

LEV ABELIOVICH

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Lev Abeliovich was a Lithuanian composer born in Vilnius in 1912 but moved to Warsaw to study the piano at the Conservatory with Dzhevecky.

Abeliovich's first attempts at composition date from 1935. He was profoundly interested in folk music, literature and poetry. His collection of books in his small apartment included books in Belorussian, Russian, Polish and French. He has an interest in the poetry of the British mystic, William Blake.

He was a very self-critical composer and an active and reviser of his own works. When studying with Miakovsky from 1944 -1947 he destroyed his first two piano sonatas as they were 'inadequate'.

Among with many other European Jews, Abeliovich was severely persecuted by the Socialism of the Nazis.

He escaped to Belorussia from Poland to prevent the possibility of a concentration camp. He remained in Belorussia until his death in 1985 although he was in Moscow from 1944 to 1951.

In the Belorussian Conservatory he had studied with Zolotarioff graduating in 1941 when he volunteered for the Soviet Army.

In his final years, he suffered from depression and became something of a recluse.

As to his works there are three piano sonatas (1953, 1957 and 1974). The last sonata suffered from the influence of Scriabin's Piano Sonata no 4.

The first set of Frescoes date from 1965 a set of nine pieces with the title

- Footsteps in the Night
- Fugitive
- Time of Mourning
- Soaring
- Silence
- Procession
- Requiem
- Scherzo
- Culmination

The second set dates from 1973

Other works include three violin and piano sonatas (1939, 1947, 1948), oboe sonata (1950) piano trio (1955) four symphonies (1962, 1964, 1967, 1967), clarinet sonata (1972) piano concerto (1978-1980);

His work varies in quality but there is much to admire.

A smaller piece lasting about 8 minutes is the elegiac Aria for violin and orchestra, which serves as a good introduction to his music.

Abeliovich died in Minsk in 1985

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