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91423



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Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa  
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

## Level 3 Music Studies 2024

### 91423 Examine the influence of context on a substantial music work

Credits: Four

Achievement	Achievement with Merit	Achievement with Excellence
Examine the influence of context on a substantial music work.	Examine in depth the influence of context on a substantial music work.	Examine perceptively the influence of context on a substantial music work.

Check that the National Student Number (NSN) on your admission slip is the same as the number at the top of this page.

**Answer ONE of the essay questions in this booklet.**

If you need more room for your answer, use the extra space provided at the back of this booklet.

Check that this booklet has pages 2–12 in the correct order and that none of these pages is blank.

Do not write in the margins (/////). This area will be cut off when the booklet is marked.

**YOU MUST HAND THIS BOOKLET TO THE SUPERVISOR AT THE END OF THE EXAMINATION.**

Merit

TOTAL 06



**INSTRUCTIONS**

Write an essay on a substantial music work that you have studied, in response to ONE of the questions below.

Give the details of the work in the box at the top of page 3.

**QUESTIONS** (Choose ONE)

1. Music works may be closely associated with, or respond to, a specific event or occasion (e.g. a celebration or a natural disaster).  
Discuss how such an association has impacted the conception, production, and interpretation of your work.
2. Music is sometimes used to communicate the values or beliefs of a particular person or group of people.  
Discuss how the conception, production, and interpretation of your chosen work has been influenced by a set of values or beliefs.
3. "Music is a language that doesn't speak in particular words. It speaks in emotions ..."  
Discuss how an intention to communicate emotions through music has impacted the conception, production, and interpretation of your chosen work.
4. Different performances of a music work may lead to changes in musical style, particularly when the context (time or place) is also different.  
Discuss how the conception, production, and interpretation of your chosen music work has changed when comparing one performance to another.



Work title(s): Shostakovich's Symphony No. 11 'The Year 1905', Movement II  
 Composer(s) / performer(s): Dimitri Shostakovich  
 Genre/style/period: Orchestral Symphony

### PLANNING

Consider the following aspects of the work:


- its conception
- its production
- its interpretation.

Intro

- "Associated with / Related to" Bloody Sunday
- C. P. I

P1: Contextual

P2: Themes (Palace / Massacre)

P3: Older interpretation: 

P4: Historical interpretation:

P5: Grand Theme

Conclusion



You should aim to write a concise essay of no more than five pages. The quality of your ideas is more important than the length of your essay.

Support your response with musical evidence from the work. Manuscript paper is provided on page 9 in case you wish to include musical quotations.

Begin your essay here:

Question number: 1

"Discuss how such an association has impacted the conception, production, and interpretation of your work."

It is very true that any music of modern significance has a direct association, or responds to a specific event or occasion - typically one of great historical importance. Dimitri Shostakovich's Symphony No. 11 'The Year 1905', specifically Movement II 'The 9<sup>th</sup> of January', is no exception to this, and the piece's association with the events of the historical event 'Bloody Sunday' significantly impacted the conception, production, and interpretation of this timeless work.

In order to understand how the music within the piece has been impacted by Bloody Sunday, we must understand how the piece is associated with and responds to this specific event. On the 9<sup>th</sup> of January, in 1905, some 150,000 peaceful protesters gathered outside the Czar's (Russian King / Representative of God) palace in St Petersburg in Russia. These protesters were largely the working class Russian majority, who were protesting issues such as cramped living conditions, inadequate



pay, and women's rights. However, the Czar was 'not home' so to speak, located 25 miles south at another palace. Within an instant and without warning, the palace guard opened fire on the peaceful protestors, with no direction from the Czar. Official reports claim the deaths of 200 people, however some eyewitnesses recount that the number of deaths could have been as high as 1500. Ultimately, this specific event - now known as Bloody Sunday - became the catalyst for the 1905 and 1917 Russian Revolutions, which saw the Czar be overthrown and executed, and the communist Soviet regime established. Shostakovich associated his 11<sup>th</sup> Symphony with the event of Bloody Sunday, and this is seen across the conception, production, and interpretation of Symphony No. 11.

