

EMIL VON REZNICEK

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This composer is only known for this Overture Donna Diana which has had many performances and an astonishingly bad performance conducted by Willi Boskovsky whom I have never heard give a good performance of anything.

Emil von Reznicek was born in Vienna on 4 May 1860. In Graz, he studied law and music simultaneously but abandoned law in favour of music where his main tutor was Wilhelm Mayer, who was also known as W A Remy.

Mayer (1831-1898) was an Austrian-Bohemian composer and teacher, born in Prague who acquired a doctorate in law and among his pupils in music were Weingartner, Heuberger and Busoni. Mayer wrote five symphonies, orchestral works, *Das Waldfraulein*, a concert opera, chamber music and songs.

Reznicek took up conducting in Graz, Berlin and elsewhere. He was the Kappellmeister of the 88th infantry in Prague from 1886 to 1894. *Donna Diana* was premiered in 1894 and was the only success he had.

In the spring of 1902, he settled in Berlin but toured Britain and Russia several times. In 1933, when the Nazis came to power, he decided not to get involved.

He was a friend of Richard Strauss although it was not always amicable. It seems quite clear that Reznicek parodied some of Strauss's works. Reznicek's symphonic poem *Schlemmi* of 1912 is a take off of Strauss's *Ein Heldenleben* of 1899.

Reznicek had a sarcastic sense of humour which many found to be offensive. Such examples can be detected in his opera *Ritter Blaubert*, *Dance around the Golden Calf* from *Der Singer* and the finale of the *Symphony no 5*, the *Dance Symphony*.

He died in Berlin on 2 August 1945. He was 85.

He composed five symphonies

1 in D minor Tragic	1902
2 in B flat Ironic	1904
3 in D Im alten Still	1918 (In the olden style)
4 in F minor	1919
5 Dance Symphony	1924

The most successful symphony is the first but at fifty minutes in length may be a little overlong. The *Symphony no 4* has 89 pages of full scores and is in four movements

Moderato pesante
Trauermarsch auf den Tod eines Komodiante
Allegro molto
Moderato un poco maestoso



The Symphony no 5 is made up of a polonaise, czardas, landler and tarantella

The symphonies are not highly regarded at this time. They are often dry and lack contrast and vitality

Other orchestral works include :

Symphonic Suite no 1	1883
Eine Lustpiel Overture	1895
Symphonic Suite in D	1896
Overture Wie Till Eulenspiegel lebte	1900
overture Fruhlings	1903
Nachtstucke cello and orchestra	1903
Serenade for strings no 1	1905
Konzertstuck for violin and orchestra	1918
Violin Concerto in E minor	1918
Serenade for strings no 2	1926
Kol Nidrei symphonic variations	1929
12 Operas	
2 operetta	

Ballet

I am not listing these as I have not heard them or seen scores and so cannot give any useful details. I hope someone will at a future date.

3 String quartets

Unnumbered quartet

Unfinished quartet

Small piano pieces

3 organ works

Reznicek was not, and never will be, a big time composer and his sardonic approach

to others and to their music does not stand him in good stead. His music is not very original but often competent as seen in his finest work, the Symphony no. 1. He did not have an individual voice but it is for everyone to hear his music and make up their own minds.

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