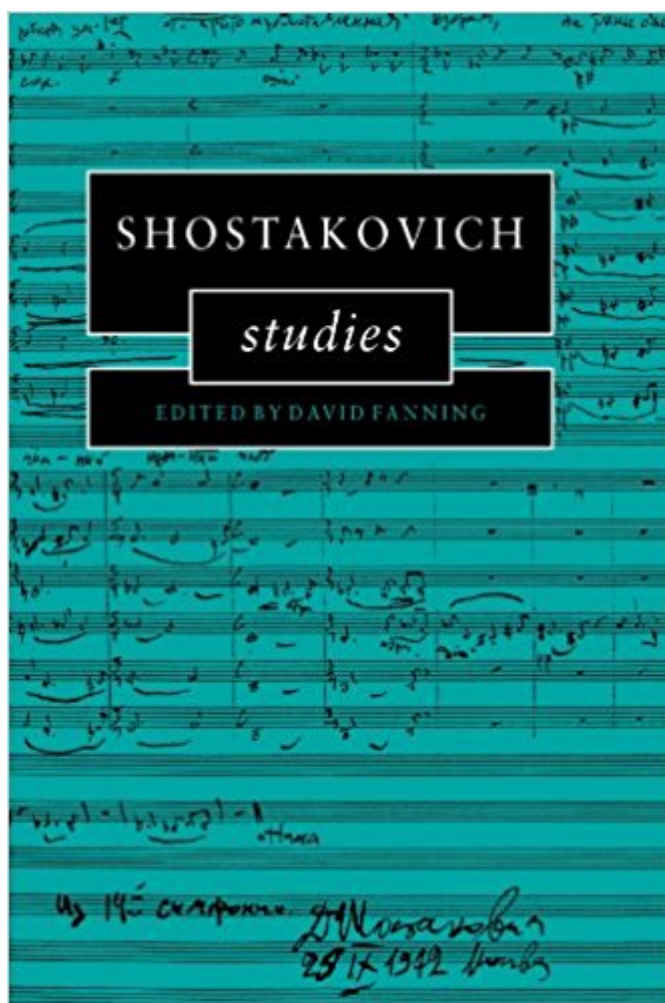


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Shostakovich Studies (Cambridge Composer Studies)



Synopsis

Few composers' posthumous reputations have grown as steadily as Shostakovich's. Yet outside the concert hall the focus of attention seems to have been on the extraordinary circumstances of his life rather than on the music itself. This book seeks to show that the power of his work stems as much from its craftsmanship as from its political and personal context. The eleven essays lay a foundation for a proper understanding of Shostakovich's musical language as well as providing new insights into the issues surrounding his composition.

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"This work joins Cambridge's eclectic list of books on 20th-century music. It is an important contribution to the critical assessment of a major modern composer." Choice

Few composers' posthumous reputations have grown as steadily as Shostakovich's. Yet outside the concert hall the focus of attention seems to have been on the extraordinary circumstances of his life rather than on the music itself. This book seeks to show that the power of his work stems as much from its craftsmanship as from its political and personal context. The eleven essays lay a foundation for a proper understanding of Shostakovich's musical language as well as providing new insights into the issues surrounding his composition.

_Shostakovich_Studies_ is valuable first and foremost for Richard Taruskin's essay "Public Lies and Unspeakable Truth: Interpreting Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony." The Fifth--a piece I loved as a teenager--I later wrote off, accepting the conventional wisdom that it was a "Soviet artist's response to just criticism." After reading Taruskin, I hear a complex and nuanced depth to the work that I never dreamed of before. The volume does have other interesting essays, but Taruskin's is front and center.

This book is indispensable if you are really interested in Shostakovich. It contains an important essay by Richard Taruskin--and pretty much every essay by Taruskin on Shostakovich is important--detailed treatment of subjects such as Russian use of modes, Shostakovich's vocal music, the second piano trio in e minor and on and on. Not an easy read, but scholarly and well worth the effort.

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