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Sah Li Tam

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VIOLIN WORKS OF BOHUSLAV JAN MARTINŮ

Sah Li Tam

Vedoucí práce: prof. doc. Mgr. Jindřich Pazdera

Oponent práce: MgA. Jakub Junek

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Sah Li Tam

Thesis Supervisor: Prof. Doc. Mgr. Jindřich Pazdera

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Violin Works of Bohuslav Jan Martinů

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ABSTRACT

People say that life of a person changes based on one's own environment, that also applies to the Czech composer Bohuslav Martinů. The purpose of this thesis is learning and understanding the violin works of Martinů throughout his life. The study is structured in three main chapters. The first chapter introduces the life of composer Bohuslav Martinů. His personality, his musical style and hardships in his life.

The second part is analyzing the changes of style in his violin composition according to the timeline of his life with a list of his violin compositions and graph analysis on chosen compositions.

Lastly, there is an understanding of other people's interpretation of his violin works in different surroundings (e.g., country, tutor, experience), with interviews from four violinists.

Keywords: Bohuslav Martinů, violin works, different surroundings, Czech Republic, France, United States, neoclassicism, jazz

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research

When I was trying to come up with a topic for this thesis, I was listening to Martinů's violin sonata No. 3 and got mesmerized by his work. This got me interested in knowing more about Bohuslav Martinů since I am now studying in his home country, Czech Republic. There are three purposes for this thesis. Firstly, due to being introduced and started to know Martinů's pieces after coming to Prague, I wanted to show my country many other excellent Czech composers' pieces besides the great Bedřich Smetana and Antonín Dvořák as most of the musicians in Malaysia do not even know or have heard the greatness of the work of composer Bohuslav Martinů.

Czech Republic at that time still had not really evolved from Romanticism, but Martinů wanted to learn more of the 20th century style and in order to learn more musical styles, he went to France. It is like in my case as Malaysia is still very new to the Western Music. Even till this day, many musicians in Malaysia only play or listen to music up to Romanticism and are hesitant to go one step up to 20th century classical music. Not just students, but the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra's concerts are up to Romantic period music and only sometimes they play 20th century music, but only the well-known works like Prokofiev's Romeo and Juliet, Stravinsky's Firebird suite or Rite of Spring etc.

After Martinů moved to France and to the US in his later years, his compositions, as I was listening, innovated a lot throughout his years as he was experimenting many ways and styles. This shows that living and experiencing in different surroundings really changes Martinů's musical style. Of course, Martinů was still a student and was still learning at that time, maybe he would have had also improved even if he was to continue staying in the Czech Republic, but after experiencing myself being overseas and away from Malaysia for 3 years, I understand his experience overseas and determination of wanting to innovate and improve his own music.

1. BOHUSLAV JAN MARTINŮ

Biography

1890-1923: Czech Republic

Bohuslav Jan Martinů was a Czech modernist composer in the 20th century. Born on December 8th, 1890, in a small town called Polička, Czech Republic. His family worked as the tower watchman and because of that, he was born and lived for 12 years in the clock tower of the Church of St. Jakub. At the age of 6, he started playing the violin. Even at a young age, he showed remarkable talent as a violinist that the town people helped to raise fund for his study at the Prague Conservatory.

In 1906 he attended the Prague Conservatory, but got expelled in the year 1908 as he was more of an explorer than a hard-working artist and in the year 1910, he was expelled from the conservatory due to "incurable negligence." [1] During his time in Prague, he attended many concerts and became obsessed with analyzing new music, especially with French impressionist works.

After he was expelled, he went back to Polička for several years composing and asking guidance from Czech composer Josef Suk. He was also encouraged by Suk to pursue formal composition training under him, but sadly because of the World War I, he could not study until years later. He toured around Europe as a violinist in the National Theater Orchestra and in 1920 he became a full member of Czech Philharmonic Orchestra that was led by Czech conductor Václav Talich, who was the first major conductor to promote Martinů's compositions.

1923-1940: France

Due to trying to learn more different musical styles, Martinů went to Paris, France in 1923 after receiving a scholarship from the Czechoslovakia Ministry of Education. He took lessons with French composer Albert Russel until the death of his mentor in the year 1937. Rather than focusing on one style, Russel taught many different trending styles of composition during that time like jazz, neoclassicism and surrealism. By 1930, Martinů had settled with neo-classical style.

During his time in Paris, he met many people who helped and supported him. A famous musician at that time he met was Russian-born conductor Serge Koussevitzky, who at that time became the conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Martinů met him at a cafe, introduced himself and gave him a score of his recent composition *La Bagarre*. Koussevitzky was so impressed by it that he premiered the piece with the Boston Symphony Orchestra in 1927.[2]

In 1926, he also met a French seamstress named Charlotte Quennehen, who later became his future wife. They never divorced, but the marriage wasn't quite a happy marriage. Later in 1937, Martinů met Czech composer Vítězslava Kaprálová, who later became his pupil and later a lover.