Using Bloody Sunday as the basis for conception of Symphony No. 11, Shostakovich produced themes that associate with his perception of the emotions and features of this historical event. For example, the 'Palace Square Theme' which first appears at Figure 69 is associated with the emotions of the crowd during Bloody Sunday. The Palace Square Theme features a slow, *adagio* tempo with a quiet piano dynamic amongst a few high-pitched instruments such as the Piccolo. This creates an eerie, suspenseful feeling within the listener, which is associated with the unease and tense feeling within the protesting crowd. Furthermore, the use of 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> intervals create an empty, emotionless, and almost frightening sound, associated with the cold, freezing temperatures



of a Russian morning in the winter. Thus, we can see that in Shostakovich's conception of Symphony No. 11, he has been impacted by the events of Bloody Sunday, and because of this impact he has associated the themes he produced with features of this event so that the listener can understand his perception of the emotions felt during the day. This is further exemplified through his introduction of the massacre theme in Figure 85 ②. The massacre theme features a similar melodic structure to the palace square theme, however contrasts it through a significantly increased dynamic, achieved through the fortissimo marking and terraced dynamics created by the orchestra in rhythmic unison, and through a significantly increased tempo. Furthermore, he increases the rhythmic density in this theme in a rapid repeating triplet rhythm, which in effect with the other changes, creates a sense of alarm and crazed movement within the listener, designed to emulate the panic and shock of the protestors as the palace guard began to open fire. Thus, we can explicitly see that in Shostakovich's association of ~~Symphony No. 11~~ Symphony No. 11 with Bloody Sunday, the conception of the piece was impacted in that he endeavoured to make elements of the production (i.e. the musical themes) representative of emotions and features of this historical event.

We can also see how Shostakovich's association of Symphony No. 11 with Bloody Sunday ~~created~~ impacted the interpretation of the work as it allowed various different groups of people to interpret the work



in different ways. In mid-20<sup>th</sup> century Soviet Russia, the historical time period in which Shostakovich was brought up in, all musical works were produced and evaluated at the discretion of the Soviet Artistic Censorship Committee, who were responsible for ensuring that all forms of entertainment met the criteria of Socialist Realism. Socialist Realism was essentially the concept that all music had to have meaning behind it and tell a story, and typically that meaning had to be associated with how 'great' and 'prosperous' Soviet Russia was. Whilst Symphony No. 11 didn't exactly do this, by associating the Symphony with the event of Bloody Sunday, and essentially criticising the previous monarchy and how they let their people down, the Soviet Artistic Censorship Committee interpreted this work as being "the greatest ever example of socialist realism", as they believed Shostakovich was using this example of a horrific event to present how much better Russian Society was ~~than~~ now. As a result, Shostakovich was ~~awarded~~ awarded the Lenin Prize in 1957, the highest achievement and recognition for Soviet Musicians at the time. This in turn caused Western Audiences, who would have associated the piece with communist Russian propaganda, to interpret the ~~film~~ work as meaningless programmatic ~~propaganda~~ music, dubbed "film music without a film". Thus, it can be seen that through Shostakovich's association of Symphony No. 11 with Bloody Sunday, ~~an~~ interpreters were impacted as they varied based on the significance of this event to the society in which the listener lived.



However, in Shostakovich's ~~reference~~ <sup>association</sup> of the piece with Bloody Sunday and with another specific event of the Hungarian Uprising, ~~that~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~interpretation~~ <sup>conception, production and interpretation</sup> were all impacted as a result. Before the composition of Symphony No. 11 in 1956 and 1957, Shostakovich was going through a 'creative dry spell' so to speak. However, in 1955, ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~Hungarian~~ <sup>the</sup> nearly 3000 Hungarian protesters were massacred during a peaceful demonstration by government officials in a circumstances not dissimilar to those of Bloody Sunday. Shostakovich had long wanted to write about Bloody Sunday, largely due to the fact his father was present on the day and Shostakovich was born into a politically aware household, so this Hungarian massacre provided sufficient inspiration for the conception of this work. His association of the piece with both of these historical events impacted his production of the work, giving rise to themes such as the 'Artillery Theme' ③. The artillery theme appears at Figure 8c in the snare, featuring a stately crotchet/quaver rhythm that is reminiscent of gunfire. By creating this nonspecific gunfire-like ~~for~~ <sup>in</sup> rhythm, Shostakovich allowed for variety of interpretation. Whilst many Russians would simply associate this theme with gunfire on Bloody Sunday due to its military sound, more politically aware Russians including those older Russians who were present at Bloody Sunday interpreted this general theme as a commentary on how people will always rise up against the cruel regime of autocratic leaders ~~who~~ <sup>who</sup> would massacre their own people such as the Czar's monarchy and the Hungarian communist government. In this way, we see that Shostakovich's (extra page)



① Palace Square Theme

Adagio  $\text{♩} = 66$

69

High pitch creates an eerie sensation.

