

DoNEMus

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Forbidden
Music
Regained

preview

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Sonata

for flute and piano

1939-1943

Leo Smit

The series of published scores of *Forbidden Music Regained* is a collaborative project by Donemus Publishing, the Leo Smit Foundation and the Nederlands Muziek Instituut (Dutch Institute of Music).

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Forbidden Music Regained

The series 'Forbidden Music Regained' proudly presents works by composers who were persecuted during the Second World War. Performances of these works were forbidden during the war. Many composers were imprisoned, several did not survive and others went into hiding.

After the war a new generation took over. The pre-war composers were soon forgotten and their compositions remained hidden in closets and archives or fell otherwise into oblivion. In recent decades numerous works have been rediscovered through the efforts of the Leo Smit Foundation. Some scores were found in attics, others in a garden shed and a pile of music was found by young children next to a garbage can. These compositions are of a high quality and deserve to be performed again. The diversity of styles represents the entire spectrum of the first half of the Twentieth century: romanticism, impressionism, modernism, neoclassicism, jazz and so forth. This project aims to encourage musicians young and old, from across the globe to perform these compositions and for concert audiences to (once again) become acquainted with this 'unheard' music.

www.donemus.nl
www.leosmitfoundation.org
www.nederlandsmuziekinstituut.nl



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Leo Smit (1900-1943)

It was in the Autumn of 1994 that I played Leo Smit's *Flute Sonata* for the first time. I found myself deeply moved by this composition. I hadn't heard the name Leo Smit before, as his music was not performed in those days. In the Conservatory of Amsterdam, where I was studying at the time, I never came across his name either. How was it possible that a Dutch composer who wrote music of this quality had so completely disappeared from stage? His works hold their own, also in relation to music of his contemporaries such as Maurice Ravel, Francis Poulenc and Igor Stravinsky. After I learned of the fate that befell him during World War II, a great sadness took a hold of me, as well as outrage. He was killed in a concentration camp for being Jewish. In 1996 I founded the Leo Smit Foundation, together with Frans van Ruth, who had introduced me with the sonata in the first place. We call attention to music of suppressed and forgotten composers worldwide. Our motto: we cannot bring back to life the composers who were murdered, but we can show that their music lives on.

Eleonore Pameijer

Founder and artistic director of the Leo Smit Foundation

Biography

Leo Smit was born in Amsterdam into a Jewish family. He studied at the gymnasium until the age of seventeen and left school without a diploma; his deepest wish was to study music. He attended composition lessons with Bernard Zwarters and Sem Dresden at the Amsterdam Conservatory. In 1924 he was the first composer to graduate "cum laude" in composition. Early on and throughout his career, his orchestral works were performed by the Concertgebouw Orchestra, under the direction of well-known conductors like Cornelis Doppe, Pierre Monteux and Eduard van Beinum. For three years he taught harmony and analysis at the Amsterdam Conservatory. In 1927 he moved to Paris, where he could listen to the newest French music and attend the most inspirational performances. In November 1937 Smit and his wife went back to Amsterdam due to family circumstances. Smit took up his teaching practise, he taught piano and music theory to private students at his home.

Three years later, World War II broke out. Soon Jewish musicians and composers were barred from musical life. Their music became forbidden. Smit's compositions written in the years 1940-1943 reflect this significant loss of freedom.

In November 1943, Leo Smit and his wife were forced to leave their house in the south part of Amsterdam. They moved to the Transvaal neighbourhood, a Jewish ghetto in the east of Amsterdam. In March 1943, they were arrested, incarcerated at the Hollandsche Schouwburg (the Jewish Theatre) and transported to transit camp Westerbork. By the end of April, they were deported to concentration camp Sobibor and murdered upon arrival.

Leo Smit Foundation

(translation: Luc den Bakker)

Sonata for flute and piano

Huib Ramaer provides the following illustration in the booklet of the cd box 'Leo Smit Complete Works':

The Sonata for flute and piano, on which he worked with interruptions over the period of some three years, is Leo Smit's last completed work. The Allegro was finished before the Occupation in December 1939, the Allegro moderato in June 1941. (...) He completed the Lento on 12 February 1943. Written under the direst circumstances these pages are among the most beautiful in the entire flute literature, according to the musicologist Leo Samama – a final glorious blossoming of Leo Smit's compositional genius. Two and a half months later, Smit was no longer alive.