On 30th September 1938, the Munich Agreement was concluded.[3] After the Agreement, Czech President Edvard Beneš began to form the Czechoslovakia government in exile set up in France and England. As a Czech resistance force was organized, Martinů tried to join them but was rejected due to his age. However, in 1939, he composed a tribute to this force, *the Field Mass for baritone, chorus and orchestra*. For this, Martinů was blacklisted by the Nazis and sentenced in absentia. In 1940, when the German army approached Paris, the Martinůs fled to the United States.[4]

1941-1953: United States

Living in the United States was also difficult for the Martinůs. Like many other artist émigrés, they had difficulty in communication in English, funding difficulties and opportunities in showcasing his works. Luckily, they had people who helped them through those difficulties, but still many happenings occurred in Martinů's life in America. Firstly, there were Martinů's marital difficulties as Charlotte wanted to go back to France, whereas he wanted to continue staying in the United States. Then, he also suffered but survived a major accident in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, where he fell off from the terrace which had no railing, landing on concrete, and was hospitalized with a fractured skull and concussion. Even though he survived, he suffered many side effects for the rest of his life, and it took him a few years to be able to return to his formal state and continue composing. Lastly, his

uncertainty on which country he should live in as he was considering going back to Czechoslovakia to be a teacher, but also reluctant to leave the States.

During his time in America, he taught composition at the Mannes College of Music for most of the period from 1948 to 1956. He also taught at Princeton University and the Berkshire Music School (Tanglewood).[5]

1953-1959 (his death): Europe

In 1953, he left America and settled in Nice, France. Even though he left, he still had connections in the States. In 1955, his *Symphony No.6: Fantaisies symphoniques* was premiered by the Boston Symphony Orchestra and gained the composer an annual New York critics' prize for the work.[6] He continued composing many of his notable works until his death. Martinů died of gastric cancer in Liestal, Switzerland, on 28 August 1959 at the age of 69. His remains were moved and buried in his hometown, Polička, Czech Republic.

Personality

Martinů probably suffered from Asperger syndrome, a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by significant difficulties in social interaction and nonverbal communication, along with restricted and repetitive patterns of behavior and interests.[7] Frank Rybka, a Czech born cellist and neighbor of the Martinůs, wrote a biography book about Bohuslav Martinů and brought up his idea that Martinů suffered from this syndrome.[8] According to Rybka, Martinů was quiet, introverted, and emotionally stolid when meeting people he did not know well. He typically answered questions very slowly, even when conversing in Czech language.[8] There is also the fact that he could write a full piece just by listening to it at a concert during his conservatory time.[9] All of these evidences were based on his assumptions upon Martinů's interview and some of his close friends, as well as letters written to his family and friends. His evidence of Martinů having an autism spectrum disorder was compiled and evaluated, using the established criteria found in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disease (DSM-IV). This evidence that the composer had autistic spectrum disorder, most likely Asperger syndrome, was also agreed by a well-known autism neuroscientist.[10]

Whereas some were against these reasonings like Erik Entwistle, a pianist and musicologist. Firstly, that it is impossible to diagnose someone so many years after his death. Secondly, that Asperger syndrome officially does not exist as a separate syndrome at that time; and finally, that according to Entwistle, Rybka was so engrossed to this idea that he tried to find his claim that had no proof for.[11] There is also another fact was that Rybka only met Martinů a few times and his first meeting of Martinů was when he was at a very young age, whereas Martinů was already in his 50s, so there is definitely a very huge age gape, making it difficult to really agree with Rybka's assumptions, even though he had interviewed close friends and family of Martinů.

2. VIOLIN WORKS OF BOHUSLAV MARTINŮ

Violin Works according to timeline

The pieces that I had included in the list are violin as the solo like violin concertos and violin solo works. I also included duos for violin and other instruments even though it is technically a chamber work. The list of pieces is lined according to the year and country in which he composed the pieces. The reason I chose this order is so we could see the innovations from his works before and after. It is also based on what I had stated in the purpose of this research as different surroundings impact one's lifestyle. The list is stated: The official name of the piece, the number of the composition (H1, H2, etc.), the year it was composed, and the country in which Martinů was when the work was written. The list is as follows: -

1890-1923: Czech Republic

- *Elegy for Violin and Piano, H3 (1909)*
- *Romance for Violin and Piano, H12 (1910)*
- *Concerto for Violin and Piano, H13 (1910)*
- *Berceuse for Violin and Piano, H32 (1911)*
- *Adagio for Violin and Piano, H33 (1911)*
- *Offertorium for Violin and Piano, H58 (1912)*
- *Fantasia for Violin and Piano, H62 (1912)*
- *Violin sonata in C major, H120 (1919)*

