



Trio Sonata No. 5 for Two Oboes, Bassoon and Continuo in F major, ZWV.181

Jan Dismas Zelenka (1679-1745)

Composed in 1720-1721.

Jan Dismas Zelenka was baptized (and probably born) on October 16, 1679 in Lounovice, Bohemia to Jiri Zelenka, the town organist, who almost certainly gave the boy his earliest training. Jan probably attended the Jesuit college in Prague known as the Clementinum (he wrote three cantatas for the school's chapel in later years), but the first records of his life do not appear until 1709, when, at age thirty, he was known to have been in the service of Count Ludwig Joseph Hartig in Prague. The following year he joined the musical establishment of the Elector Friedrich August in Dresden as a double bass player. Though the state of Zelenka's formal training at that time is unknown, he may well have been largely self-taught in composition, since he requested and was granted a year's leave of absence in 1715 (when he was 35!) to polish his counterpoint in Vienna with the renowned pedagogue Johann Joseph Fux, who praised his work.

Zelenka rejoined the court orchestra the following year, but left the Elector's service again for a short time and returned to Vienna for more study with Fux. When he returned to Dresden in 1717, Zelenka discovered that Johann David Heinichen had been installed as court *Kapellmeister* and composer of church music. In recognition of his skill and his education in the contrapuntal genres, Zelenka was appointed Heinichen's assistant. Zelenka's efforts were apparently little appreciated in Dresden, however, because when Heinichen died in 1729, his petition for promotion to the vacant post was passed over in favor of Johann Adolph Hasse, who had built a flashy reputation for his operas and sacred music both in Hamburg and Italy. Despite a substantial salary increase and a new title, Zelenka suffered from an understandable depression in his later years, and composed little. He died in Dresden on December 22, 1745.

Zelenka's six trio sonatas are thought to have been composed in 1720-1721, perhaps as part of his duties at the Dresden court, perhaps for an extended visit he made to Prague at that time. They all follow the four-movement plan of the *sonata da chiesa* ("church sonata") perfected by Arcangelo Corelli nearly forty years earlier except for the Sonata No. 5 in F major, which is in the three-movement, fast-slow-fast configuration familiar from Vivaldi's concertos. The form of the Fifth Sonata's opening Allegro is based on the recurrences of the long unison theme stated at the outset; the intervening episodes are filled with conversational counterpoint for the winds. The expressive Adagio is one of Zelenka's most daring exercises in chromatic harmony. The virtuosic finale is impelled by a rhythmic vibrancy sprung from the chain of syncopations embedded in its principal theme.

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12 Miniatures for Flute and Piano, Op. 29 **Mieczysław Weinberg (Moisei Vainberg) (1919-1996)**

Composed in 1945.

Mieczysław Weinberg occupied one of the most unlikely career niches of any 20th-century musician: a Polish-born Jewish refugee who became one of the Soviet Union's most distinguished composers. Weinberg, born in Warsaw on December 8, 1919 (he is also known by his adopted Russian name, Moisei Vainberg), came from a musical family and studied piano and composition at the local conservatory. Soon after his graduation in 1939, he fled before the Nazi invasion of Poland to Minsk, where he became a student of Vassily Zolotarev. Weinberg lived in Tashkent from 1941 to 1943 and then settled in Moscow, where he befriended Shostakovich and other leading Soviet musicians and quickly rose to prominence. He managed to escape the 1948 purges that withered the spirits and careers of many eminent Soviet musicians by adhering to a conservative idiom deemed appropriate by the authorities, but he was jailed in 1953 on a trumped-up charge of "Jewish bourgeois nationalism." (Not only had Weinberg

been shadowed by the secret police ever since his father-in-law, Solomon Mikhoels, the celebrated Jewish actor and artistic director of the Moscow State Jewish Theater, was executed on Stalin's order in January 1948, but his wife's uncle, a physician at the Kremlin, had recently been labeled an "enemy of the people.") Shostakovich came to his defense and he was released after eleven weeks in prison. Weinberg lived quietly thereafter in Moscow and composed prolifically until his death in 1996, creating a large catalog of works that contains six operas, four operettas, three ballets, 25 symphonies (many with programmatic associations, including one "In Memory of Dmitri Shostakovich"), numerous concerted compositions, seventeen string quartets, much chamber music, songs, choral works, piano pieces, and incidental and film music. "In his music," wrote Russian-born musicologist and lexicographer Nicholas Slonimsky, "he followed the precepts of 'social realism' in its ethnic aspects; according to the subject of the composition, he made use of Jewish, Polish, Moldavian or Armenian folk melos, in tasteful harmonic arrangements devoid of abrasive dissonances."

