

# Abstracts

Aleš Březina: Martinů's Place in Musical History. Prolegomena to a Problem-Oriented Essay on the Composer

Bohuslav Martinů wrote more than four hundred works encompassing all forms and genres of music. Characteristic of his output are its unusual breadth in terms of style, compositional technique, form and genre, and the compositional virtuosity that he acquired through continuous experimentation during the early (Prague) and middle (Paris) phases of his career then further refined in his mature and late works (New York, Rome, Nice, Basel). The difficulty of access to many scores results in far-from-complete knowledge of his many-layered output and prevents both musicologists and performers from making objective evaluations of his compositional bequest. They often create the impression of disparate, non-linear compositional development. The Martinů Institute in Prague directs the continual musicological research prepares a complete critical edition of his works.

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Sandra Bergmannová: Sinfonic Compositions of the Czech Period. An Insight into Martinů's Early Work

The compositions in Bohuslav Martinů's estate are so extensive that one scholar's life will not suffice to deal with all his works. Hence, one mostly concentrates on those of his works composed between 1923 and 1959. Because of this, scholars easily miss the important fact that the composer's life in Bohemia until 1923, that is, before his emigration for Paris, encompasses a long creative period of 150 compositions. In my essay, I intend to explain Martinů's musical thinking as shown in the sinfonic compositions of his youth. Even if there is no real, continuous progress to be detected in those works, the music is of great documentary value for an examination of his creative development, and it illustrates for us some tendencies of his later periods, especially with respect to the last years of his life.

Übersetzung: Claudia Brusdeylins

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Eva Velická: String Trio No. 1. The Unknown Turning Point in Bohuslav Martinů's Work of the 1920s

*String Trio No. 1*, H. 136, composed in late 1923 and early 1924, is the first work which Martinů wrote in Paris. The manuscript was rediscovered after many years by musicologist Eva Velická in 2005 in Copenhagen. Martinů

arrived in Paris in the autumn of 1923 to study with the French composer Albert Roussel. However, a short-term stay in Paris turned out to last 17 years, and Martinů's subsequent life and work are closely associated with the French capital. In the case of *String Trio No. 1*, it is therefore fascinating to contemplate the extent to which he absorbed the new Parisian influences, and to what degree changes occurred in his compositional style. This short piece of three movements is without doubt the direct predecessor of his mature chamber works.

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Stefan Weiss: Tradition and Revolution in Martinů's Early Parisian String Quartets

In his early Parisian years, when he was under the strong influence of Stravinsky, the objectivist aesthetic of the latter affected Martinů deeply. In this essay, an attempt is made to trace Martinů's reaction to this new tendency through the medium of the string quartet. While his Second Quartet (1925) is replete of Stravinskyisms, to the point of imitating the harmonic facture of the opening of his idol's *Trois pièces* (1914), by the Third Quartet (1929) the Czech composer has come free from an all too close adaptation of his model. In both works, however, the objectivist distance to the traditional quartet ideal is fused paradoxically with an adherence to the romantic legacy.

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Ivana Rentsch: The Poetics of the Opera. Bohuslav Martinů's Drama Aesthetics as an Alternative Draft to Musical Drama

Martinů's aim of creating a veritable anti-*«Gesamtkunstwerk»* was closely connected with his conception of music which was – completely in the classical manner – committed to *«pure music»*. He sought to create the prerequisite for a tonal language which, in spite of being placed in the context of the stage, evaded any psychologising function. This essay sets out to establish that the principles of opera aesthetics Martinů referred to in the first half of the 1930s and which he – in the context of *Hry o Marii* – substantiated with a remarkable wealth of feuilletonistic comments, did indeed determine his later dramatic works, as the example of his last opera, *The Greek Passion* (1957), shows.

Übersetzung: Claudia Brusdeylins

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Klaus Döge: Expressing the Awful Horror. Comments on Martinů's *Memorial to Lidice*

In his *Memorial to Lidice* (composed in the summer of 1943) Martinů pays tribute to the complete extinction of the Czech village Lidice and its inhabitants

by the Nazis. In the composition he uses – as he has never done before in this way – many traditional idioms and quotation-like elements in order to express all the sadness, fright and pain of his subject.