1923-1940: France

- *Violin Sonata in D minor, H152 (1926)*
- *Duo for Violin and Cello No. 1, H 157 (1927)*
- *Impromptu, three compositions for Violin and Piano, H166 (1927)*
- *Violin Sonata No. 1, H182 (1929)*
- *Five short pieces for Violin and Piano, H184 (1930)*
- *Ariette for Violin and Piano, H188A (1930)*
- *Easy Etudes for Two Violins, H191 (1930)*
- *Seven Arabesques, rhythmic etudes for Violin and Piano, H201A (1931)*
- *Rhythmic etudes for Violin and Piano, H202 (1932)*
- *Violin Sonata No. 2, 208 (1931)*

- *Violin Concerto No. 1, H226 (1933)*
- *Intermezzo, four pieces for Violin and Piano, H261 (1937)*
- *Sonatina for Violin and Piano, H262 (1937)*
- *Duo Concertante for Two Violins and Orchestra, H264 (1937)*
- *Suite Concertante for Violin and Orchestra, H276 I (1939)*

1941-1953: United States

- *Concerto da Camera for Violin and String Orchestra, Piano and Percussion, H285 (1941)*
- *Violin Concerto No. 2, H293 (1943)*
- *Five Madrigal Stanzas for Violin and Piano, H297 (1943)-dedicated to Albert Einstein*
- *Violin Sonata No. 3, H303 (1944)*
- *Suite Concertante for Violin and Orchestra, H276 II (1944)*
- *Czech Rhapsody for Violin and Piano, H307 (1945)*
- *Three Madrigals (Duo No. 1) for Violin and Viola, H 313 (1947)*
- *Duet No. 2 for Violin and Viola, H 331 (1950)*

1953-1959: Europe

- *Duo for Violin and Cello in D major No.2, H 371 (1958)*

Analysis

As can be seen, even though chamber works that are more than duos are not included, Martinů had written many violins works. Even I myself only knew or have played a few. The pieces that I had chosen to analyze are *Sonata for Violin and Piano in C major (1st mov.)*; *Sonata for Violin and Piano No. 1 (1st mov.)*; and *Sonata for Violin and Piano No. 3 (1st mov.)*. The reason for my choices is because of their timeline. As we can hear, even pieces that were composed during his time in the CR, the changes from his very early piece *Elegy* and his later works *Sonata for Violin and Piano in C major* have major improvements or changes between ten years, but it still has the elements of romanticism style that Martinů wanted to get away from.

According to my analysis of *Sonata in C major*, in this piece, it is quite a clear sonata form with an exposition, development and recapitulation, but with a coda ending. It starts off with an intro (bar 1-15) with changes of time signature in almost every bar and it slowly builds up. Once at Piu Allegro (bar 15), there comes the first theme and the key changes from C major to A major. Then at Allegro Con Brio (bar 52), piano plays the melody and builds up, with minor suspension chords and time signature changes, like he is showing the next theme which is at Moderato (bar 70), but he didn't continue playing forte (*f*), he did a subito piano (*p*) instead. In Allegro (bar 120), a modulation section comes. As shown in the graph (Appendix 1, pg. 23), even though it is the development, Martinů wrote the themes A and B, but in different order, starting with a development, theme B, then theme A before going to recapitulation (bar 190) that starts off again with the building intro again. Finally, in the coda (bar 268), even though I have stated it as coda, the piano still plays the B theme on the right hand, while the violin and piano left hand play running notes.

His first violin compositions in France: *Violin Sonata No.1* changed drastically after he went to study in France. As can be heard in the first movement, he fused jazz and neoclassicism style. It was common to play jazz music at that time. The reason is because during the World War I, soldiers in America went to aid France in the war. After the war, some Americans continued staying in France and they brought their culture to France, including jazz style. It became popular for many composers to try blending jazz into their works. As can be seen in my analysis graph (Appendix 2, pg. 24), there are many syncopated rhythms right from the beginning to the end. He also composed with jazz swing notes like from the very beginning of the violin intro with the main melody notes GAGB \flat . For the neoclassicism part, the main four notes GAGB \flat he kept repeating even in different transposition, similar as a fugue like in the violin intro, from GAGB \flat transposed to CDCE \flat . Not just that, he also later used CDCE \flat , but in a descending order, E \flat DE \flat C at bar 6. He also fused dissonant chords with the jazz syncopated rhythm like in bar 39, with piano playing the bass jazz rhythm and the right-hand playing G to G \sharp diminished chord. Even though the piece has innovated a lot from his previous works, he was still in his experimentation phase, so you can hear that his pieces were still not a stable

style as he was cooperating with different styles that were taught by his mentor at full use.

