



Shostakovich

By Elizabeth Wilson

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Shostakovich: A Life Remembered is a unique study of the great composer Dimitri Shostakovich drawn from the reminiscences and reflections of his contemporaries. Using much material never previously published in English, as well as personal accounts from interviews and specially commissioned articles, Elizabeth Wilson has built a fascinating chronicle of Shostakovich's life.

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Shostakovich By Elizabeth Wilson Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

This book offers a unique perspective on one of our century's most complex, enigmatic, and controversial geniuses, set in the musical and political context of his time. The author is well equipped for the task: she is a cellist who studied with Mstislav Rostropovich in Moscow from 1964 to 1971, when her father was British ambassador there. Her book is a compendium of official documents, private letters, diaries, and interviews with Shostakovich's family, friends, and enemies (in Russia and elsewhere), as well as articles written especially for the book. The result is a fascinating, first-hand portrait of Shostakovich the man as husband, widower, father, and friend, and Shostakovich the composer, who--by turns officially reviled and extolled--became a symbol for the suffering of his people. Indomitably creative despite constant fear, repression, bereavement, and debilitating illnesses, his ultimate tragedy was that the political "thaw" came too late for his failing health. Naturally, many of Wilson's respondents are musicians who knew that Shostakovich encoded his music with hidden subtexts to express his secret thoughts. On the other hand, his political statements, written and spoken under duress, were often ambiguous and contradictory, and she quotes both conciliatory and hostile reactions to them. She also cites many testimonials of his spontaneous generosity to friends and colleagues in need. Among the most delightful episodes are visits by the composer Benjamin Britten and the tenor Peter Pears. The latter gives a loving description in his diary of a splendid Christmas and New Year's celebration with the Rostropovich and Shostakovich families, never even mentioning differences of language, culture, or politics. --*Edith Eisler*

Review

"Elizabeth Wilson has done both Shostakovich scholarship and the general reader a great service...making available for the first time a remarkable range of material, much of it specially commissioned for this book in taped interview or written form...Her book makes an important contribution to our knowledge of Shostakovich's life and times."--**Eric Roseberry**, *The Times Literary Supplement*

"Elizabeth Wilson's magnificent new oral history, *Shostakovich: A Life Remembered*, [is] the one indispensable book about the composer."--**Richard Taruskin**, *The New York Times*

"The most important book ever published about the greatest Russian composer of the 20th century....For the first time, Shostakovich's anguished personality comes into focus, and his emotionally devastating encounters with the Soviet government are put into trustworthy perspective."--*The New York Daily News*

"By far the most important book ever published about the greatest Russian composer of the 20th century. This 550-page anthology weaves together dozens of memoirs by friends and colleagues of Shostakovich, most never previously available in English and many commissioned for this book. For the first time, Shostakovich's anguished personality comes into focus, and his emotionally devastating encounters with the Soviet government are put into trustworthy perspective. Very strongly recommended."--*New York Daily News*

"In Shostakovich: A life remembered, Elizabeth Wilson has done both Shostakovich scholarship and the general reader a great service . . . making available for the first time a remarkable range of material, much of it specially commissioned for this book. . . . an important contribution to our knowledge of Shostakovich's life and times."--*Times Literary Supplement*

"The author, an English cellist who studied with Rostropovich in Moscow, has gathered numerous recollections of Shostakovich and organized them into an enormous biography that follows every step of his life. . . . Together, these diverse sources provide a mosaic portrait of a shy, fidgety, punctilious musician."--*New Yorker*

"Drawing on contemporary reminiscences, interviews, letters and other material from Shostakovich's friends and disciples, Ms. Wilson has stitched together a kind of collage-cum-commentary that splendidly illuminates the composer's life and times. . . . The result is a gripping portrait of Shostakovich's physical and mental sufferings under the regimes of Josef Stalin, Nikita Khrushchev and Leonid Brezhnev."--**Samuel Lipman, *Washington Times***

". . . an enthralling new biography. . . . It is a tale of musical genius, fired and nearly extinguished by oppression. . . . Courage and cowardice, nobility and self-disgust: These extremes in Shostakovich's character which informed so much of his music, have made him seem the quintessential composer not only of his own tragic times, but of our whole appalling century."--**Charles Michener, *The New York Observer***

"Elizabeth Wilson . . . conducted interviews with and solicited short written pieces from many who knew Shostakovich. Wilson has arranged this fascinating material into a "documentary biography" in which many voices and points of view are heard. . . . its value as "documentary" cannot be overestimated."--**Wilson *Library Bulletin***

"Shostakovich emerges from these pages not only as a musical prodigy (he could compose and orchestrate in his head as much as Mozart) but as a human being unfailingly polite and gentlemanly, touching in his weaknesses, commendable in his strengths. This volume goes a long way in providing the missing biography of one of this century's most vital creative spirits."--**Opera News**

"[Wilson's] book makes possible a better grasp of the composer's life and . . . [gives] insight into the tribulations of a great artist subjected to the pressures of a totalitarian regime. The author and her contributors reveal what these pressures cost Shostakovich, the effect they had on his life and work, and the nature and the extent of his efforts on behalf of others subjected to the same pressures."--**Choice**

"[Elizabeth] Wilson interviewed and commissioned writings from nearly a hundred of Shostakovich's family members, former students, friends, collaborators, and acquaintances. . . . The result is a richly varied insight into one of the century's most frequently misjudged geniuses. . . . [In] *Shostakovich: A Life Remembered* we finally have a more balanced, insightful and quite literally diverse view of his life and work. . . . one will gain immeasurably from reading this book."--**David Weininger, *Boston Book Review***

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Paul Dixon:

Spent a free time and energy to be fun activity to do! A lot of people spent their leisure time with their family, or their friends. Usually they doing activity like watching television, likely to beach, or picnic within the park. They actually doing same every week. Do you feel it? Do you want to something different to fill your own free time/ holiday? Could possibly be reading a book might be option to fill your free time/ holiday. The first thing that you ask may be what kinds of book that you should read. If you want to attempt look for book, may be the book untitled Shostakovich can be great book to read. May be it can be best activity to you.

Sophia Hartman:

A lot of people always spent their free time to vacation as well as go to the outside with them loved ones or their friend. Do you realize? Many a lot of people spent they will free time just watching TV, or even playing video games all day long. If you would like try to find a new activity here is look different you can read a book. It is really fun for you personally. If you enjoy the book that you read you can spent 24 hours a day to reading a book. The book Shostakovich it is extremely good to read. There are a lot of people who recommended this book. They were enjoying reading this book. In the event you did not have enough space bringing this book you can buy the actual e-book. You can m0ore quickly to read this book from your smart phone. The price is not very costly but this book has high quality.

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