

## Jaromir Weinberger



Jaromir Weinberger photo

“At the conservatory I have a very talented pupil from Prague: Bohemian – but also hereditarily predisposed with the Bohemians’ terrific sense of tone color. I gladly put up with such hereditary predisposition!”

\_(Max Reger about Jaromir Weinberger in a letter, dated 22 December 1915, to Adolf Wach, one of Felix Mendelssohn’s son-in-laws)

Whoever wants to understand Jaromir Weinberger’s overwhelming success at the end of the 1920s only has to reach for a CD with the *Polka and Fugue from Schwanda the Bagpiper*, for example, in the interpretation by Fritz Reiner and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra: the melodies and rhythms of the pupil of a pupil of Dvorak, Bohemian, innately musical, catchy. That’s the one thing. On the other hand, one hears an intellectually elaborated and yet spontaneously effective technique of orchestral writing that is reminiscent of his teacher Max Reger’s *Mozart Variations*. Some ten years after the opera from which these two orchestral pieces are taken, he composed, already in French exile, the orchestral variations on *Under the Spreading Chestnut Tree*, which were then premiered in the USA and that, on the one hand, seem obliged to the same model and also to Johannes Brahms, but, on the other hand, also to the tonal horizon of the large city, the revue, and the sound film. Like the other variations, the seemingly “academic” fugato finale is also joined here to the previous movement by an unusual piano solo, as if a pensive bar pianist were improvising in between.

With none of his later stage works was Weinberger able to repeat the huge success of *Švanda dudak*, the strikingly folksy and yet anything but old-fashioned opera that makes enormous demands on the performers. It is not a “comic opera” for light voices and a mere municipal theater orchestra. The great conductors of the time, such as Erich Kleiber and Clemens Krauss, stood on the rostrum. It is significant that Weinberger was particularly acclaimed by the German public of the Weimar Republic, that is to say, in a heady phase between the stiff imperial era and the culturally narrow-minded, dull “Third Reich.” That is why he was also to write the operetta *Frühlingsstürme* (“Spring Storms”) for Berlin’s Admiralspalast, as the Lehar of a new era, so to speak, an era that was to begin a few days after the premiere in January 1933, albeit in an entirely different manner, and that was initially to drive Weinberger out of Germany, then out of Austria and

Czechoslovakia, and ultimately out of Europe. Beside the retrospective melancholy – for example, in the grand romance “Du wärst für mich die Frau gewesen” (“You would have been the woman for me”) for Richard Tauber as the Japanese officer and abjuring lover – one also hears in the music of *Frühlingsstürme* the snappy asphalt rhythms of the buffo couple, “Nimm mich nach China mit, ins Reiche der Mitte” (“Take me with you to China, to the Middle Kingdom”), where there were allegedly none of all those things that were so disturbing at that time in Germany. The libretto, written by Gustav Beer, was namely quite “political.”

In 1937 Weinberger finished his last stage work, the opera *Wallenstein*, which was premiered in Vienna in the German translation by Max Brod. The original Czech libretto, like that of *Švanda dudak*, was written by Miloš Karelš, only this time the subject was not a fairytale-like legend, but a multi-part historical play, a classic by Schiller that was unwieldy for musical theater and anything but obvious as an opera plot. Nevertheless, Weinberger succeeded in composing a fanciful score and vocal roles with audience appeal; with ease he wrote melodies that under other political circumstances would surely have established the story of the Bohemian commander on the opera stage. But Austrian chancellor Kurt Schuschnigg, to whom the opera is dedicated, already had no chance against the National Socialist pressure from Berlin.

Just after his arrival in the USA, Weinberger described himself in an article for *Musical America* (10 February 1939) as “a composer of the past ... the time in which we are living, has nothing to say to me.” And yet, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, one can perhaps recognize the Europe of Weinberger’s time more clearly in his works, as recent performances of *Wallenstein* prove, than in those of many of his contemporaries.