Later, after he decided and settled with neoclassicism, his works slowly started to stabilize. Like his *Violin Sonata No.3*, one of his works written in the US. This is a piece that I performed during my final year of bachelor's concert at HAMU. This violin sonata was considered as the darkest and the most dramatic duo work. It is understandable as this piece was composed during the World War II and it was just two years after he was being exiled and moved to the US. The first movement, *Poco allegro*, starts off with a blast with the note B-flat, then there come clusters of 16 notes scales. The violin soon enters as Theme 1 with a B-flat minor harmonic scale and even though he wrote almost every bar in a different time signature, when being heard, it has the same rhythm in quarter and 8 notes. Regarding the time signature, it usually is in 6/8, but only when the Theme 1 is played, the time signature changes. Even though this movement is in sonata form, but regarding the melody, it has a sharp edge and uneven feeling, due to occasionally having sudden *p* and *f*, many harmonic scales and modes; mostly dorian, harmonic, phrygian and octatonic, and sometimes having a fierce-like fight between the violin and the piano. For example, from the bar 84, with the violin playing in double stops, changing the melody line of the bottom and top notes; while the piano plays in a totally different rhythm, which the violin plays from the bar 92, both have the same dynamics, from *p cresc. to f*. Then the beginning comes back in the bar 156, starting from the piano intro until part A. In the Coda, the piano plays the same from the bar 74-83; whereas the violin, playing the same rhythm as in the bar 92, mixes both parts together with dynamics between *mf* and *f*. The ending is with a settled and happier C major chord.

3. INTERPRETATION OF MARTINŮ

Participants

The participants that I had interviewed for my research are four people: -

1. Aldrich Tanyin Pinso
 - Born in Sabah, Malaysia, but now staying in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
 - Graduated with a master's degree music major in University UCSI, Malaysia. Never studied overseas, but was taught under a Polish teacher, Mrs. Małgorzata Potocka and a Slovakian teacher, Mr. Miroslav Danis (HAMU alumni).

2. Ariya Tai
 - Born in Selangor, Malaysia, but now studying in Texas, United States
 - Currently studying her master's degree at the Texas Tech University, double major violin and piano.

3. Alžběta Ježková
 - Born in Olomouc, Czech Republic, but grew up in Kroměříž, Czech Republic and now she is living in Prague, Czech Republic.
 - Currently studying her 3rd bachelor year at The Academy of Performing Arts, Music and Dance faculty (HAMU) under Doc. MgA. Bohuslav Matoušek.

4. Terezia Hledíková
 - Born in Bratislava, Slovakia. But studies for 5 yrs. now in Prague, Czech Republic.
 - Currently studying her 2nd bachelor year at HAMU under Prof. Doc. Mgr. Jindřich Pazdera.

The reason I chose these musicians for my interview is so I could see the perspective from four different surroundings: a Malaysian representative with experiences of learning under European tutors, who never experienced studying or living overseas; a Malaysian currently studying overseas; a native Czech and a Slovakian, who are currently studying in Czech Republic. All are professionally trained violinists.

Interview and Discussions

The interview was conducted as follows: -

1. Before the day of the interview, interviewees were informed that it was an interview about Bohuslav Martinů, but were told not to search or know more about him. They were also advised to bring a pencil and paper for notes.
2. On the day of their interview, they were asked first how much they know about Martinů.
3. After that, five of Martinů's pieces were played to them: *Elegy for Violin and Piano*[12], *Violin Sonata in C major*[13], *Violin Sonata No. 1*[13], *Violin Concerto No. 1*[15] and *Violin Sonata No. 3*[16]. Before each piece was played, listeners were informed the title of the piece and were asked to write their notes about the pieces. All five pieces were each randomly played for about 5 minutes from the beginning.
4. After listening to all five pieces, participants, who were not familiar with Martinů, were informed about Martinů's travels (without the reasons) and the history that occurred in Europe (not music related). Later they were asked some questions as follows: -
 - i. After listening to the pieces and knowing about Martinů's travels and the history that occurred during that time, label which piece(s) were composed in which country he was in? * There are **two** pieces when he was in the CR, **two** in France and **one** in the US.
 - ii. Which piece(s) is considered "good" or "beautiful" to you?
 - iii. If Martinů's compositions were to be played in (country) / If Martinů's composition will be promoted overseas, which piece(s) will the audiences appreciate or will understand as "This is Martinů."?

The motive on why interviewees were informed briefly and were told to not research about Martinů was for me to know how much they knew or were experienced with Martinů. That way it is possible to understand their first impressions of Bohuslav Martinů. Apparently, people who did not study in the Czech Republic, two out of four participants (Pinso and Tai), had stated that they

had heard his name before, but never experienced or heard his works before; whereas in the Czech Republic, all the musicians, even non-musicians, who are living or studying in the Czech Republic, have experienced his compositions before as Martinů was one of the well-known Czech composers in the 20th century.