Weinberg composed the *12 Miniatures for Flute and Piano* late in 1945, a time in Russia of mingled hope — World War II had ended in Europe in May and in Japan in September — and fear, as Stalin was quickly tightening his iron grasp on the Soviet Union's politics, culture and life. That time's mixed emotions were reflected personally in Weinberg, who was still mourning the loss of his family in Poland in the Holocaust and concerned about Russia's stubbornly persistent anti-Semitism, but then also celebrating both the return of peace and his recent wedding. The stimulus for the *12 Miniatures* and the *Five Pieces for Flute and Piano* he wrote two years later is uncertain, though he may have been encouraged in the effort by Vladimir Tsybin, the highly respected flute professor at the Moscow Conservatory. (A national flute competition named for him is held every three years in Moscow.) The *12 Miniatures* would certainly be well suited for student use, with only the florid *Introduction* and showy *Etude* providing much technical challenge, but their range of moods and styles as reflected by their titles — *Introduction, Arietta, Burlesque, Capriccio, Nocturne, Waltz, Ode, Duet, Barcarole, Etude, Adagio, Pastorale* — requires a subtle and sensitive musicality.



Four Madrigals for Oboe, Clarinet and Bassoon **Bohuslav Martinů (1890-1959)**

Composed in 1937.

Premiered in 1938 in Paris by the Trio d'Anches.

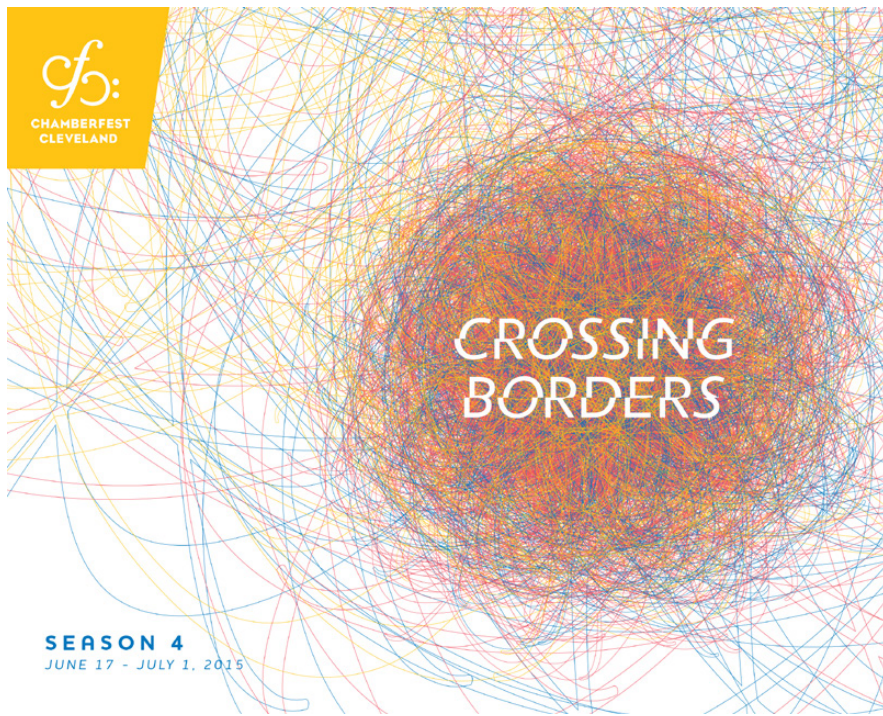
Bohuslav Martinů was born in the Czech village of Policka in the church tower where his father was watchman and keeper. As a boy, Bohuslav took violin lessons, but his real interest was in composition. He started composing at age ten, and studied first at the Prague Conservatory (from 1906 until 1910) and then privately with Josef Suk before winning a small scholarship that enabled him to settle in Paris in the summer of 1923. Martinů lived there in great poverty for seventeen years, but he was invigorated by the heady artistic atmosphere of the French capital. One of the surprising results of his Parisian residence was a new-found interest in the music of his homeland; ironically, it was only when Martinů left Czechoslovakia that he became a nationalist composer. Blacklisted by the Nazis, he fled from Paris in June 1940, and emigrated to America the following year. Though his popularity and the demand for new

works spread quickly in the New World, Martinů's heart remained in Czechoslovakia. An invitation to teach at the Prague Conservatory came after World War II, but he was unable to accept it because of the establishment of the communist regime in 1947. Instead, he took a summer teaching post at Tanglewood and joined the music faculty of Princeton University the following year. He left that post in 1953 and moved to Nice for two years, but returned in 1955 to teach at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia. The following year he accepted a faculty position at the American Academy in Rome. He died in Liestal, Switzerland in 1959.

