

DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH



ABOUT THE COMPOSER

Born September 25, 1906 St. Petersburg, Russia | Died August 9, 1975 Moscow, Russia

FAMILY & CAREER

Dmitri Shostakovich was a child prodigy pianist and composer. When he began piano lessons at age 9 with his mother, he took to it immediately, playing things by ear after hearing them only once. He entered a music conservatory when he was 13, and wrote his first symphony as a graduation piece at age 19. He was married four times (twice to his first wife) and had two children: Galina and Maxim. Maxim became a pianist and composer.

MUSIC

Shostakovich lived in Soviet Russia, where the government kept a tight watch on intellectuals and artists. They only allowed those who furthered their political aims to flourish. His life was a constant struggle between his own creativity and having to appease the Soviet state, led by Joseph Stalin.

Shostakovich frequently suffered at the hand of the government: his works were banned, he received bad reviews of his music in the official government newspaper, he was forced to give public apologies for his works, he lost his job at the Music Conservatory, and he had to write music in praise of Stalin. Fearful of rejection (which could mean arrest, imprisonment, even death), he wrote a lot of music that he immediately threw away or hid away in his desk drawer.

Despite all this, Shostakovich wrote quite a lot of music in varying styles: 15 symphonies, 15 string quartets, 3 operas, and film music, among other things.

Symphony No. 9

by Dmitri Shostakovich

ABOUT THE MUSIC

WHAT KIND OF PIECE IS IT?

A *Symphony* is a long piece of music containing four movements. These *movements*, or sections, each have their own characteristics. Some movements may be upbeat and lively, while others may be slower and more song-like.

WHEN WAS THE PIECE COMPOSED?

Shostakovich composed Symphony No 9. in 1945.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT?

This was Shostakovich's shortest symphony, despite having five movements. The last three movements are played without pause.

FUN FACTS

Shostakovich sent cards to himself to test how well the postal service was working.



Program Notes for kids

Beethoven No 9.
Saturday, April 27th
8 p.m.
Hill Auditorium

BEETHOVEN *Symphony No. 9 in D minor*

intermission

SHOSTAKOVICH *Symphony No. 9 in E-flat major*

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN



ABOUT THE COMPOSER

Born December 16, 1770 Bonn, Germany | Died March 26, 1827 Vienna, Austria

Ludwig van Beethoven's parents were Johann van Beethoven and Maria Magdalena Keverich. Johann was a German musician, teacher, and singer, and was Beethoven's first music teacher. Johann was quite harsh with Ludwig, and neighbors sometimes reported seeing Beethoven standing at the piano in tears. Beethoven's father would tell everyone that he was two years younger than he really was in order to make him seem more like a prodigy. Young Beethoven also played the violin. He often enjoyed improvising rather than reading off sheet music.

Beethoven had two brothers and one sister. He never married or had children, but he was in love many times.

Beethoven is one of the most prominent composers of Classical and Romantic musical eras. His best-known compositions include 9 symphonies, 5 concertos for piano, 32 piano sonatas, and 16 string quartets. He also composed other chamber music, choral works, songs, and one opera.

By the age of 26, Beethoven began to lose his hearing. He suffered from a severe form of tinnitus, a ringing in his ears that made it hard for him to hear. Despite this, he continued to compose. In fact, some of his best works come from this time in his life.



Fun Facts

Beethoven's talent and powerful personality made him many friends, but he frequently lost friends by insulting them. He once wrote a song called "Praise to the Fat One" for an overweight violinist. Another time he became angry with a prince and told him, "There are and there will be thousands of princes. There is only one Beethoven."

Symphony No. 9

by Ludwig van Beethoven

ABOUT THE MUSIC

WHAT KIND OF PIECE IS THIS?

A *Symphony* is a long piece of music containing four movements. These *movements*, or sections, each have their own characteristics. Some movements may be upbeat and lively, while others may be slower and more song-like.

WHEN WAS IT COMPOSED?

The Philharmonic Society of London commissioned Beethoven to write a symphony in 1817. But Beethoven did not compose the symphony until 1822. He composed the symphony from 1822-1824.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT?

This symphony was longer and more complex than any symphony to date and required a larger orchestra. But the most surprising aspect of this symphony was that Beethoven included chorus and vocal soloists in the final movement. He was the first major composer to do this in a symphony.

Symphony No. 9 is often nicknamed the 'choral' symphony, but it's only the finale that features a choir.

Featured Soloists:

On tonight's concert, the chorus and vocalists that are featured on Beethoven's Ninth Symphony are:

Jacqueline Echols - Lyric soprano

Freda Herseth - Mezzo-soprano

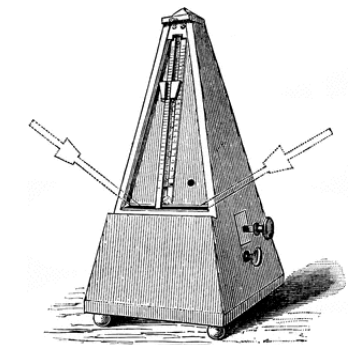
Scott Piper - Tenor

Stephen West - Bass-baritone

The UMS Choral Union

Fun Facts

Beethoven was deaf at the premiere of the ninth symphony, so he remained facing the orchestra and could not hear the applause of the audience.



A metronome is a device that helps musicians stay in time by producing a steady click or beep. Beethoven's metronome may have looked like this.

Listen for...

The words that are sung during the final movement are sung by four vocal soloists and a chorus. They were taken from the "Ode to Joy", a poem written by Friedrich Schiller.

Fun Facts

Beethoven composed best while walking. He was often seen wandering the streets, waving his arms and loudly singing bits of music, oblivious to the crowds of people staring at him.