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Clash of Expectations: The Receptions of Shostakovich's Seventh and Eighth Symphonies in the US and the Soviet Union

Rosa Kleinman
Illinois Wesleyan University

Stephen Press, Faculty Advisor
Illinois Wesleyan University

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Poster Presentation O5.4

**CLASH OF EXPECTATIONS: THE RECEPTIONS OF SHOSTAKOVICH'S
SEVENTH AND EIGHTH SYMPHONIES IN THE US AND THE SOVIET UNION**

Rosa Kleinman and Stephen Press*
School of Music, Illinois Wesleyan University

This paper is a study of the critical reception of Shostakovich's Seventh and Eighth Symphonies. Both were written at the height of World War II. Shostakovich's Seventh was a Symphony that ideologically defeated Hitler's fascism. It was highly acclaimed in the Soviet Union and by American audiences, but attacked by some American critics for both its program and mediocre quality. Still, it was enormously successful and it prompted an equally monumental sequel, the Eighth Symphony. Soon after the premiere, the Eighth dismissed as tragic, formalistic, and individualistic by the Soviet cultural apparatus, but that did not quell America's interest. Americans greeted it with the same curiosity as before and critics acknowledged a marked improvement. What spawned different reactions from different camps? The successes and failures of the Symphonies must be examined in relation to historical context and cultural expectations.