Martinů first became acquainted with the genre of the Elizabethan madrigal in the early 1920s, when the touring English Singers performed in Prague. He was attracted to the rich textures created by the madrigal's interweaving lines, and polyphonic devices are given greater prominence in his works of the following years. In 1937, he stretched the original vocal associations of the title to instrumental music by applying it to a four-movement trio for oboe, clarinet and bassoon to denote the work's multi-voiced fabric. In 1942, he wrote a *Madrigal-Sonata* for Flute, Violin and Piano, and a year later composed the *Five Madrigal Stanzas* for Violin and Piano. For chorus, he created sets of *Czech Madrigals* in 1939 and 1948; the *Four Madrigals on Moravian Folk Poetry* were among his last completed compositions.

Martinů wrote his *Four Madrigals* for Oboe, Clarinet and Bassoon in Nice in the summer of 1937 for the Paris-based Trio d'Anches ("Woodwind Trio"), who gave the premiere the following year. The carefully sculpted contrapuntal lines of the opening movement address each other in the buoyant sprung rhythms that characterize much of his writing. The *Lento* may trace its veiled, introspective mood to the opera *Juliette*, based on Georges Neveux's hallucinatory play *Juliette, ou La cle des songes* ("*Juliette, or The Key of Dreams*"), which Martinů had composed just before the *Four Madrigals*. The third movement balances the trills and quicksilver motion of its outer sections with a march-like central trio. The finale is a *moto perpetuo* showpiece for woodwind ensemble.

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Piano Quartet in E-flat major, K. 493 Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Composed in 1786.

As Mozart reached his full maturity in the years after arriving in Vienna in 1781, his most expressive manner of writing, whose chief evidences are the use of minor modes, chromaticism, rich counterpoint and thorough thematic development, appeared in his compositions with increasing frequency. Among the most important harbingers of the shift in Mozart's musical language was the G minor Quartet for Piano, Violin, Viola and Cello (K. 478), which he completed on October 16, 1785 in response to a commission for three such works from the publisher Franz Hoffmeister. Hoffmeister had only entered the business a year earlier, and Mozart's extraordinary and disturbing score, for which the publisher saw little market, threw a fright into him. "Write more popularly, or else I can neither print nor pay for anything of yours!" he admonished. Mozart cast some quaint expletives upon the publisher's head, and said it was fine with him if the contract was canceled. It was. (Composer and publisher remained friends and associates, however. The following year,

Hoffmeister brought out the Quartet in D major, K. 499, which still bears his name as sobriquet.) Rather surprisingly, then, Mozart completed another piano quartet, one in E-flat major (K. 493), eight months later in Vienna, on June 3, 1786, without any known prospect of commission or publication. The new work was somewhat lighter in mood than its G minor predecessor but was every bit as rich (and challenging to the contemporary Viennese taste) in its harmonic daring and contrapuntal elaborations. Artaria & Co., proving more bold than Hoffmeister, acquired the piece, and published both of the piano quartets a year later; there are hints in contemporary documents that they enjoyed a number of performances in Vienna. Mozart played K. 493 at the palace of his host in Prague, Count Joseph Thun, when he visited that city in January 1787 to observe for himself the wild success there of his *Marriage of Figaro*.

Alfred Einstein said that the E-flat Piano Quartet "is bright in color, but iridescent, with hints of darker shades," a description that could well serve as a summation of many of the masterpieces of Mozart's later years. The work opens with a broad, dramatic statement in chordal texture that serves as preface to the half-dozen motives comprising the first theme group. The complementary subject is a graceful tune with a turn-figure initiated by the piano and quickly taken over by the violin. It is this motive that is used, through modulation and instrumental dialogue, as the exclusive material of the development section. The recapitulation provides both formal balance and further elaborations of the themes, with the turn-figure motive serving as the subject for a brief coda.

The *Larghetto* is an essay that could have been authored by none other than Mozart. Melding sonata-form balance, wistful grace, and melodic suavity with audacious harmonic invention (almost every phrase in the movement is immediately repeated with some unexpected change of harmony) and expressive intensity, it is precisely such surpassing music that has made Mozart a living presence today while the then-more-popular creations of his contemporaries have long slipped from currency.

The finale is a large rondo with sonata elements based on a subject that Einstein deemed "the purest, most childlike and godlike melody ever sung," a quality not lightly achieved by Mozart, since this composer who almost always worked out his pieces fully in his head before committing a note to paper left two revised sketches for the theme. The movement tries to break into unrestrained jubilation, but it is always held back by a certain inner tension expressed through the chromaticism of its harmony.