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## OPERAS

### The Beloved Voice

(Milovaný hlas / Die geliebte Stimme)

1930

3 hr

Opera in three acts

Major roles: S,2M,A,3T,hBar,Bar,B;  
minor roles: 2T,B; chorus; children's chorus;  
3.2(II=corA).2.2-4.3.3.1-timp.perc:cym/BD/3tgl/carillon/tam-t/glsp/SD/xyl-cel-2harp-ma  
nd-strings

**World Premiere: 28 Feb 1931**

Bayerische Staatsoper, München, Germany  
with Elisabeth Feuge, Fritz Krauss, Luisa Willer  
Conductor: Hans Knappertsbuch

Availability: This work is available from Boosey & Hawkes for the world excluding USA

### Frühlingsstürme

(Jarní bouře/Spring Storms)

Jaromir Weinberger, arranged by Norbert Biermann

1933

2 hr 30 min

Operetta in 3 acts

2S,2T; small roles; speaking roles; opt. chorus;  
3(III=picc).2(II=corA).2.asax.tsax.2-4.3.3.1-timp.perc(4):xyl/glsp/crot/cym/sups.cym(C  
rash,Splash)/hi-hat/2tam-t(sm,lg)/2gong(C#,A#)/2cowbell/finger  
cymbals/SD/BD/tamb/tgl/wdbl/5tpl.bl/ratchet/whip/t.bell(G#)/wind machine/thunder  
sheet/rain stick/chimes/flatone/air pump-harp-mand/banjo-cel/org(opt)-strings;  
on-stage: ob-3tpt.3trbn-pft-drum set

**World Premiere: 20 Jan 1933**

Theater im Admiralspalast, Berlin, Germany  
Heinz Saltenburg, director; Richard Tauber, Jarmila Novotná, Oskar Homolka and  
others  
Conductor: Manfred Gurlitt

Availability: This work is available from Boosey & Hawkes for the world

### The Outcasts of Poker Flat

(Lide z Pokerflatu)

1932

3 hr

Opera in five acts

2S,A,2T,Bar,B,4speakers; chorus  
3(III=picc).1.corA.2.ssax(=asax).tsax.2(II=dbn)-4.3.3.1-  
timp.perc-pft-harp-banjo-org-strings

**World Premiere: 19 Nov 1932**

Brno, Czech Republic  
unknown

Availability: This work is available from Boosey & Hawkes for the world excluding USA

### Schwanda the Bagpiper

(Svanda Dudak / Schwanda, der Dudelsackpfeifer)

1927

1 hr 55 min

Folk opera in two acts

Major roles: dramS,heldT,Bar; minor roles: dramM,B;  
small roles: 5T,2B; chorus;  
3(II,III=picc).2(II=corA).2(II=bcl).2(II=dbn)-4.3(=bugles).3.1-  
timp.perc(3): tgl/cym/SD/BD/tam-t/tamb/xyl/glsp/carillon-2harp-cel-org-  
strings;

Reduced scoring: 2(II=picc).2.2.2-3.2.2.0-timp.perc:3tgl/cym/BD/SD/t  
am-t/susp.cym/xyl/tamb/chimes/t.bells-org-cel-pft(ad lib)-strings

9790202519356 **Libretto (German)**

**World Premiere: 27 Apr 1927**

National Theatre , Prague, Czechoslovakia (former)  
National Theatre, Prague  
Conductor: Otakar Ostrcil

Availability: This work is available from Boosey & Hawkes for the world excluding USA

## Wallenstein

(Valdstejn)

1937

3 hr

Musical tragedy in six scenes

2S,5T,Bar,2BBar,3B; chorus;

3.2(II=corA).2(II=bcl).2(II=dbn)-4.3.3.1-timp.perc-harp-strings

**World Premiere: 18 Nov 1937**

Operntheater, Wien, Austria

Dr. Lothar Wallerstein, director; Alfred Jerger (Wallenstein) / Fred Destal (Octavio) /

Friedrich Ginrod (Max) / Esther Réthy (Thekla)

Conductor: Wolfgang Martin

Availability: This work is available from Boosey & Hawkes for the world excluding USA

## FULL ORCHESTRA

### The Beloved Voice

#### Overture to the Opera (Die geliebte Stimme)

1930

9 min

for orchestra

3(III=picc).2(II=corA).2.2-4.3.3.1-timp.perc:tgl/cyms/BD-harp-cel-strings

Availability: This work is available from Boosey & Hawkes for the world excluding USA

### Christmas

Weihnachten

1929

20 min

for orchestra

3(III=picc).2.corA.2.bcl.2.dbn-4.3.3.1-timp.perc:glsp/t.bells/  
cowbells/cyms/tam-t/tgl/BD-2harps-cel-pft-organ-strings

