



# MEET THE COMPOSER: Dmitri Shostakovich

<b>Age Range:</b>	Elementary, Middle School, High School
<b>Introduction:</b>	Composers write music, just like authors write books. In the Class Notes “Meet the Composer” series, we will learn a little bit about the achievements, backstory, and influences of a variety of composers. Get ready to learn about these influential composers and listen to some of their music.
<b>Total Video Time:</b>	10:29
<b>Total Lesson Time:</b>	Approximately 20-25 minutes

## BACKGROUND on Dmitri Shostakovich

Dmitri (du-MEE-tree) Shostakovich (shah-stuh-KOE-vich) was born in 1906 in Saint Petersburg, Russia. As a child, he showed interest and talent in music and entered a special music school at age 13. He became an excellent pianist and started composing. He wrote his first symphony at age 19 and became famous soon after. Dmitri Shostakovich lived during a time of political unrest and had a complicated relationship with the Soviet/Russian government. He also lived through World War II, which influenced his compositions. He died in 1975 in Moscow, Russia.

## MUSIC of Dmitri Shostakovich

1. Dmitri Shostakovich is perhaps best-known for his energetic and intense symphonies. Listen and watch the second movement of his Symphony No. 10 to get a sense of his style.

[Symphony No. 10](#). Composed 1953. Video approx. 4.5 minutes.

2. Shostakovich was good friends with a famous cellist and decided to write a concerto for him. It is widely considered to be one of the most difficult concertos written for the cello. Watch and listen to the cellist Sheku Kanneh-Mason perform a section of the piece.

[Cello Concerto No. 1](#). Composed 1959. Video approx. 2.5 minutes.

3. Over the course of his career, Dmitri Shostakovich composed fifteen string quartets for two violins, viola, and cello. In the String Quartet No. 8, Shostakovich attempted to capture some of the fear and anger felt during wartime. Watch and listen to the beginning of that quartet and discuss how the composer tries to depict those emotions through music.

[String Quartet No. 8](#). Composed 1960. Video approx. 3.5 minutes.



MEET THE COMPOSER:

# Dmitri Shostakovich, cont.

## CREATE, CONNECT, & RESPOND to Shostakovich's music

1. Dmitri Shostakovich is often associated with serious and heavy music, though he had a light-hearted side and composed a lot of music for movies. Explore the connection between music and emotion with the Class Notes lesson [Music and Emotion](#).
2. During his lifetime and after his death, there has been a lot of discussion among music scholars about whether or not Shostakovich was writing music in support of the government or as a protest against it. Learn more about using music to express opinions and beliefs with the Class Notes lesson [Themed Lesson: Protest Music](#).

# Dmitri Shostakovich

## FAST FACTS

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