Next, after playing all five pieces, participants were asked to answer some questions. The first question was that the participants were to differentiate in which country they thought the pieces was composed. The correct answer for the question was: In the Czech Republic (CR): *Elegy for Violin and Piano* and *Violin Sonata in C major*; in France: *Violin Sonata No. 1* and *Violin Concerto No. 1*; and in the United States (US): *Violin Sonata No. 3*. Of course, after each of them stated their reasons for their answers, the correct answers were given.

Surprisingly, the results of the violinists who were not living or studying in the Czech Republic, Pinso and Tai were the same: In the CR: *Violin Sonata in C major* and *Violin Sonata No. 3*; in France: *Elegy* and *Violin Concerto No. 1*; and in the US: *Violin Sonata No. 1*. Even though both had the same answers, their reasoning is a bit different. Pinso stated: "I was trying to think geographically and also like what major event occurred during that time." Pinso's explanation for putting *Elegy* in France and *Violin Sonata No. 3* in CR: "I think that maybe he was trying to experiment with different styles, so that's how *Violin Sonata No. 3* was written. Later, after he went to Paris, he felt homesick and wrote *Elegy*, as it sounds like a romanticism style." For Tai's explanation: "*Elegy* in the beginning sounds like Debussy a little bit, so maybe Martinů is inspired by Debussy. For why I think *Violin Sonata No. 1* was written in the US, because it sounds jazz-y, with syncopated rhythm. I am still not sure with *Sonata No. 3*, as it sounds like Bartók, the tonal sets."

Both Malaysians have interesting yet understandable explanations for their answers. Like Pinso's reasons, which are more on emotions, he understands the feelings of being homesick, but still wanted to pursue one's own career since he experienced moving alone to be in another state just to study violin under Mrs. Potocka. For Tai's explanation, it is more based on her hearing and the information that was given to her as I had informed both the participants that Martinů is a **20th**

century Czech composer who studied in **France**. She thinks about 20th century French composers that they had an impact in French classical music and thought of Debussy. As for the *Violin Sonata No. 1*, I can understand why they thought it was when Martinů was in the US since the genre jazz started in America. Both didn't know about how jazz came to Europe as both never studied European music history.

For the HAMU students, since both had knowledge of the history of Europe, particularly in the Czech Republic, and experiences of Martinů, their understanding and encounter of the composer's works helped them to identify easily on which piece(s) were written in which timeline. Both listeners said immediately that *Elegy* and *Sonata in C* were written in the CR. The mistakes that they made, for Ježková, it was *Violin Concerto No. 1*, in which she thought it was from the US and *Violin Sonata No. 3*, she thought it was from France; whereas Hledíková, she thought *Violin Sonata No. 1* was from the US and the *Violin Sonata No. 3* was from France. For Ježková's mistake, she is currently practicing Martinů's *Violin Concerto No. 2*, which was composed during the time when he was in America, so based on the piece that she is currently playing she thought that maybe *Violin Concerto No. 1* was from the US. For Hledíková, she thought that *Violin Concerto No. 1* was written in France. As she said: "It is because the *Violin Concerto* sounds very similar to *La Jolla* (Martinů's *Sinfonietta La Jolla for piano and chamber orchestra in A major, H328*) that we played together in the concert (NeoKlasik Martinů concert, 08.03.2020), and I think it is from France (later after the interview, we searched and it was written in 1950 in New York, US.)."

An understandable reason on why they have mistaken these two pieces, *Violin Concerto No. 1* and *Violin Sonata No. 1*, is because *Violin Concerto No. 1* is not often played by violinists, even in the Czech Republic; whereas for *Violin Sonata No. 1*'s reason, it has a very jazzy style, with the rhythms and melody line, that a lot of people will think that it is from when he was in the States more than in Paris. In Ježková's case, as someone who is playing the *Violin Concerto No. 2*, the piece *Violin Concerto No. 1* sounded like Martinů's later works. Her reasoning is comprehensible as this piece was composed in 1933, two years after Martinů had

settled with neoclassicism style. As for Hledíková, she had the same reason as Malaysian musician Tai, with the thought that it sounds very jazz influenced.

For the second question, all interviewees had different feelings on which piece is considered "good" to them. For Pinso, he preferred *Elegy* and/or *Violin Sonata in C major*, whereas *Violin Sonata No. 3* was "too much" for him. He said: "My preferences are based on whether I could listen to it as relaxing music. People prefer simpler things. It is not that I don't like his other older works, it is just that I could not digest listening to music like *Violin Sonata No. 3*. If I were to listen to 20th century music, I would want to analyze it in order to understand this piece. Maybe if I were to see and analyze the score, I would appreciate this piece more." For Tai, her choices at first were also same as Pinso's, then she concluded *Violin Sonata No. 1* to like the most. Tai explained: "It's hard to choose one piece. I am not sure whether to choose something fun or classic style... I think I like the Czech Republic time, especially the *Elegy* as it sounds like it is French influenced. For the *Violin Concerto*, it has not much melody in it, it is something I think I wouldn't be playing, it sounded like he was experimenting a lot in one piece that it's kind of unstable. But I did like his *Sonata No. 1*, with the jazz feel. I will definitely want to play this piece!"

