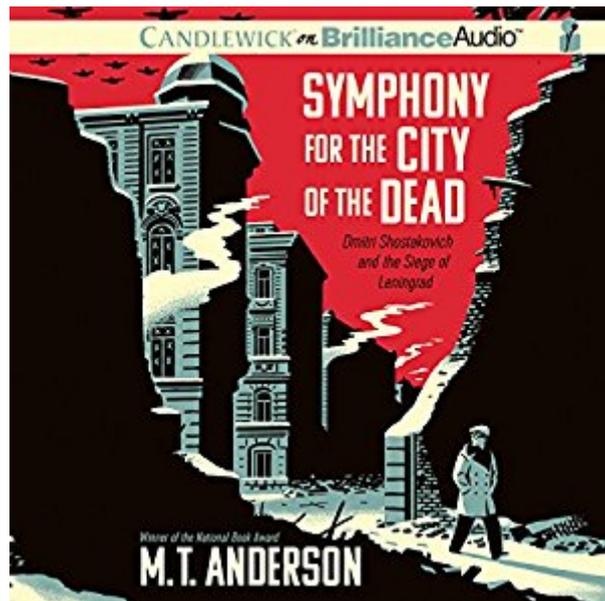


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# Symphony For The City Of The Dead: Dmitri Shostakovich And The Siege Of Leningrad



## Synopsis

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.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Extreme Situations  
*Symphony for the City of the Dead*. Dmitri Shostakovich and the Siege of Leningrad  
I can recommend this very readable book with some reservations about the reader-level promoted for it--and with urgent references to reviews of other books on the subject, given below. This story goes far beyond what its title promises, providing pretty much a complete biography of Shostakovich and a history of Russia and the Soviet Union from before the 1905

Revolution and the Thaw following the death of Stalin. Anderson gives us a harrowing tale of extreme cruelty on the part of both Stalin and Hitler, as well as manipulation of Stalin by Hitler. Stalin brought the invasion and near defeat of his country on himself by his extreme purges of his own military and his party in the late 1930s, killing off his own best generals, who believed in the effectiveness of tanks rather than horses; and Hitler cooperated in framing the best general of all. After breaking the nonaggression pact between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, Hitler's army penetrated far into Russia and the northern city of Leningrad (now St. Petersburg) and that city experienced the longest siege in military history: nine hundred days. Hitler hoped to starve the inhabitants rather than conquer them and nearly succeeded. Huge numbers did starve, and starvation was followed by widespread cannibalism. Harrowing accounts of cannibalism and graphic accounts of torture by the Soviet secret police are matters calculated to give one nightmares, and I have strong doubts about the suitability of this book for teenagers. In any case, I would not recommend it for anyone under seventeen.

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