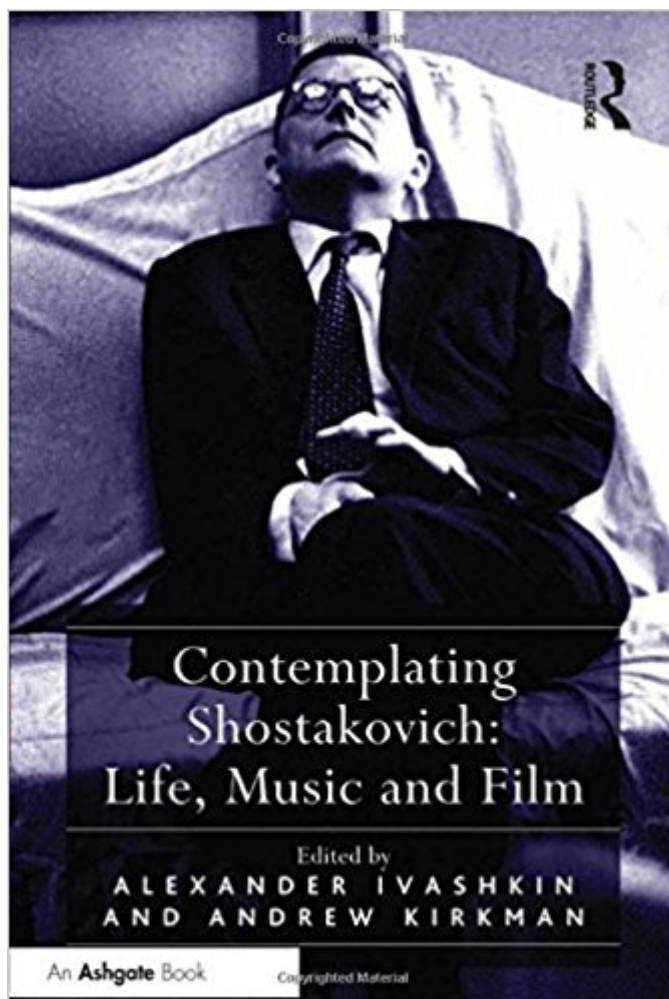


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# Contemplating Shostakovich: Life, Music And Film



## Synopsis

Contemplating Shostakovich marks an important new stage in the understanding of Shostakovich and his working environment. Each chapter covers aspects of the composer's output in the context of his life and cultural milieu. The contributions uncover 'outside' stimuli behind Shostakovich's works, allowing the reader to perceive the motivations behind his artistic choices; at the same time, the nature of those choices offers insights into the workings of the larger world - cultural, social, political - that he inhabited. Thus his often ostensibly quirky choices are revealed as responses - by turns sentimental, moving, sardonic and angry - to the particular conditions, with all their absurdities and contradictions, that he had to negotiate. Here we see the composer emerging from the role of tortured loner of older narratives into that of the gregarious and engaged member of his society that, for better and worse, characterized the everyday reality of his life. This invaluable collection offers remarkable new insight, in both depth and range, into the nature of Shostakovich's working circumstances and of his response to them. The collection contains the seeds for a wide range of new directions in the study of Shostakovich's works and the larger contexts of their creation and reception.

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## Customer Reviews

'... a highly readable excellently edited collection and an important contribution to the burgeoning science of 'Shostakovichology'.' Russian Review 'Contemplating Shostakovich: Life, Music and Film, edited by Alexander Ivashkin and Andrew Kirkman, expertly fills gaps in our knowledge of the

composer, his times and his music, bringing Western (U.S. and British) and Russian scholars together in a robust collection ... a collection that contains a healthy mix of approaches to research and contains essays that will have value to all interested in the continued study of Shostakovich's life and his music, and the cultures in which it lives'. DSCH Journal '... Contemplating Shostakovich illuminates key works through detailed interpretations rooted in a strong command of the extensive secondary literature'. Philip Ross Bullock, Slavonic and East European Review 'Dealing largely with musical style and compositional method, Contemplating Shostakovich is satisfyingly unified, remaining close to the musical text and "questions of personal and political exegesis". The image of the composer that emerges - one who was a product of Soviet culture rather than a victim of it-is familiar, but the volume nevertheless abounds in new details and insights.' Slavic Review

Alexander Ivashkin was a professional cellist with an international career. He was Professor of Music, Director of Classical Performance and Director of the Centre for Russian Music at Goldsmiths, University of London. He recorded over forty award-winning CDs on Chandos, Naxos and BMG, and published books on Penderecki, Ives, Schnittke and Rostropovich. Andrew Kirkman is Peyton and Barber Professor of Music at the University of Birmingham. As a musicologist, he specializes in music of the fifteenth century, and his book *The Cultural Life of the Early Polyphonic Mass: Medieval Context to Modern Revival* was recently published. He is an active performer of music from the fifteenth to the twentieth century, and his Renaissance vocal ensemble, 'The Binchois Consort', has to date recorded nine highly-acclaimed discs on the Hyperion label.

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