

Hey Kids, Meet Dimitri Shostakovich

Russian Modern Era Composer (1906-1975)

Dimitri Shostakovich was born in 1906 to Dmitri Boleslavovich Shostakovich and Sofiya Vasilievna Kokoulina, the second of three children. He was born in St. Petersburg, Russia, during the beginnings of the Russian Revolution. As a child, he was a prodigy as both a pianist and composer. His talent became apparent after beginning piano lessons with his mother at the age of eight.

In the midst of a government that strongly enforced the style and elements of symphonic music, the works that Shostakovich produced as an adult reveal significant genius. Not only do they show great depth, but also his struggle to make his music fresh and original without overstepping the boundaries established by the former Soviet Union. The government insisted that composers use folk and folk-like elements, straight forward rhythms, minimal dissonance and simple harmonies. Not adhering to these expectations, especially in years of Stalin's regime, may have literally meant death.



Dimitri Shostakovich died on August 9, 1975. Many people feel that Shostakovich was one of the greatest composers of the mid-twentieth-century.