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Daniela Philippi: Martinů's Concerto Music for Chamber Orchestra and the Importance of the Piano

In quality as well as in quantity, the piano plays a leading part in the complete works of Martinů. In this context, the concerto pieces for chamber orchestra with piano composed between 1925 and 1941 during the Paris period constitute a special group. The compositions gave the piano a great variety of different tasks which were, at that time, unique. For example, the musical function of the piano within a piece changes from presenting the melody to being the rhythm instrument and from playing a harmonic or continuo part to playing the solo part. This variety of compositional tools shall be exemplified with the *Jazz Suite* (H 172) and the *Double Concerto* (H 271).

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Wolfgang Rathert: Bohuslav Martinů's Symphonies. A Contribution to American Musical History?

In contrast to the symphonies of Schostakowitsch or the neo-classicistic symphonic works of Stravinsky, Bartók, or Hindemith Martinů's six symphonies haven't yet found their place in the concert hall repertoire. This seems highly paradox, since these works – all of them written during Martinů's World War II exile in the United States – are characterized by accessible traditional stylistic and formal approaches allowing orchestras to display as well instrumental virtuosity as sound brilliance. But in fact, Martinů's symphonies suffer from an ambiguous historical place: Following the stylistic Art Deco ideal of his French teacher Albert Roussel and influenced partly by Dvorak, partly by Mahler's expressive and monumental elevation of the Symphony, they address mainly European ears. On the other hand Martinů's search for an »impersonal« musical language was committed to programmatic ideas coming up in the New Deal era and propagated by leading American composers like Copland. Thus, a deeper understanding and juster reception of Martinů's symphonies demands a fresh perspective which locates these works within a transatlantic music history of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

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Jarmila Gabrielová: On Martinů's Reception in Bohemia

The aim of this article is to outline changes in the reception of Bohuslav Martinů's artistic personality and œuvre in Bohemia during his lifetime and imme-

diately after his death, i.e. between 1918/1919 and 1959/1960. The earliest date refers to Martinů's first public appearance as a composer in Prague, the latest to his (not attained) 70<sup>th</sup> birthday. The article is based on selected textual sources, i.e. on news, reviews and polemics published in contemporary daily newspapers (*Lidové noviny*, *Národní listy*, *Právo lidu*, *Venkov*, among others) and music journals (*Der Auftakt*, *Tempo – Listy Hudební matice* and *Hudební rozhledy*) as well as on major book publications by Vladimír Helfert, Miloš Šafránek, Harry Halbreich, Jaroslav Mihule, and others. The history of the Martinů reception in Bohemia reflects both the composer's various places of residence and work and the turbulent history of his native country and of Europe in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The examination shows that from the spectacular premiere of his *Czech Rhapsody* (H 118) in January 1919 through the early 1920s, Martinů was warmly accepted as a young and promising composer, although still immature in terms of individual style. After the 'scandalous' premiere of his *Half-time* (H 142) in December 1924, he was suddenly subjected to harsh criticism and rejected as a provoking modernist and ardent adherent of Igor Stravinsky. The reputation of a genuinely national composer, which Martinů earned in the 1930s, was mostly based on his stage and vocal works on folk and traditional texts and subjects, among them *Špalíček* (*The Chap-Book*, H 214), *Hry o Marii* (*The Miracles of Mary*, H 236), *Hlas lesa* (*The Voice of the Forest*, H 243), *Veselohra na mostě* (*Comedy on the Bridge*, H 247), or *Kytice* (*Bouquet of Flowers*, H 260). During World War II, public performances of Martinů's music were forbidden in the so-called »Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia«. The fifteen post-war years showed the gradually renewed interest in Martinů and his recent large works, his temporary banishment after the communist coup in February 1948, and, finally, his partial rehabilitation from 1953/1954 on.