

ABSTRACT

Karel Ančerl 1968-1973. A documentary monograph

OBJECTIVES:

The main objective of this thesis is to capture and describe the last five years (1968-1973) of life and artistic achievements of the conductor Karel Ančerl. This is a topic which has not been elaborated on an academic level yet. On the beginning of the captured period we find Ančerl to be a prominent member of the Czechoslovak music environment working as the chief conductor of the Czech Philharmonic. At the end of this period, Ančerl permanently lived and worked in Canada as the chief conductor of the Toronto Symphony. This fact is reflected in the two main topics of this thesis. First, there is the theme of process of following a qualitative change which the Toronto Symphony undertook during Karel Ančerl's leadership. Second, there is the relationship of the conductor to the Czechoslovak environment and its musical tradition. Main axis of the thesis is defined by a chronological following of the affairs of Karel Ančerl's life story in the given period.

METHODOLOGY:

Since the estate of Karel Ančerl has been missing, some of the important – maybe even the most important – documents still remain unknown. The story is being told with the help of supporting sources, just like is the correspondence between Ančerl and Ivan Medek, which covers the complete described period. A very important source of knowledge was identified in the musical reviews published mostly in Toronto, but also in the North American press. The image of Karel Ančerl is being completed by documents conserved in the archives of Czech Philharmonic and the Toronto Symphony as well as in many private archives or estates. There also is an important supporting source of knowledge captured in the oral history of contemporary witnesses from Canada or Czechoslovakia.

RESULTS:

The thesis pictures a particular period of Ančerl's life which has not been elaborated so far. It also has not drawn any academic awareness till present times. In comparison to Ančerl's long term activities connected to the Czech Philharmonic, which brought outstanding achievements on an international music scene, the conductor's engagement in Toronto has always been considered to be a less important topic which was interrupted by Ančerl's death. This short termed period of Ančerl's life had not a chance to produce significant results on the

international level. This thesis wants to present links between Ančerl's way of working with the Czech Philharmonics and with the Toronto Symphony, to declare the continuity of his private as well as artistic approaches. Another result of the thesis is to help to understand some particular stereotypes which are present if we interpret Ančerl's artistic influence only by reflecting his activities in connection to the Czech Philharmonics. We shall not forget, that the period after 1968 is nothing else but a natural continuum of Ančerl's work. Anyway there is one significant exception: in this period, Karel Ančerl was allowed to work and live in a free environment, in an environment which connected the personal integrity with a particular responsibility. Even if missing his homeland, this was the environment, where Karel Ančerl could work feeling happiness and meaning of life.

KEYWORDS:

Karel Ančerl, Toronto, Toronto Symphony, Czech Philharmonic, Ivan Medek, occupation, freedom, orchestra quality, artistic achievement