



St. Louis Symphony  
Orchestra

stéphane denève : music director



We are the squeak  
of the clarinet.  
Hidden by the  
drums loud to pump  
the only  
The only safety  
The only life she had,  
Was destroyed



# express the music 2022

**Inspire Creativity**

An educational program for grades 6-12 presented by the  
**St. Louis Symphony  
Volunteer Association**

Sponsored by  
**Employees Community Fund  
of Boeing St. Louis**

## A special invitation for teachers and student writers

Showcase your students' imagination and creativity with *Express the Music*, now in its 25th year of celebrating poetry and prose from public, private, parochial, and homeschools throughout the region. This year, this FREE cross-curricular writing competition invites students in grades 6-12 to discover the fourth movement of **Dmitri Shostakovich's Symphony No. 5** and respond with poetry or prose that expresses creative thought and emotion inspired by the music.

### How it Works

Students listen, write, edit, and share—teachers encourage creativity and choose the prose and poetry to submit.

Guided by you, students listen to this year's musical selection, the fourth movement of Dmitri Shostakovich's Symphony No. 5, and respond to its impact on them through creative writing—prose or poetry. Then, you choose and submit up to seven (7) students' compositions per class, which can include both prose and poetry in a mix you decide. If you have more than one class, seven entries may be submitted from each of your classes. Information about this year's musical selection is at the end of this document.

### Where to Find the Music

1. YouTube:  
[New York Philharmonic, Leonard Bernstein, conductor](#)
2. [Spotify](#)
3. Your school's music teacher
4. Your school or local library

### How to Prepare & Submit Entries

Prepare and submit entries **online**.

- Visit [slo.org/express](https://slo.org/express) to access the submission platform beginning in late October.
- Complete one Entrant Form, which requires teacher and school information. If you have more than one class, please complete a separate Entrant Form for each class.
- Complete one Submission Form for each student entry, which requires student and composition information.
- Please double check the spelling of each student's name before hitting submit. Student names will be reproduced exactly as entered online.
- If you are unable to access the online platform, please contact [svaexpressthemusic@slo.org](mailto:svaexpressthemusic@slo.org).

### Entry Requirements

Submit up to seven (7) entries per class. If you have more than one class, seven entries may be submitted from each of your classes.

Each entry must fulfill the following requirements:

- Entries must be word-processed, double-spaced in an 8.5" x 11" sized document.
- Font size must be black in 12pt. with page margins of 1" on all sides.
- File type must be .doc, .docx, or .pdf.
- Entries must be limited to the following lengths:
  - Junior Division (Grades 6-8): 400 words
  - Senior Division (Grades 9-12): 600 words
- No illustrations or embellishments.
- The student's name must not appear in the submitted composition document file. Student names should only appear in online Submission Forms.

Do not submit previously published entries or works entered in other competitions. The SLSO and *Express the Music* retain the right to use and republish submitted works at will.

**All entries must be submitted online by Friday, January 21, 2022.**

Questions? Call 314-286-4190 or email [svaexpressthemusic@slo.org](mailto:svaexpressthemusic@slo.org).

### Judging

Judges will not be given the name, grade level, or school of the writer. Poems and prose entries will be judged by separate panels. Each entry goes through preliminary judging first. Finalists selected by the preliminary judging panel will then be evaluated by a separate, final-judging panel of expert writers and editors.

## Judging *continued*

Our judges will rate the entries on four dimensions:

1. an engaging and clear voice
2. responsiveness to the musical selection
3. a structure that keeps readers involved
4. good writing mechanics that support the voice—the writer's style or the composition's point of view.

Finalists will be announced in late February.

## Awards Ceremony and Prizes

All finalists will receive certificates of merit in a public ceremony during a Youth Orchestra Concert at Powell Hall at 3:00pm on **Sunday, March 27, 2022**, and their entries will be compiled and published on the SLSO website.

Cash prizes for the top three entries in each category—prose and poetry—will be awarded:

### Junior Division (Grades 6-8):

- 1st place for Prose: \$200 / for Poetry: \$200
- 2nd place for Prose: \$100 / for Poetry: \$100
- 3rd place for Prose: \$75 / for Poetry: \$75

### Senior Division (Grades 9-12):

- 1st place for Prose: \$400 / for Poetry: \$400
- 2nd place for Prose: \$200 / for Poetry: \$200
- 3rd place for Prose: \$100 / for Poetry: \$100

## Tips for Teachers

- Use *Express the Music* for authentic cross-curricular collaboration. Have students listen to the piece and start their writing in music class, then revise and edit in English class.
- Set your usual high expectations. Encourage students to write expressively and refine their writing with your input and editing. Peer feedback on drafts is usually helpful as well. The judges are looking for creative writing that is influenced by the musical selection's impact on listeners.
- Allow enough time for students to listen to the music more than once to explore the emotions and thoughts that form in their minds. They will become more familiar and comfortable with it through repeated listening.
- Dedicate specific class time to this project for the most thorough experience.
- Entries will be reproduced "as is." Help students edit carefully for mechanics such as spelling, grammar, and spacing on the page.
- Encourage students to write from the heart rather than to fit a rubric. The music is a way to spark their creativity, rather than something to be analyzed.

