

Three Lives of Dmitry Shostakovich – First Life:

Muddle Instead of Music, Episode 1

Tři životy Dmitrije Šostakoviče - Život první: Chaos místo hudby

The original radio series outlines the creative path of the genius composer and his clash with the totalitarian power.

In the first part, set at the start of the Stalinist terror, we witness the composer's fall after a harsh rejection of his opera *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*. The opera had been hugely successful around the world in the previous two years until Stalin came to see it at the start of January 1936. He left the performance before the end and *Pravda* newspaper published a denouncing article headlined 'Muddle instead of Music' which sharply criticised the work and its composer. The absurd accusation of formalism means the whole Soviet music society turns its back on Shostakovich. Feeling helpless and worrying about the destiny of his other music works, especially the nascent *Fourth Symphony*, and faced with the growing political pressure, the composer is now also worried for the safety of his family and for his life.

The second part of the series called *The Blockade* describes the writing of Shostakovich's probably best-known work – the *Leningrad Symphony*.

Part three maps the events of 1948 when the composer was deeply affected by the repressions of the *Zhdan* cultural doctrine.

Lukáš Hlavica cast Ondřej Brousek as the main character of the revered and hated composer. He was outstanding in his performance and he also played all the prescribed piano passages.

Submitting organisation:	Český rozhlas - Czech Radio
Contact:	Alena Righini Golková – alena.righinigolkova@rozhlas.cz
Author:	Pavel Molek
Director:	Lukáš Hlavica
Sound:	Jitka Kundrumová, Jakub Rataj
Commissioning editor:	Klára Novotná
Dramaturg:	Klára Novotná
Producer:	Jana Knappová
Production Company:	Czech Radio
Key staff:	Ondřej Brousek
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