Shostakovich and His World. Edited by Laurel E. Fay. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004. xvi, 405 p. $22.95 US. ISBN 0-691-12069-2

Shostakovich and His World features a diverse collection of essays that will attract anyone intrigued by the legacy of Dmitrii Shostakovich. The book is divided into two parts of unequal length: part one ("Documents") consists of a "documentary essay" and three articles that translate Russian documents, while part two ("Essays") presents seven essays that address a variety of issues regarding Shostakovich's creativity.

The translated documents in part one appear in the following articles: "Shostakovich: Letters to His Mother, 1923-27," "Responses of Shostakovich to a Questionnaire on the Psychology of the Creative Process," and "Stalin and Shostakovich: Letters to a 'Friend'." They are valuable English-language translations for readers who do not read Russian, but the original Russian texts have at least to some extent been published previously in Russian sources. For example, several of Shostakovich's letters to his mother dating from 1923-27 were published in abridged form in the journal *Neva* in 1986. As explained by Rosa Sadykhova, the author of a brief introduction to them, the letters published here appear unabridged for the first time. Reference to money is a leitmotif in these letters. They bear witness to young Mitia's sense of responsibility for the financial welfare of his family. The Questionnaire on the Psychology of the Creative Process was used in a survey conducted by Roman Ilich Gruber at the Leningrad Conservatory in 1927-28, and Shostakovich completed it when he was nearly twenty-one years old. This document was originally published in 2000 in *Dmitrii Shostakovich v pis'makh i dokumentakh* (ed. I. A. Bobykina) and provides, among other insights, an interesting reflection by Shostakovich on his Conservatory training. "Stalin and Shostakovich: Letters to a 'Friend'" reproduces four brief correspondences from Shostakovich to Stalin between 1946 and 1950. In addition to the four translated letters, this article by Leonid Maximenkov is particularly noteworthy for its use of archival documents drawn from the Russian State Archive of Social-Political History. This evidence sheds new light on behind-the-scenes political situations that precipitated Shostakovich's public censures in 1936 and 1948, and leads Maximenkov to propose that Stalin's views on Soviet film music was a basis for the former, and monetary rather than musical issues were at the heart of the latter. Maximenkov's article is a revised and expanded version of one published in *Rodina* in 2002.

Differing from the preceding three articles, Christopher Gibbs' contribution, "The Phenomenon of the Seventh," is an essay on Shostakovich's Seventh Symphony rather than a presentation of translations previously unavailable. Its "Documentary Essay" subtitle and placement in the "Documents" section of the book underscore the contemporary reviews and program notes upon which it is based. While exploring extra-musical meaning attached to the Seventh Symphony, this impeccably footnoted essay addresses several central themes of

the work's reception in the United States: its program, wartime propaganda, political status, sincerity, derivativeness, and artistic worth within Beethoven's symphonic legacy.

The essays section of the book begins with Simon Morrison's "Shostakovich as Industrial Saboteur: Observations on *The Bolt*." Morrison's thesis is that *The Bolt* is a satire combining popular and serious artistic expression, whose music "cannot be properly heard without consideration of its interaction with the décor and dance." However, given that the original choreography for this work is unrecoverable, the author concedes that his evaluation is "provisional." Nevertheless, he explores his thesis admirably by tying it in with the creative style of the contemporary Russian writer Mikhail Zoshchenko and the literary genre of *skaz*. In the process, Morrison sheds new light on how to understand the negative evaluations of the ballet by critics and Shostakovich himself.

The two essays that follow Morrison's continue to explore facets of Russian literary tradition in Shostakovich's work. In his essay, "*The Nose* and the Fourteenth Symphony: An Affinity of Opposites," Levon Hakobian connects poetics of *The Nose* to poetics of the contemporary writers group Oberiu (Association of Real Art), whose members included Nikolai Zabolotsky, Alexandr Vvedendsky, and Daniil Kharms. In particular, Hakobian makes a case for correspondences between Oberiu's manifested use of "dramatic" and "scenic" plots, and Shostakovich's juxtapositions of similar "dramatic" and "scenic" plots (identified by Hakobian) to create a theatre of the absurd. Although Hakobian aims to tie both *The Nose* and the Fourteenth Symphony to the literary tradition of Petersburg, he has limited success in doing so with the Symphony and admits in due course that this work "does not manifest a direct connection to Petersburgian mythology." Caryl Emerson's essay, "Shostakovich and the Russian Literary Tradition," pursues the literary theme in more depth. It examines the possible perception of Shostakovich as a "literary" composer through four case studies: *The Nose*, *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk District*, *Six Verses of Marina Tsvetaeva*, and *Four Verses of Captain Lebiadkin.* Emerson uses Esti Sheinberg's publication, *Irony, Satire, Parody and the Grotesque in the Music of Shostakovich* (Ashgate, 2000), as a point of departure from which to discuss "literary montage," "tragic-satirical opera," parody and transcendence in these works. In the process, she sets out arguments that challenge a political simplification of Shostakovich's legacy.

David Fanning argues compellingly that the work of Shostakovich's students should be acknowledged as another important influence on the composer. Fanning's essay, "Shostakovich and His Pupils," documents Shostakovich's pedagogical work and is noteworthy for including sources of information on this activity and identifying "official" (registered) and unofficial students. Fanning also illustrates how ideas derived from pupils (particularly pupil-muses Galina Ustvolskaya and Elmira Nazirova) appear prominently in Shostakovich's works and invite programmatic interpretation. By doing so, he demonstrates that teaching influenced Shostakovich's music in fundamental ways and suggests that Shostakovich's pedagogical activities

were perhaps as responsible for his compositional development as was political intervention. This viewpoint is echoed by Peter Schmelz in his essay, "Shostakovich's 'Twelve-Tone' Compositions and the Politics and Practice of Soviet Serialism." While reviewing the Soviet context of dodecaphony, Schmelz observes that the younger generation of Soviet composers in the 1960s, including Shostakovich's students, influenced the composer's adoption of twelve-tone "motives" in his own work.

On the lighter side, Gerard McBurney's essay, "Fried Chicken in the Bird-Cherry Trees," discusses in considerable detail one of Shostakovich's less familiar and recently revived works: the operetta or "musical comedy" titled *Moscow Cheryomushki*, written in 1957-58. Consisting of about 100 minutes of music, the operetta is one of Shostakovich's longest compositions and the only musical drama completed by the composer after *Lady Macbeth*. McBurney identifies the operetta as a monument to Soviet popular culture of the Khrushchev period and examines the work in terms of its parodies, references and quotations. The author demonstrates convincingly that this composition invites multiple interpretations of meaning because of its variety of musical references to the Russian classics (Tchaikovsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, Borodin), urban songs, village folk songs, and even several other compositions by Shostakovich.

The topic of meaning in Shostakovich's music is explored further in the final essay of the book: "Listening to Shostakovich," by Leon Botstein. Confronting this controversial issue, Botstein suggests that Shostakovich's music is ambiguous enough to be read simultaneously as affirmative of authority and resistant to it. It commands our attention because its mix of accessibility and complexity permits multiple interpretations and continues to attract listeners today.

Shostakovich and His World is edited masterfully by Laurel E. Fay. Her Shostakovich expertise and helpful guidance are noted by most of the book's contributors. Bringing together the work of established and young scholars from North America, Britain and Russia, Fay's compilation is a valuable contribution to Shostakovich scholarship today.

Anna Ferenc
Wilfrid Laurier University