**Year 13 Listening**

**Shostakovich Symphony No.5 – movement 4 (1937)**

After his opera *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*, Shostakovich was under pressure to simplify his music and adopt a more ‘classical’ model, and a more ‘Heroic’ sound that would glorify the state. An acceptable portrayal of socialist realism in music meant an approach based on optimism. Shostakovich's music was considered too complex, technically, to be considered ‘socialist realism’. *Lady Macbeth* had been denounced in the Russian press as "a farrago of chaotic, nonsensical sounds." Shostakovich appeared to have no choice but to comply.

If he were to do anything but yield to political pressure, it would have to be subtle, as all eyes would be on him and whatever composition he wrote. His form of musical satire had been denounced and would not be tolerated so blatantly again. Falling back on venting his tragic side cautiously whilst otherwise toeing the line of socialist realism would amount to self-betrayal. He had to somehow turn the simplicity demanded by the authorities into a virtue, mocking it whilst in the process of turning it into great art.

His symphony number 5 was considered by some to be a genuine compliance with the ‘socialist realism’ that was expected and that the symphony was genuinely written to glorify the state.

Others consider that it was its tone is one of sarcasm and is so overtly nationalistic that the work is subtly mocking the Stalin regime rather than praising it.

***Q – Which of these views do you agree with and what has led you to this conclusion?***

***(In your answer, refer to the music, using appropriate terminology and, where appropriate, referring to specific instrumentation)***