The outer movements are strongly constructivist in approach. The nimble opening movement is outward going, virtuoso and playful. After a lively cat-and-mouse game between piano and flute, we briefly hear a short lyrical motif as a presage of the Lento. In the Lento itself the flute ranges freely across all its registers in long melodic notes, over a background of darting tremolandos and gossamer flourishes, like gusts of wind in the piano. Long extended phrases, ending in cryptic fermatas, imbue the music with a narrative and nostalgic character, each one gradually moving forward. The last phrase disappears like a setting sun over a distant horizon. The final movement is ingeniously structured. Seemingly innocent trills are interwoven with fluttering movements in a wonderfully subtle way, the movements of lyricism more frequent than in the first movement. This Allegro Moderato springs a surprise in the form of an accelerando leading to a peaceful intermezzo. A swinging motion ushers in the final bars, bringing the Sonata to a close in a powerful crescendo.

(translation: Nicole Gatchouse)

The autograph of this composition is currently located at the Nederlands Muziek Instituut in The Hague

Duration: c. 12'15"

Sonate voor fluit en klavier

Leo Smit:
(1911-1943)

Allegro ♩ = 116

1

f *energico* *stacc.* *mf* *mp* *sfz* *mp*

6

mp dolce *dim.* *dim.*

10 **A**

p *p scherzando* *mp* *stacc.* *p scherzando* *stacc.* *mp* *stacc.*

14 **B**

p dolce *mf dim.* *pp* *Red.*

18

mp *p* *p* *mp* *Red.*

C

22

p *mf marcato*

pp legatissimo *mf marcato* *non legato*

*Red. * Red. **

D

26

mp *p* *p poco a poco cresc.*

mp *p*

stacc.

29

mf *p leggiero*

*Red. Red. Red. **

E

32

f marcato *mf* *molto cresc.* *f*

mf marcato *sfz* *molto cresc.* *f*

F

36

mp *p* *poco cresc.*

mf *mp* *p non legato* *poco cresc.*

41

mp non legato

mf *dim.* *p* *p*

44

poco cresc. *mf* *dim.* *p con espressione*

poco cresc. *pp legatissimo*

Red. *

48

poco appassionato

no espress. *poco cresc.* *Red.* *

H

52

molto cresc. *ff*

molto cresc. *ff*

55

8va *mf* *mp*

mf *sfz* *p*

59 *mf* *espressivo*

mf 6 *stacc.* 6 *stacc.*

Red. *

62 **I** *p* *dolce*

dim. *pp*

Red. *

66 *mp* *mf*

mp 3 *p* 3

Red. *

70 **K** *p* *mf marcato*

pp *legatissimo* *mf marcato* *non legato*

Red. *

74 **L** *mp* *p* *p poco a poco cresc.*

mp *p* *stacc.*

77

mf

p leggiero

8va

Red.

80

f marcato

molto cresc.

mf marcato

sfz

molto cresc.

83 [M]

ff

stacc. dim.

mp stacc.

f

ff

mp stacc.

f subito

Red.

II

Lento ♩ = 69

mf

appassionato

mf grave

mp

Red.

6 [A] A piacere (un poco meno lento)

pp legatissimo scorrendo

scorrendo a piacere

pp sordamente

legatissimo

p

tr^b zonder naslag

Red.

8 *poco rit.* *zonder naslag tr* **B** *a tempo*

pp *m*

poco cresc. *p legatissimo* *mf*

Red.

11 *appassionato*

mf *p eguale*

Red.

13 *p* *mp* *b)*

poco appassionato e poco a poco cresc.

Red.

15 *p* *mf* *5*

mf

Red.

17 *poco rit.* **C**

mp poco scherzando

calando 5 *p poco scherzando*

poco marc. ma non troppo e legato

Red.