Quiet dynamic and slow tempo suggest unease and tense feelings associated with the protesters.

Chromatic Ascension builds suspense in the listener.

② Massacre Theme [85]

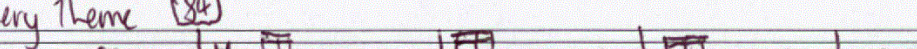
prec. ff

High pitch creates a sense of alarm

Low, impending fortissimo dynamics in combination with the orchestra in rhythmic unison

Rapid triplet rhythm creates crazed, panicked sensation in the listener.

③ Artillery Theme [84]



ff  
Loud tempo frightens the  
listener with noise

f  
Stately snare rolls suggest  
military allusion.

④ Crowd Theme [28] d = rd.

Quiet, low pitch creates  
depressed, gloomy  
atmosphere representative of  
the protesting crowd

Melody adapted from  
"10 Songs based on revolutionary  
poems" with lyrics: "O Motherland, our Father"



Extra space if required.

Write the question number(s) if applicable.

QUESTION  
NUMBER

... association with the piece or with both Bloody Sunday and the Hungarian uprising impacted the conception and production of the Symphony, leading to various interpretations on how Shostakovich was truly commenting on society.

Finally, we can examine how Shostakovich's ~~perception~~ conception and in turn - ~~which was the Russian~~ Russian secretaries' interpretation of Symphony No. 11 was impacted by his association of the ~~piece~~ piece with Bloody Sunday. Within the Soviet societal context it was produced. Prior to his conception and production of Symphony No. 11, Shostakovich had written choral music ~~based~~ named "10 songs based on Revolutionary poems", which pertained to different events that occurred around the time of the various Russian Revolutions. The 'Crowd Theme' ④ first appears in Symphony No. 11 in Figure 28 and is essentially the first theme we hear recur throughout the work. The melody of this theme is rapid and descends chromatically in a low pitch in the bassoon and clarinet, creating a depressive, somewhat anxious theme that is associated with the feelings of oppressed protestors on Bloody Sunday felt. This melody however, has been adapted from one of Shostakovich's 10 songs, the lyrics of which translated in English to "O thou Tsar, our Father". As Soviet social life was heavily dictated



Extra space if required.

Write the question number(s) if applicable.

QUESTION  
NUMBER

by the government, Russian citizens were strongly influenced to watch various live musical performances, and thus would recognise the Crowd theme melody and easily be able to associate it with the failings of the Czar and Bloody Sunday. Thus, we can explicitly see that through Shostakovich's association ~~with~~ of Symphony No. 11 with well-known work "10 songs based on revolutionary poems" which pertains to Bloody Sunday, the production of musical themes has been impacted to allow Russian audiences to easily interpret the piece and thus be able to establish a stronger emotional ~~the~~ connection and recognition of the meaning behind the work.

Shostakovich quoted that ~~the piece~~ ~~is~~ ~~about~~ with Symphony No. 11 "The Year 1905" - specifically movement II "deals with contemporary themes". Through his effective association of the work with the specific historical event of Bloody Sunday, the conception of the piece allowed for intriguing, multifaceted themes to be produced. As a result of this impact of associating Bloody Sunday and other events and aspects within the societal context of mid-20<sup>th</sup> century Soviet Russia, Shostakovich allows for a diverse and comprehensive range of interpretations of the work across different parts of society. This leads us in the modern world to be able to understand Shostakovich's perception on society in a way that only music can show, rendering Symphony No. 11 as an epic work of timeless significance.



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Write the question number(s) if applicable.

QUESTION  
NUMBER

91423



## Merit

**Subject:** Music Studies

**Standard:** 91423

**Total score:** 06

Q	Grade score	Marker commentary
One	M6	While this response is longer than is necessary, it clearly explains, in detail, the association between the music work and a specific event / occasion. There is good use of specific musical evidence combined with accurate use of musical terminology and the notated, annotated quotes add supporting evidence of this. At times the response presents some unsupported generalisations and provides more historical context than required to answer the question. Despite this, overall the work provides a clear understanding of the musical and contextual ideas presented.