As can be seen, both have different preferences in Martinů's approach in style. For Pinso's explanation, as mentioned before, us Malaysian's musicians are quite hesitant to move forward from the romanticism and are late to experience 20th century music. That is why it would be hard for him to appreciate it. Tai on the other hand, after studying in the States for almost 4 years now, has experienced many 20th century pieces throughout her studies, so she got used to them and admires pieces that are 20th century style, especially jazz, since she likes listening to jazz music.

On the Czech and Slovakian participants, because of their encounters with Martinů's music, it was hard to choose one piece as all pieces have their own unique method. Like *Violin Sonata No. 1* is jazz influenced, the *Violin Sonata no. 3* feels dark and lost and so on. But both said the exact same thing for his earlier works, *Elegy* and *Violin Sonata in C major*, it is not Martinů's own musical style or

not a defying one. They also said it felt like he was influenced by Dvořák's style. The opinions for *Violin Concerto No. 1* from them are that the form is not fully "matured". Ježková said: "The form for the *Violin Concerto* is not that clear compared to the *2nd Concerto*. But if I have to say what I like more, I feel Martinů's defined works are closer to me."

The third question is quite like the previous one, but for a major audience. Pinso said: "I personally think *Elegy* will be the one. If you want to play more neoclassicism, it is either *Sonata 1* or *Sonata 3*. *Sonata 1*, I think, is a bit improvised and the *Sonata 3* was a stable neoclassicism piece." For Tai: "I think *Sonata 1* will be a hit, since a lot of Americans love jazz. But (I am) not sure whether it speaks 'Martinů'. If I were to show his musical style, then it is *Sonata 3*."

For Ježková and Hledíková, Ježková said *Violin Concerto No. 1*: "If I would be showing that 'This is Martinů', I will show the *Violin Concerto*, or maybe the *C major Sonata* as it was Czech inspired, so I would want to show Czech music style to the foreigner. Martinů likes the Czech culture very much since he grew up singing folk songs so all of his work is definitely influenced by it." Hledíková's answers: "I would say maybe *Sonata No. 3*. It is not his early work, and it is not jazz. I have not heard the whole *Violin Concerto*, but based on the first few minutes, it is like, yeah, it's great, but it's not settling yet, whereas *Sonata No. 3* is more settled piece. So, I would say that if nobody had heard of him before, I would play them *Sonata 3*. But if it is a country like Malaysia, then maybe his earlier works, but it would be a pity to not introduce them to the best of his compositions."

How people's opinions, even though they are just four people, have different preferences or ideas on how audiences would appreciate Martinů's work. Some of them thought of the audiences' familiarity with the musical style. Like what Pinso said, people prefer simpler things, it takes time for people to get used to or accept different variety. Due to that, pieces like *Elegy* and/or *Violin Sonata in C major* is easier for the audiences to listen to and appreciate. But on the disadvantage side is that it does not really speak Martinů's style as most of his earlier works in the

CR were mostly influenced by Czech Romanticism style composers. People who chose his later works like the HAMU participants, they want to express and show what a typical Martinů work is like. After all, Martinů did spend many years experimenting different approaches in finding his own music and matured throughout his living years, so it shows his improvements and innovations throughout his determination and hardships. But on the other side, people who had not experienced understanding the 20th century classical western music, it would be difficult to immediately understand like Pinso, they need to listen and get accustomed to Martinů or even 20th century music in order to appreciate the excellence of one composer's masterpiece.

After this interview, I had the opportunity to discuss and received some remarks from Prof. PhDr. Jan Vičar, C Sc., a Czech musicologist and a professor at the Department of Music Theoretical Disciplines at HAMU. I informed him about the outcomes, and it was discussed during one of his music aesthetics classes. Prof. Vičar gave an interesting question, particularly for musicians who are not used to 20th century music, "If a Malaysian musician got used to listening to 20th century since at a young age, stayed and studied in Malaysia for the rest of his/her life. Will this musician, who listened to Martinů's works for the first time, have different answers compared to your Malaysian participant?" As mentioned from the introduction, Malaysia has very few interactions with 20th century music, and many are in denial of accepting it. This question also is something to be discussed as it is considered as one of the discussions of the different environment. But it is difficult to find an exception, so this is based on my imagination. I will say that this musician would probably say either *Violin Concerto No. 1* or/and *Violin Sonata No. 3* is his/her choice. That is because both pieces, among the pieces that were mentioned, are considered matured works of the composer. But the answer about audience's preferences would probably be the same answer as Pinso, even though Malaysia is multicultural. It might take some time to familiarize with the Western Music.

