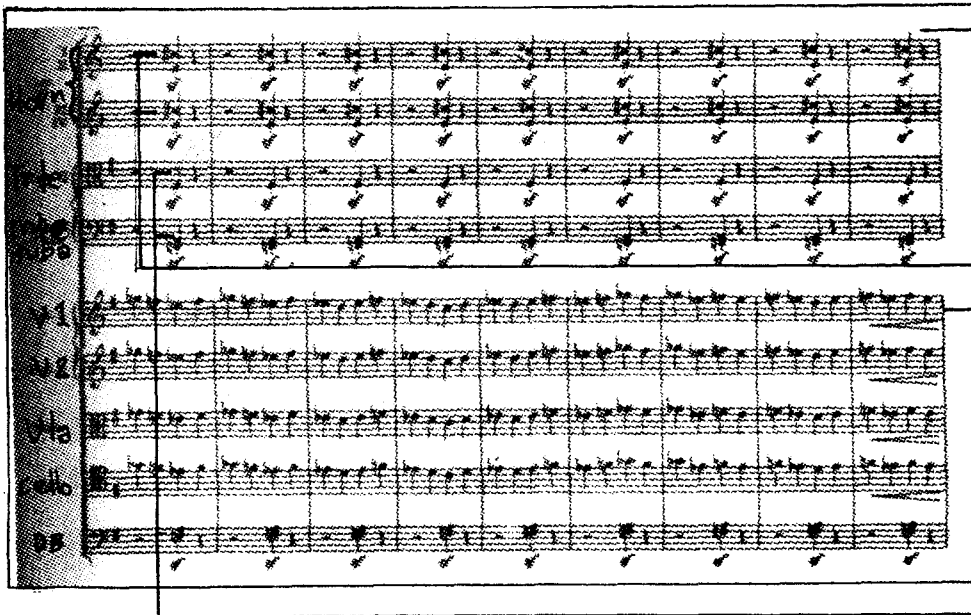


chromatic movement
more apparent.

bars featuring major 2nd movement
showing that chromatic take-over is gradual.

By bar 54, the violins have taken over the crotchet motif, and Shostakovich allows chromaticism to become more apparent. However, he is still interspersing bars that consist of major 2nds with bars of chromaticism. This highlights that the chromatic takeover is gradual. For example, bar 54, which features chromatic movement, are followed by two bars of major 2nd movement. At bar 58, chromaticism is seen uninterrupted for another ten bars.

Score Extract 14-Bar 210, Movt. Three, Symphony.



ACCOMPANIMENT:
- rhythmic unison-
repeated sforzando minor
3rd intervals, falling
on 3rd beat of bar

Unison strings-melodic
role.
Polytonality →
- horns → 1st & 3rd
of F# minor triad
- 1st & 3rd of F minor
triad.

By bar 210, the mood has changed from one of optimism to one of pessimism, due to the way chromaticism has been allowed to take over. The melodic direction falls and rises

through chromatic movement, keeping within a small range. The closeness of these melodic intervals creates tension and unrest in the listener.

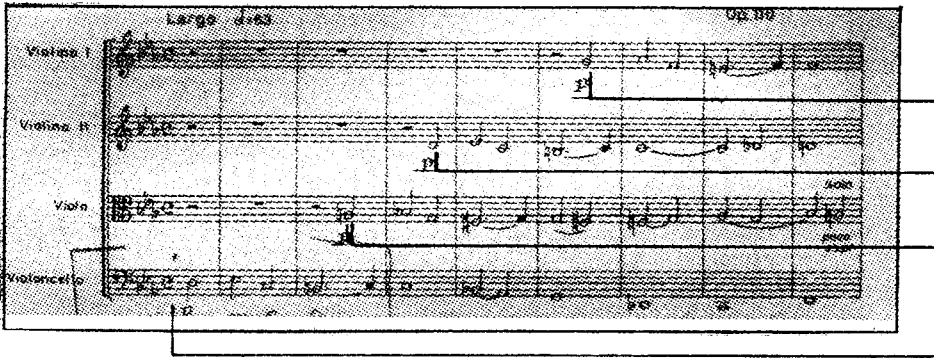
The texture is homophonic, as the strings, taking the melodic role, are in unison. Similarly, the accompaniment is in rhythmic unison, existing as repeated sforzando minor third intervals, heard on the third beat of every bar. At this stage, although the key appears to be E-minor, the repeated minor third chords of the accompaniment creates a feeling of polytonality. Double basses, tuba and trombone play the first and third notes of an F-minor triad, whilst the horns play the same intervals of the F-sharp minor triad.

Melodic Sources of the Eighth Quartet

Johnson comments on the use of Shostakovich's musical signature, (DSCH) as the basis for the work's thematic material. It is the very first phrase heard; "again and again it returns, seeming to lead us ... through the nightmare world of Shostakovich's private inferno." It is the use of his 'signature motif' which reveals the quartet to be an

autobiography, representing the man, not the public spokesperson. (p.8)

Score extract 15-Opening, Movt. One, Quartet.

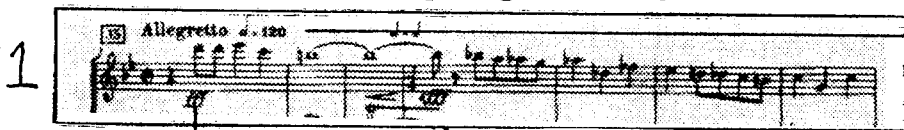


'signature motif' - (DSCH), introduced by cello, then passed through fugal entries to all parts

The 'signature motif' is the very first melodic idea offered by the composer, heard in the unaccompanied cello line. Following this, the 'signature' is passed to all parts, through

fugal entries. As a result polyphonic texture is created.

