

Trio

I

Lev Abeliovich

Edited by Rostislav Krimer

1

Allegro molto

Violin

Violoncello

Piano

Allegro molto

ff

mf

marcato

4

f

f

2

mf

sf

mf

II

Andante mosso

mp

Andante mosso

p

6 33

ten.

10 34

PREFACE

Lev Moiseyevich Abeliovich (1912–1985) was a Polish-Jewish-Belarusian composer whose fate and work vividly reflect the tragic and heroic pages of the 20th century. He was born in Vilna (now Vilnius, Lithuania) into a Jewish family and studied at the Warsaw Conservatory together with Mieczysław Weinberg – a lifelong friendship and creative connection developed between them.

With the outbreak of World War II in 1939, Abeliovich and Weinberg fled eastward to escape the Holocaust and found refuge in Minsk. There, at the Belarusian State Conservatory, they completed their studies under Vasily Zolotaryov – a student of Balakirev and Rimsky-Korsakov – finishing on June 21, 1941, just one day before Nazi Germany launched its invasion of the Soviet Union. On June 23, they were awarded their graduation diplomas, and Abeliovich was once again forced to flee from Nazi persecution.

He was evacuated deep into the Soviet Union and resumed his studies in 1944 at the Moscow Conservatory under Nikolai Myaskovsky, where, like Weinberg, he became part of the close circle around Dmitri Shostakovich. After the murder of Solomon Mikhoels and the beginning of antisemitic repressions against the Jewish intelligentsia in the USSR, Abeliovich made the difficult and necessary decision to leave Moscow and return to Minsk to escape Stalinist repression and avoid the fate of Weinberg, who was arrested in 1953. Abeliovich spent the rest of his life in Minsk and became a central figure in the Belarusian music scene, integrating European, Jewish, and Soviet traditions.

Abeliovich was not only a witness but also an active participant in the historical catastrophes of his time: his entire family was murdered in a concentration camp, he became a refugee, lost his homeland and loved ones – yet he preserved his dignity, his intellectual depth, and his unique creative voice. His music is a living testimony to what he endured, filled with symbols, allusions, and themes of memory that convey both pain and hope. Like many of his contemporaries, he could not openly speak about the Holocaust, often dedicating works instead to the ‘victims of fascism’ or the ‘heroes of the Great Patriotic War’.

His artistic legacy includes four symphonies, piano sonatas, a piano concerto, vocal cycles in Russian, Belarusian, Yiddish, and Polish, as well as numerous chamber works. His compositions are marked by lyrical expressiveness, dramatic intensity, and structural clarity – shaped by his teachers, yet unmistakably bearing the voice of someone who lived through the catastrophes of the century.

Of particular importance were his close creative and personal ties with Mieczysław Weinberg and Dmitri Shostakovich. Abeliovich and Weinberg shared not only similar life experiences – flight, study, loss – but also a deep mutual trust. Weinberg dedicated his Third Piano Sonata (1946) to Abeliovich, and Abeliovich, in return, dedicated the cycle *Fresken* (1972) to Weinberg. They often conversed in Polish – their native tongue – and remained loyal to each other until the end of their lives.

Today, Abeliovich’s work is undergoing a deserved rediscovery. Thanks to the research and initiative of renowned pianist and conductor Rostislav Krimer, who has dedicated a special project to the composer’s legacy, the complete works of Lev Abeliovich are being published for the first time by the internationally respected music publisher Edition Peters, edited by Rostislav Krimer. This is a major contribution to the preservation of musical memory and a significant discovery for the Western musical world, where Abeliovich’s name has remained largely unknown.

The musical legacy of Lev Abeliovich is not only part of Eastern European history – it is a living bridge between East and West, past and present.

Piano Trio (1955)

The Piano Trio for violin, cello and piano, composed in 1955, occupies a special place in the chamber legacy of Lev Moiseevich Abeliovich. Already in this early work, one can observe the emergence of the characteristic musical thinking that would later define the composer’s mature style – a synthesis of narrative development, inner drama and deeply personal expression. Despite the emotional intensity of the music, the trio does not yet display the extreme tragic concentration and mournful-pathetic atmosphere that would become a hallmark of Abeliovich’s later compositions. Instead, tragedy here coexists with a sense of human warmth, lyrical fragility and inner light. The work marks an important stage in the formation of the composer’s mature artistic language.

The work is dedicated to Eva Efron, Boris Afanasyev and Boris Skoblo – outstanding representatives of the Belarusian performing school of the mid-twentieth century. Eva Efron, a student of Konstantin Igumnov at the Moscow Conservatory, was a distinguished pianist. Her husband, Boris Ignatievich Afanasyev, was a violinist, conductor and one of the founders of the Belarusian symphonic and chamber performance tradition, serving as concertmaster of the State Symphony Orchestra of the BSSR and later artistic director of the Belarusian State Philharmonic Society. Boris Germanovich Skoblo was an