Interpreting a Martinů's, or different composer's work

During one of Prof. Vičar's music aesthetic classes, I presented my bachelor's concert performance of Martinů's *Violin Sonata No. 3, 1st movement* to the class

and compared my performance with a recording from a famous Czech violinist, Josef Suk and his pianist, Josef Hála.[17] The reason I chose his recording is because both of our portrayed styles on Martinů are very different even though it was the same composition. I based on my performance from the tutelage of my professor also with my depiction of this piece since the sonata is considered the darkest yet dramatic violin sonata work from the composer. I began the first movement with an eerie sounding *p* and was going to the peak with loud and powerful *f*s, whereas in Suk's recording, it was lighter and softer feeling and sound.

We discussed about what does it means the "right" portraying style, not just of Martinů's works, but also other composers' compositions. Many times, musicians have the same problems with understanding one composer's works. Like in my case, some people may say I portrayed Martinů's style beautifully or maybe some will say that I should base on Josef Suk's performances, as he is a Czech musician and his grandfather, composer Josef Suk was a mentor of Martinů. So, what is the real "right" way of playing Martinů's works?

Personally, I would first try to search for information from different sources about the pieces that I will be performing. The beginning is knowing the history of music. Before I came to Prague, I had never studied any music history or theory as in Malaysia many do not study the history of music and just thought that playing well is enough. That was also my thinking. But after studying music history and theory under Prof. MgA. Iva Oplištilová, Ph.D., it made me realize that it is important to know the history of music from the beginning till today. People may say that music is an art, and we should be free to play however we want. That is true, but it is also important to understand how the music period was formed, what had occurred in the world history that inspired composers to popularize these musical styles, also understanding the life of the composers. That way it helps to try understanding the history that happened during the composer's life. Secondly, knowing the composer's biography. It does not have to be researching the composer's full life story, just a few interesting or common knowledge facts that most of the musicians know about. Lastly, if there are comments or remarks that the composer himself stated in his work, read about it. This is quite important as

it means that the composer had an image on how the music is supposed to be. It does not mean that the image the composer thought of will be the same as the performer, but as a rough idea.

That is my way of trying to understand and portraying one composer's music style. But of course, that does not mean everyone has the same or agrees with my method as this is a personal preference of an aesthetical taste.

Limitations

The interview of this study does not mean that all the musicians, whether they are local or currently studying overseas, have the same perspectives or choices as the participants. There are other factors that should be considered as well. For example: influences by their tutors, experiences in listening to the 20th century, etc.

The prominent limitation is the number of participants. Even though some participants like Tai and Pinso are both currently in different countries, both were still born in the same country, meaning there is also the possibility that Tai still has some Malaysian's perspective with 20th century western music. For the Czechs and Slovaks, not all have the same perspectives as both representatives that were featured in this interview. Like in Jeřková's case, her professor is a dedicated violinist to Martinů's composition, he often performed Martinů's works and even recorded an album titled: "Bohuslav Martinů: Works for Violin and Piano (Complete)"[18]. Because of that, it is possible to say she has more experiences in this Czech composer's works.

Then there is also the limitation of the resources depicting the composer, Bohuslav Martinů. Since Martinů passed away a long time before the study had even started, most of the sources that I was able to collect were from books and internet sources. The sources are also mostly from the 3rd-person point of view. Another factor regarding the limitation of resources is that Martinů only has a few articles or interviews written by him. Partially that is because of his personality. As stated in Chapter One, Martinů most likely suffered from Asperger syndrome.

Lastly, the language barrier. Most of the sources about Martinů are written in Czech language, which I as a foreigner, who has a little knowledge of this language, it wakes trouble understanding and so I had to rely solely on the English translated or English written materials. There is also due to the trouble of our current situation: Covid-19 virus. Due to the pandemic, the libraries were closed, it was difficult for me to find more English books or articles regarding the composer.

4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion

In conclusion, violin works of Bohuslav Martinů innovate from the different circumstances and surroundings during his timeline. Different environments that impacted him was in the different countries: from his early life in the Czech Republic, his studies in France and moving to the United States; the events that occurred during his time: World War I and II, also his immigration to America; and his tutors: Josef Suk and Albert Russel.

After the interview, four participants from different conditions have different tastes for Martinů's works and understandable reasonings for their preferences. The interview shows how different conditions effect one's impressions, as Martinů's works also progressed from the environment changes. There is also the aesthetic that should be considered as not all will have the same answers even though they have similar surroundings.