Availability: This work is available from Boosey & Hawkes for the world excluding USA

### Overture to a Marionette Play

1924

12 min

for orchestra

3(III=picc).2.2.2-4.3.3.0-timp.perc:xyl/cyms/tgl/SD/rattle-harp-cel-  
strings

Availability: This work is available from Boosey & Hawkes for the world excluding USA

### Passacaglia

1931

25 min

for orchestra (with organ)

3.3.3.3-6(4).4(3).4(3).1-timp.perc:t.bells/cyms/BD-organ-strings

Availability: This work is available from Boosey & Hawkes for the world excluding USA

### Prelude and Fugue on 'Dixie'

1940

5 min

for orchestra

3(III=picc).2.2.2-4.3.3.1-timp.perc:tgl/tam-t/SD/glsp/cym/BD-harp-  
organ(ad lib)-strings  
stage band(ad lib):2hn.2tpt.2trbn-perc:SD

Availability: This work is available from Boosey & Hawkes for the UK and British  
Commonwealth

### Preludes religieux et profanes

1954

39 min

for orchestra

3.2.2.2-4.3.3.1-timp.perc:tgl/tam-t/cym/BD/sleigh bells-harp-strings

Availability: This work is available from Boosey & Hawkes for the world

### Schwanda the Bagpiper

Furiant

1927

3 min

3.2.2.2-4.3.3.1-timp.perc:cym/tgl/SD-harp-cel-strings

Availability: This work is available from Boosey & Hawkes for the world excluding USA

### Schwanda the Bagpiper

Overture

3.2.2.2-4.3.3.1-timp.perc-2harp-cel-strings

Availability: This work is available from Boosey & Hawkes for the world excluding USA

### Schwanda the Bagpiper

Polka and Fugue

1927

11 min

3(III=picc).2.2.2-4.7<sup>\*</sup>.3.1-timp.perc:t.bells/cyms/tgl/BD/SD-harp-  
organ(ad lib)-strings

\\*3 trumpets in C, 4 off-stage trumpets in Bb

Availability: This work is available from Boosey & Hawkes for the world excluding USA

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**Schwanda the Bagpiper****Suite****1927**

23 min

3.2.2.2-4.2.3.1-timp.perc:xyl/cyms/tgl/BD/SD-harp-cel-strings

Availability: This work is available from Boosey &amp; Hawkes for the world excluding USA

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**Six Bohemian Songs and Dances****1930**

30 min

for orchestra

2.2.2.2-4.2.3.0-timp.perc:cym/tam-t/glsp/SD/BD-harp-cel-strings

Availability: This work is available from Boosey &amp; Hawkes for the world excluding USA

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**Song of the High Seas****1940**

10 min

for orchestra

3(III=picc).2(1).corA.2.bcl(ad lib).2.dbn-4.3.3.1-timp.perc:cyms/  
tam-t/BD-harp-organ(ad lib)-stringsAvailability: This work is available from Boosey & Hawkes for the UK and British  
Commonwealth

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**Under the Spreading Chestnut Tree****1939, rev. 1941**

12 min

Variations and Fugue on an Old English Tune

3(III=picc).2.2.2-4.3.3.0-timp.perc:SD/cyms/BD-harp-pft-organ pedal  
(ad lib)-stringsAvailability: This work is available from Boosey & Hawkes for the UK and British  
Commonwealth

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**Wallenstein****Suite****1937**

20 min

3.2.2.2-4.3.3.1-timp.perc-2harps-cel-pft(ad lib)-organ-strings

Availability: This work is available from Boosey &amp; Hawkes for the world excluding USA

**CHAMBER ORCHESTRA**

**Overture to a Knightly Play**

1931

10 min

for orchestra

1.1.1.1-2.2.1.0-perc:bells(ad lib)/tgl/tam-t/SD/cym-pft-harmonium-strings

Availability: This work is available from Boosey & Hawkes for the world excluding USA

## CHORUS AND ORCHESTRA

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### **The Beloved Voice**

#### **Bosnian Rhapsody**

1930

20 min

for soprano solo, chorus, and orchestra

2.picc.2.2.2-4.3.3.1-timp.perc:glsp/cyms/tgl/BD-2harps-cel-mandolin-strings

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Availability: This work is available from Boosey & Hawkes for the world excluding USA