Score extract 16-Opening, Movt.3, Quartet.



sig. motif → varied in duration & dynamics.

triple forte dynamic marking.

The third movement opens with a firm triple forte outcry by the first violin of the same 'signature motif'. This varies with the representation of the 'signature motif' in Movement 1, as although exactly the same pitch material has been used, the composer has varied the rhythm. In the first movement, the 'signature motif' was presented as soft, sustained phrases, featuring minims. Here, however, note duration is shorter, featuring notes of more varied lengths; here the DSCH statement consists of two quavers (both D) which are followed by two crotchets (E-flat and C), and two tied semi-breves (B-natural).

When the motif is next heard, in the same movement, it is different again, shown in
2 Extract 15.

Score Extract 17- Figure 36, Movt. Three, Quartet.

piano markings:

staccatto markings

The image shows a musical score extract with four staves labeled 1, 2, a, and b. Staff 1 is the top staff, staff 2 is the second, staff a is the third, and staff b is the bottom. The music is written in a common time signature. There are several dynamic markings: 'f' (forte) and 'dim.' (diminuendo) are visible. There are also staccatto markings (stacc.) above some notes. The score is enclosed in a rectangular box.

sig. motif again varied—~~3~~ as result, no longer a defiant outcry, as seen in Extract 16.

note: duration shorter again.

Once again, the composer presents the same pitch material in a different way. The note duration is now even shorter, varying its rhythm again. Also, in this statement, the phrase is marked piano and staccato, contrasting to the strong triple forte seen in the movement's opening.

Despite the change in dynamic and intensity, the motif is still the focus of the movement. It has, however, changed from being a defiant outcry to an apologetic whisper, through the composer's manipulation of dynamics and expressive techniques. Triple forte
8 becomes piano, and sforzando markings become staccato markings.

Later in the work, at figure 47, the motif has been repressed even further by the addition of mutes (con sordini). This continuous repression of the 'signature motif' could be seen as a metaphor for the progressive repression of Shostakovich's musical
5 expression under the communist regime.

In the final movement, the signature motif is stated in the same rhythm of the first movement, but is answered and restated at different pitches, the intervals remaining the same.

Score extract 18- Opening Movt. 5, Quartet.

CANONIC ENTRIES OF SIG. MOTIF

sig. imitated at 5th.

sig. introduced on D

sig. restated at pitch(D)

restated sig. answered at 5th once more.

Here the motif exists as canonic imitation between parts. It is introduced at correct pitch, (starting on D), and is then imitated, or 'answered', a fifth higher (on A-natural). This is repeated twice, until all four parts are encompassed; the motif is passed from cello to viola, violin two, and violin one in turn, alternating between correct pitch (D), and the fifth (A-natural)

During the movement, the motif reoccurs at varying pitches. At figure 67, violin two states the motif starting on a B-flat, and three bars later is answered by the cello at the fourth (E-flat). Five bars pass, and the motif is heard again, this time in the viola line, a second higher (F-sharp).

Score Extract 19- Movt. Five, Figure 67, Quartet.

'sig. motif' beginning on B \flat - minor 6th above correct pitch.

'sig motif' beginning on E \flat - 4th above V1 statement & minor 2nd above correct pitch.

'sig. motif' beginning on F \sharp 2nd above cello statement, major 3rd above correct pitch.

Shostakovich's Eighth Symphony and Eighth Quartet allow the two voices of the composer to be identified: the public spokesman and the individual. The Eighth Symphony contemplates the horrors of war and yearns not for victory, but for peace. The Eighth Quartet (1960), related to the Eighth Symphony, has been called his "War Requiem". According to Revenyi, this is so "only in the most private sense- he mourns as a man, not as a public spokesman." (p.16)

The Eighth Symphony communicates the voice of a public spokesman, whilst the Eighth Quartet communicates the voice of an individual. Revenyi also states that this is "a case of split personality". The public Shostakovich was striving to meet the requirements of "Socialist Realism", whilst the private Shostakovich, "whose outstanding characteristic was a pessimism", was trying to truthfully express his own thoughts and feelings. (p.13)

The Symphony is a reflection on the war, and the people's fear of the power Russian victory would give Stalin. Russia was defeating the Germans, and the public expected an optimistic celebration of the impending victory. However, Shostakovich could only offer pessimism, pessimism that the whole country would also feel. The nature of the symphonic form also indicates that Shostakovich wanted to communicate these thoughts

to the public. According to Day, Soviet Russia saw its composers' symphonies as great
2 'public utterances'. (p.2)

Based around the composer's own musical signature, the Quartet automatically
communicates the personal Shostakovich. Chamber music is a more intimate medium
than the symphony, and at the time was not seen as a threat to the Communist Party,
allowing Shostakovich to express his feelings about the repression his other works were
2 subjected to.

The two voices of the composer are revealed in these two closely related works. The
public man, who was repressed by the State, and the private man, communicating his
own deeply intimate feeling, expressed through the use of the sorrowful minor intervals
of his musical signature; the source of much of the Quartet's melodic material.

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Music Extension Musicology Elective - Essay

Low Band E4

Annotation Sample 1

Shostakovich: The Public and Private Man

- Presents an hypothesis with independence of thought.
- Excellent analytical discussion that is mainly concept-based with some socio/political information.
- Critical analysis ranges from rudimentary to very perceptive.
- Valid conclusions were made.
- Well integrated score examples.