- Discuss the composer's life, culture, and world events that happened during their lifetime **ONLY AFTER** students have completed their compositions to ensure that the students' work reflects their own personal and individual emotions and thoughts about the musical selection.
- Play the musical selection for the students or have them listen at home on good quality audio equipment.

## Tips for Writers

- Listen to the music several times to get a sense its feelings. Write from your own experience, using images that evoke feelings like those, rather than writing an analysis of the music.
- Some prose writers make a rough outline or storyboard before they start. Good writing has "good bones."
- If you are writing a poem, and want to focus on one musical effect, ask yourself: What mood dominates the musical experience you are having for the whole piece? You can concentrate the poem on that, or you can create a longer, more narrative poem in response to the changes in the music.
- If a story has human characters, create a brief biographical description of each one early, as you draft your story.
- Go for clarity, using the voice you choose for this project. Cutting out or altering text that distracts or confuses readers focuses the writing and promotes clarity.

## A Sample "Feelings Map"

Most music triggers a variety of responses as it goes along. Keeping track of feelings as they change in the music might help listeners grasp the emotional structure of the music in more detail. Use adjectives or adverbs to create this "feelings map" of the music. Then, draft a story or poem that reflects the emotional structure of the music.

Here is an example "feelings map" from an imaginary musical work, not from this year's selection:

Opening – calm, peaceful  
Then – getting agitated, aggressive  
Peaceful for a while  
Becoming agitated, confusing  
Majestic  
Suddenly – calm, maybe sad  
Picking up speed – optimistic, bright, cheerful  
Calming down – the peaceful feel comes back  
Ends softly, maybe hopeful

## About the Piece and the Composer

Note: Discuss the composer's life, culture, and world events that happened during their lifetime ONLY AFTER students have completed their compositions to ensure that the students' work reflects their own personal and individual emotions and thoughts about the musical selection.

Born in Saint Petersburg, Russia on September 25, 1906, Dmitri Shostakovich was a Russian composer and pianist. He studied piano and composition—how to write music—from a young age, and entered the Petrograd Conservatory, a college for the study of classical music and other arts, at age 13. His early musical compositions were well-received.

In the middle of his career, Shostakovich's compositions began to displease the Soviet government, which was led by Joseph Stalin. Stalin wanted Soviet composers to write music that was joyful and optimistic, but Shostakovich often did the opposite. He expressed the fear and difficulty of living in the Soviet Union during Stalin's leadership. Some of Shostakovich's works were even banned for being too critical of the Soviet government.

Shostakovich regained approval with the 1937 premier of his dramatic Symphony No. 5. The symphony, a complex musical composition written for a full orchestra to perform, was composed for the 20th anniversary of the 1917 Russian Revolution and has many details that represent the dark times citizens of the Soviet Union were experiencing. The citizens of the Soviet Union picked up on these themes, and highly praised the piece. But because Shostakovich wrote the symphony's finale to sound majestic and triumphant, Stalin was tricked into believing the symphony was a celebration of the Soviet government. Stalin praised the work and Shostakovich received official approval from the government even though his composition was actually very critical of Stalin's leadership.

Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony quotes his own song, *Vozrozhdenije* ("Revival" or "Rebirth"), which is also the setting of [a poem about rebirth by Alexander Pushkin](#). Though both contain music, a song is different from a symphony. Songs are usually much shorter than symphonies, and typically include words to accompany, or be sung along to, the music.

## State Standards for English Language Arts and Music

*Express the Music* fulfills components of the Missouri grade-level expectations in English Language Arts and Music, as well as the Illinois Learning Standards.

### [Missouri English Language Arts Learning Standards](#)

W2A, W3A

### [Missouri Music Learning Standards](#)

MU:Cn11A.E.5a-IIIa, MU:Cr1A.C.I-II, MU:Cn11A.H.5a-III

### [Illinois English Language Arts Learning Standards](#)

Text Types and Purposes

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6-12.3

Production and Distribution of Writing

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6-12.4, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6-12.5

Range of Writing

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6-12.10

### [Illinois Fine Arts Learning Standards](#)

MU.Re7.1, MU.Re8.1, MU.Cn11.1