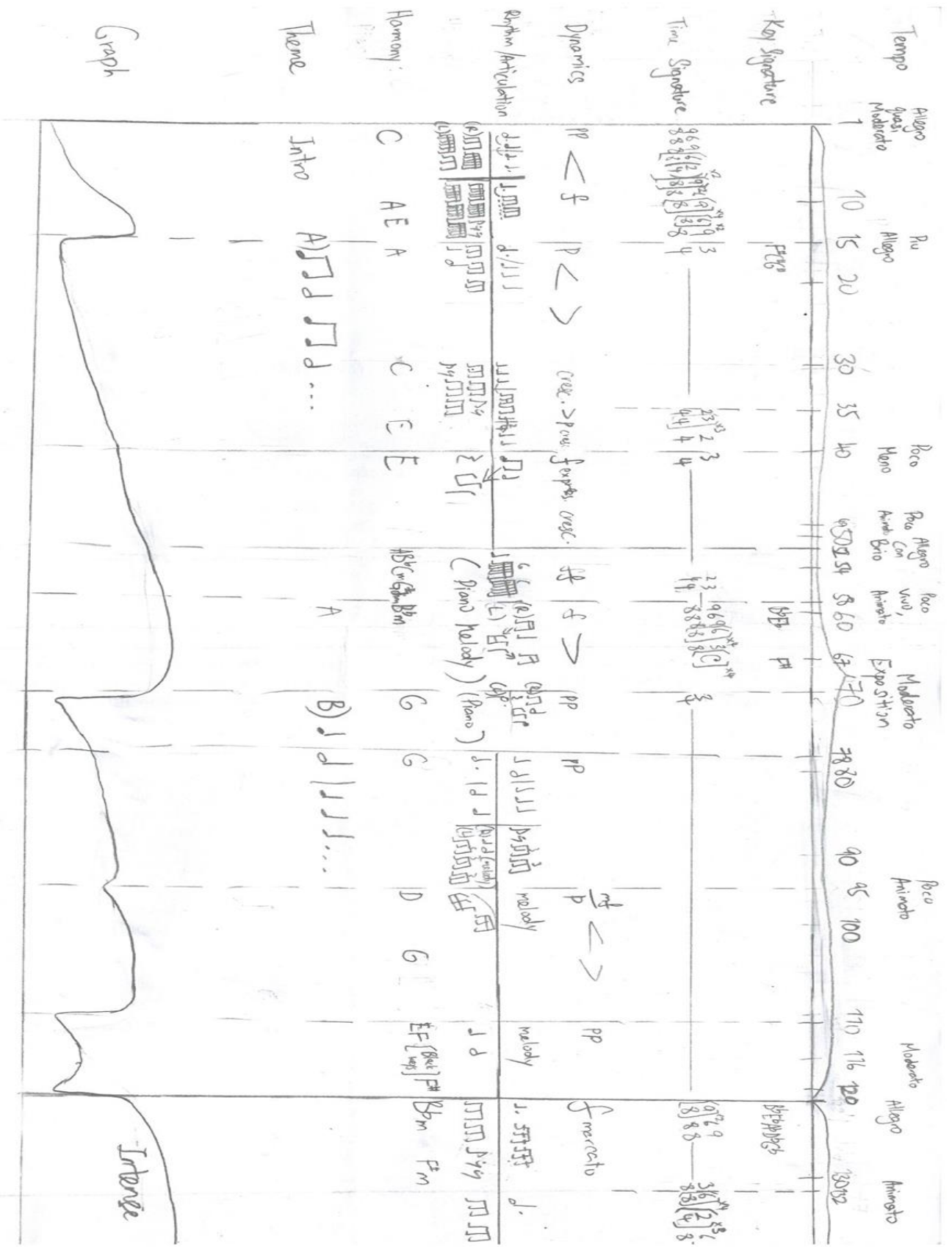
After doing much research for this thesis, one thing is for certain, Bohuslav Martinů is an amazing composer, and I would really want other musicians to understand the greatness of Bohuslav Martinů's works.

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Appendix 1: Analysis graph of Martinů's Sonata for Violin and Piano in C Major



Time	Instrument	Notes	Tempo	Section
150-160	Piano	Intro	Allegretto	no mm tempo
160-165	Piano Solo	Melody		recapitulation
165-170	Piano	Solo		
170-180	Piano	(Vn & Piano)		
180-190	Piano	(Some as beginning)		
190-200	Piano	Intro		
200-210	Piano	Vln Melody		
210-220	Piano			
220-230	Piano			
230-240	Piano	Vln Melody		
240-250	Piano	Solo		
250-260	Piano	Vln		
260-261	Piano	Vln		
261-268	Piano	Finale		
268-270	Piano	Finale		
270-272	Piano	Finale		

Intens
but
length

