

## MASTERING EQUIPMENT

*Merging Technologies Pyramix Digital Workstation  
Antelope Audio Isochrone 10M Rubidium Atomic Clock  
Hapi Digital Converter*

*Weiss Saracon Sample Rate Conversion Software*

*Weiss POW-r Dithering Software*

*Analog: Studer 810 Reel to Reel with  
Custom by JRF Magnetics & Siltech wiring  
Nagra 4S custom by JRF Magnetics*

*Aria tape head pre-amp by ATR Services  
Dehavilland Tape Head Pre-amp  
Retro Instruments 2A3 Dual-channel tube program equalizer*

*Power Sources: PS Audio P10 Power Plant  
and Power Plant 300*

*Power Cords: Purist Audio Design, Essential Sound Products,  
Speltz Anti-Cables*

*Vibration Control: Symposium Acoustics Rollerblocks,  
Ultra platforms, Svelte shelves*

*Sonic Studio CD.1 Professional CD Burner  
using Mitsui Gold Archival CD's*



HIGH DEFINITION TAPE TRANSFERS

# Shostakovich

## Symphony No. 5 in D minor, Op. 47

LEONARD BERNSTEIN / NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC

---

## Facts about this Recording

Transferred from a Columbia 4-track tape

Date of Recording: 1959

Engineer - Fred Plaut

Producer, Mixed By - John McClure



After his fall from favour in 1936 over the opera *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District* and the ballet *The Limpid Stream*, Shostakovich was under pressure to simplify his music and adapt it to classical models, heroic classicism being a prime characteristic of socialist realism. An adequate portrayal of socialist realism in music meant a monumental approach and an exalted rhetoric based on optimism. Shostakovich's music was considered too complex, technically, to fall under the strictures of socialist realism. *Lady Macbeth* had been derided in *Pravda* as "a farrago of chaotic, nonsensical sounds." At the meeting of the Composers' Union weeks after the *Pravda* article, Lev Knipper, Boris Asafyev and Ivan Dzerzhinsky suggested that the composer should be helped to "straighten himself out." Essentially a non-person in an era of unprecedented state terrorism, Shostakovich appeared to have no choice but to comply. Shostakovich sought the aid of Marshal Mikhail Tukhachevsky, one of the highest-ranking officers in the Red Army and since 1925 a patron of the composer. However, the marshal himself became a victim, convicted on a trumped-up charge of treason and shot. Many of Shostakovich's friends and relatives were arrested and disappeared, and for a year the composer feared the same would happen to him. He completed his Fourth Symphony in April but withdrew the work the following year while it was in rehearsal.

This was the situation Shostakovich faced in April 1937. If he were to do anything but yield to Party pressure, it would have to be subtle, as all eyes would be on him and whatever composition he wrote. His form of musical satire had been denounced and would not be tolerated so blatantly again. Falling back on venting his tragic side cautiously whilst otherwise toeing the line of socialist realism would amount to self-betrayal. He had to somehow turn the simplicity demanded by the authorities into a virtue, mocking it whilst in the process of turning it into great art.

One work, written 37 years earlier, had achieved this basic paradox—Mahler's Fourth Symphony. Mahler began his Fourth in a mode of apparently childish simplicity, at which initial audiences scoffed. However, Mahler's development subsequently indicated to listeners that the first impression was deceptive. Shostakovich referred to this opening passage from Mahler in his own symphony. Mahler's Fourth starts with 24 F-sharps tapped in consort with sleighbells; the vaulting canon theme which comprises the first four bars of Shostakovich's Fifth descends to a motto rhythm of three repeated As on the violins. These As would become much more important later in the symphony.

Four months after he withdrew his Fourth Symphony, he began writing his Fifth. This work, he hoped, would mark his political rehabilitation, at least outwardly coming up to party expectations. It could pass for an example of the heroic classicism demanded by official policy. He showed the first movement to Tikhon

Khrennikov, Aram Khachaturian, and Vissarian Shebalin in May, and the first two movements were performed in June for Nikolai Zhilyaev and Grigoriy Frid. In October, he and Nikita Bogoslovsky performed a four-handed piano arrangement, after which Yevgeniy Mravinsky and Shostakovich began preparing for the orchestral premiere. Shostakovich slimmed down his musical style considerably from the superabundance of the Fourth, with less orchestral color and a smaller breadth of scope. With this scaling down also came a refinement of his pithiness and a deepening of ambiguity. More importantly, Shostakovich found a language through which he could speak with power and eloquence over the following three decades. Paul Bekker, in describing Mahler's works, called this power *gesellschaftsbildende Kraft*, literally "community-moulding power." It is the power to weld an audience together, uplifting and moving them in a single emotion-controlled wave, sweeping aside all intellectual reservations.

The Symphony quotes Shostakovich's song *Vozrozhdeniye* (Op. 46 No. 1, composed in 1936–37), most notably in the last movement, which uses a poem by Alexander Pushkin (find text and a translation here) that deals with the matter of rebirth. This song is by some considered to be a vital clue to the interpretation and understanding of the whole symphony.<sup>[14]</sup> In addition, commentators have noted that Shostakovich incorporated a motif from the "Habanera" from Bizet's *Carmen* into the first movement, a reference to Shostakovich's earlier infatuation with a woman who refused his offer of marriage, and subsequently moved to Spain and married a man named Roman Carmen.

#### Reception

With the Fifth Symphony, Shostakovich gained an unprecedented triumph, with the music appealing equally—and remarkably—to both the public and official critics, though the overwhelming public response to the work initially aroused suspicions among certain officials. The then head of the Leningrad Philharmonic, Mikhail Chulaki, recalls that certain authorities bristled at Mravinsky's gesture of lifting the score above his head to the cheering audience, and a subsequent performance was attended by two plainly hostile officials, V.N. Surin and Boris M. Yarustovsky, who tried to claim in the face of the vociferous ovation given the symphony that the audience was made up of "hand-picked" Shostakovich supporters. Yet the authorities in due course claimed that they found everything they had demanded of Shostakovich restored in the symphony. Meanwhile the public heard it as an expression of the suffering to which it had been subjected by Stalin. The same work was essentially received two different ways.

# Shostakovich

## Symphony No. 5 in D minor, Op. 47

LEONARD BERNSTEIN / NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC

- 1. Moderato**
- 2. Allegretto**
- 3. Largo**
- 4. Allegro non troppo**

Transferred from a Columbia 4-track tape Date of Recording: 1959 Engineer - Fred Plaut Producer, Mixed By - John McClure

Please Note: In the interest of preserving the superb sound quality of these historic recordings, they have been preserved in their original, pristine state for maximum fidelity. Transferred from commercially released, analog reel-to-reel tapes (some of which are more than 50 years old), the recordings themselves can be subject to certain "artifacts" which are an inseparable part of the original analog recording process, such as tape "hiss" or other defects, and these may be audible on certain music tracks.

Because your CD or DVD-A was individually "burned" in order to realize superior sound quality to stamped, mass-produced versions, microscopic cosmetic blemishes may be visible. Please regard these tiny marks as evidence of the "human touch" in the care and individual attention that each and every HDTT disc receives during its very demanding manufacturing process.



For more info e-mail us:  
[admin@highdeftapetransfers.com](mailto:admin@highdeftapetransfers.com)  
or visit our website:  
[www.highdeftapetransfers.com](http://www.highdeftapetransfers.com)