

[Free PDF File] Symphony for the City of the Dead: Dmitri Shostakovich and the Siege of Leningrad

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In September 1941, Adolf Hitler's Wehrmacht surrounded Leningrad in what was to become one of the longest and most destructive sieges in Western history - almost three years of bombardment and starvation that culminated in the harsh winter of 1943-1944. More than a million citizens perished. Survivors recall corpses littering the frozen streets, their relatives having neither the means nor the strength to bury them. Residents burned books, furniture, and floorboards to keep warm; they ate family pets and - eventually - one another to stay alive. Trapped between the Nazi invading force and the Soviet government itself was composer Dmitri Shostakovich, who would write a symphony that roused, rallied, eulogized, and commemorated his fellow citizens - the Leningrad Symphony, which came to occupy a surprising place of prominence in the eventual Allied victory. This is the true story of a city under siege: the triumph of bravery and defiance in the face of terrifying odds. It is also a look at the power - and layered meaning - of music in beleaguered lives. Symphony for the City of the Dead is a masterwork thrillingly told and impeccably researched by National Book Award-winning author M. T. Anderson.

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