

## MARCEL MIHALOVICI

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Marcel Mihalovici is another composer ignored and almost completely forgotten.

He was a French composer born in Bucharest, Roumania on 22 October 1896. He was discovered by Georges Enesco and, at the age of 21, Marcel moved to Paris to study with Vincent d'Indy.

Mihalovici became a prolific composer and was successful in every genre. His works include:

- Three nocturnes for piano Op 6
- Sonatine for piano Op 11
- Dialogues for clarinet and piano Op 12
- Chansons et Jeux for voice and piano
- Impromptus for piano op 19
- Violin Sonata no 1
- String Quartet no 1
- Karaguez puppet ballet for orchestra Op 23
- Opera: Ophee aux Enfers Op 27
- Chindia, Roumania popular dance for orchestra Op 28
- Four Caprices for piano Op 29
- Serenade for piano trio Op 30
- String Quartet no 2 Op 31
- Chanson, Pastorale and Romanian Dance for piano Op 32
- Concerto quasi un fantasie for violin and orchestra Op 33
- Sonata for three clarinets Op 33
- Five Bagatelles for piano Op 37
- Divertissement for small orchestra Op 38
- Rhapsody concertnate for orchestra Op 40
- Prelude and Invention for string orchestra Op 42
- Toccata for piano and orchestra Op 44
- Violin Sonata no 2 Op 45
- Ricerare for piano Op 46
- Viola Sonata Op 47
- Symphonie pour le temps present op 48 (1944)
- Sequences for orchestra
- Sonata for violin and cello Op 50
- Contrerimes for violin and piano Op 51
- String Quartet no 3 Op 52
- Variations for harp and string orchestra Op 54
- Opera: Phedre Op 58
- Sonata for solo violin Op 59
- Ritournelles for orchestra Op 61
- Four Pastorals Op 62
- Three nocturnes for piano Op 63
- Etude for piano, wind. brass. celeste and percussion Op 64
- Symphony no. 1 (Sinfonia Giocoso) Op 65 (1951)
- Symphony no 2 (Sinfonia partitia) Op 66



Two Poesis for SATB Op 67  
 Five Motets Op 68  
 Opera: The Homecoming Op 70  
 Trio for oboe clarinet and bassoon Op 71  
 Elegy for orchestra Op 72  
 Ballet: Scences from Thesee for orchestra Op 73  
 Ballet: Alternament for orchestra Op 74  
 Evening Songs voice and piano Op 75  
 Tragic Overture for orchestra Op 76  
 Sonata for bassoon and piano  
 Sonata for clarinet and piano Op 78  
 Exercise for string orchestra Op 80  
 Opera Krapp's last tape Op 81  
 Symphony no 3 (Sinfonia Variants)  
 Improvisations for piano and percussion Op 83  
 Opera: The Tunis Op 84  
 Musique Nocturen for clarinet and chamber orchestra Op 87  
 Symphony no 4 (Sinfonia Cantate) for baritone, chorus and orchestra  
 Aubade for string orchestra Op 89  
 Piano Sonata Op 90  
 Dialogues for clarinet and piano Op 92  
 Perples for small orchestra Op 93  
 Symphony no 5 (In Memorium Hans Rosbaud) Op 92  
 Pretexts for oboe, bass clarinet, piano, percussion and string orchestra Op 95  
 Variants for horn and piano Op 96  
 Cantus Firmus for two pianos Op 97  
 Rondo for orchestra Op 98  
 Serioso for bass saxhorn and piano Op 99  
 Cantilene for mezzo soprano and chamber orchestra Op 100  
 Recit for solo clarinet Op 101  
 Melopeia for solo oboe Op 102  
 Sonata: Chant Premiere for tenor saxophone and orchestra  
 Texts for viola and piano Op 104  
 Passacaglia for piano, on enand Op 105  
 Folia, Paraphrases for orchestra Op 106  
 Delie, cantata for soprano and orchestra (or piano) Op 107  
 Sonata-Danse for cello and piano Op 108  
 Maliconia Cantata for soprano, bass, string quartet and orchestra Op 109  
 Sonata for solo viola Op 110  
 String Quartet no 4 Op 111  
 Mirror of Songs for flute and piano Op 112  
 Torse, meditation for solo violin Op 113  
 Elegy no 2 for violin and piano Op 114

Mihalovici married the renowned concert pianist Monique Haas (29 October 1909–9 June 1987). She was excellent at Debussy and especially Ravel and recorded her husband's Toccata for piano and orchestra. She was a fine pianist who, like many others of the time, did not venture into Romantic music but specialised in Couperin, Rameau, Haydn, Mozart, French composers, was excellent in Bartok's Piano Concerto no 3 and in 1965 she recorded the Ravel Concerto with Paul Paray which was flawless and indicated Ravel's love for Mozart.

As we have said, her husband wrote an extended Toccata for piano and orchestra for her, a brilliant work of contrasts which should be in pianists repertoire.

Mihalovici was a good friend of the Irish poet Walter Beckett (1906–1989), a playwright who wrote gloomy, bleak and tragic works of what is now called black humour and gallows humour. Mihalovici set *Cascando* in 1962, and set *Krapp's Last Tape* and, in the *Symphony no 5*, dedicated to that excellent conductor Hans Rosbaud, a soprano sings a text by Beckett. However, Beckett was a Nobel prize winner, but his pessimistic works do not appeal to everybody.

The *Symphonie pour le temps present* Op 48 of 1944 is simply a tremendous work. There is never a dull moment. The music is often epic and the orchestration is as good as you find anywhere. The performance by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra under Jean Martinon was as sensational as anything I have ever heard. It is a work of outstanding quality; it is supreme and the only other work in this highest echelon is Roussel's *Third Symphony*.

The *Symphony no 1* (*Sinfonia giocoso*) is an eighteen minute work, light in the sense that it is not heavy or profound, and, as the title suggests, cheerful. The work has fine writing for woodwind and sometimes gives the impression of chamber music. The music is episodic and, at times, the music is taut. Perhaps the music does not flow, although the finale begins frantically. The work reminds me of a *Divertimento* for wind by Mozart or one of the wind symphonies of J C Bach, although the musical content is not baroque or classical.

The *Symphony no 3* (*Sinfonia Variata*) is a fine work with activity and drama. The orchestration is quite superb and the music has the glowing warmth of Berg and the logic of Schoenberg. There are ethereal moments on a canvas of beauty and coherence. The variations are diverse and well-conceived. Even the waltz variation is highly commendable and the humour is obvious. Thirteen or fourteen minutes into the work, we have a glorious string melody and the woodwind take up fragments of this melody. The music is so well integrated. The timpani registers 'heartbeats' and there is a terrific orchestral flourish. The music continues in a remarkably logical vein and there is always something of interest including a fugato developed with great skill. There is drama, excitement and a forward motion which leads to agitation. The dissonances are rivetting. A violin solo of tremendous beauty is echoed by the cello. This is followed by a coda and this 22 minute work comes to a sudden end. Very impressive.

This is yet another example that proves that this composer is seriously underrated.

*Pretexts* for oboe, clarinet and chamber orchestra of 1968 is an exceptional chamber of impressive originality. The piano and other percussion instruments play a vital role in this exciting and stimulating work.

Mihalovici died in Paris on 12 August 1985.

What can be done to cause people to promote his music?

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