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A VALUABLE SERIES FROM DONEMUS ON PERSECUTED COMPOSERS

Forbidden Music Regained. A collaborative project by Donemus Publishing, the Leo Smit Foundation and the Netherlands Music Institute dedicated to the discovery and promotion of the works of composers persecuted and banned in the Second World War. Stichting Donemus Beheer, 2021–2024 [5 volumes (25 scores each); available in print or as PDF]

Musicians and music listeners love a good story. Ethel Smyth conducted with a toothbrush while imprisoned. Edwin Starr's "War," the epitome of anti-war songs, was originally written for and recorded by the Temptations. Birgit Nilsson just needs comfortable shoes to sing Wagner. Pink Floyd wrote Dark Side of the Moon to synchronize with the Wizard of Oz. We love repeating these stories and giving them glow-ups. We love revisiting them and reshaping them. We love claiming their authenticity and researching and questioning them. They find their way into preconcert talks, proclaimed from conductors' podium at rehearsals and performances, and retold in dorm rooms. To riff on the cliché, musicians are not ones to let the truth get in the way of a good story.

Musicians and music listeners, especially those engaged with classical music, also like to perpetuate the idea that the "music itself" is what matters most. This may not seem so bad on the surface, but it is often wielded in ways to gatekeep and exclude new and marginalized musicians and composers. The idea here is not only that new (to us) music must meet a clear-and-understood bar of excellence, but also that now-accepted music and composers have met and have always met that same bar. The antidote, as I see it, is to celebrate the music and the story. And, in the context of music study, to research both the music and the story. Our understanding of music and musicians in their cultural contexts informs us of our enjoyment and performance of the music we listen to and play.

Forbidden Music Regained, a score series by Donemus Publishing, the Leo Smit Foundation, and the Dutch Institute of Music (Nederlands Muziek Instituuthas), is an ambitious project to do just that: to enrich music repertoire by promoting the music and stories of Dutch persecuted composers. Thus far, they have published 125 scores, organized into five volumes of twenty-five scores each, and have plans to continue with further volumes. The scores are published and printed in standard and study sizes and are available to purchase as PDFs and through Newzik. The scores can be ordered individually or as a group of twenty-five in a volume, but the volumes are not bound together. When a volume is ordered, the purchaser will receive twenty-five individual scores, suited for study and performance. Each volume has works by thirteen to seventeen composers, and volumes two through five all introduce new composers and return to composers included in previous volumes. There are works by over thirty composers in the first five volumes.

Each score has front matter including a biographical note about the composer supplied by the Leo Smit Foundation and notes on the music contained written by Lourens Stuifbergen. These excellent inclusions to the scores provide the needed context for the composers and compositions, and they highlight the extraordinary need for this series. All of the included composers lived and

worked in the Netherlands before or during World War II, and their music was banned either because they were Jewish or because they refused to collaborate with the Nazi demands for public performance in the Netherlands.

Each composer has a compelling story, worthy of attention. Marius Flothuis lost his position at the Concertgebouw after refusing to become a member of the Kultuurkamer, an institution established by Nazi Germany on the model of the Reichskulturkammer. He hid refugees in his house, distributed clandestine magazines, and held illegal house concerts, often called black evenings, to raise money. In 1943, he was arrested and sent to the Amstelveensewg prison in Asterdam and then to Camp Vught. He survived a death march from the Sachsenhausen concentration camp in Berlin to Schwerin near the Baltic Sea. While imprisoned, he wrote twenty-five works for friends and fellow prisoners, some of which are included in the series (https://www.forbiddenmusicregained.org/search/composer/id/100022). Géza Frid fled Hungary for the Netherlands in 1927. Unable to officially work during the war because he was Jewish, he managed to avoid arrest while organizing nearly fifty house concerts and working to forge documents. After the war he became a Dutch citizen and continued musical life as a prolific composer and concertizer (https://www.forbiddenmusicregained.org/search/composer/id/100023).

Of particular note is the music of six female composers included in the series thus far: Johanna Bordewijk-Roepman, Henriëtte Bosmans, Fania Chapiro, Reine Colaço-Osorio-Swaab, Rosy Wertheim, and Marjo Tal. Here, the story isn't only a ban during World War Two. These composers faced obstacles as women in classical music composition, before, during, and after the war. Even in the narratives researched and told about suppressed music in the previous decades, the stories of suppressed women composers have been neglected. We are fortunate that Forbidden Music Regained has shone a light on the stories and music of these women.

Rosy Wertheim grew up in an affluent Jewish family, eventually living and working as a composer and journalist in both Paris and New York. During the war, she organized house concerts, primarily programming the works of Jewish composers. She later hid in the countryside, which didn't allow her to attend concerts where her music was performed. Her possessions, including her books, were all stolen—presumably her compositions survived because she took them with her when she fled to rural areas (https://www.forbiddenmusicregained.org/search/composer/id/100181). With the promise of a continued career, Henriette Bosmans registered with the Kultuurkamer. She was registered as half-Jewish, which, by 1942, led to her no longer being able to perform. In 1944, she successfully advocated for her mother's release from the Westerbork camp. Her *Doodenmarsch* (Death March) from 1944 is available through the Regained series. After the war, she continued composing and performing and was knighted in the Order of Orange-Nassau in 1951 (https://www.forbiddenmusicregained.org/search/composer/id/100018).

Dutch classical music from this period isn't particularly well known. Willem Pijper, Henk Badings, and Hendrik Andriessen (father of Louis Andriessen) are perhaps the most well-known, but all of them lie outside the persecuted category for the Regained series. For more on music in the Netherlands, see the *Algemene muziek encyclopedie*, available in RILM Music Encyclopedias. While the war and occupation undoubtedly touched all musicians and composers living in the Netherlands at

the time, the focus on persecuted composers is a valuable lens for the series. The included composers faced financial hardship, arrest, and often death, and many of them participated in defiant acts, including clandestine concerts and publishing. That their scores have survived is a testament to extraordinary acts of preservation by the composers and their friends and family members. Donemus, the Leo Smit Foundation, and the Dutch Institute of Music have undertaken an incredible next step in the preservation process, one that allows study and performance today and into the future.

In addition to the information included on each score, the Leo Smit Foundation has biographies and lists of works and available recordings for all of the included composers on their website (https://leosmitfoundation.org/) and on the Forbidden Music Regained website (https://www.forbiddenmusicregained.org/). Donemus also offers over five hundred additional scanned manuscripts in their web-shop (https://webshop.donemus.com/). There, one can preview and purchase the scans; every example I viewed had very clear copy suitable for performance. They have an open invitation for engravers to contribute modern engraving for these scanned works, another opportunity for musicians to help further the Regained collection.

The mission of Forbidden Music Regained doesn't end with scores. They seek and organize performances and recordings as well. In collaboration with the Conservatory of Amsterdam (Conservatorium van Amsterdam), they have held four festivals dedicated to performances of the works in the series (https://donemus.nl/forbidden-music-regained-fourth-festival/). Additionally, they have joined forces with Wiener Holocaust Library and Symphonova UK Ltd. to bring large orchestral works to a global audience through technological instrumental playback for live performance and recordings (https://donemus.nl/donemus-joins-international-consortium-reawakening-suppressed-music/). These performances and recording projects help complete the picture for musicians and listeners eager to hear and study the music of suppressed composers.

The scores in this series are suitable for study and performance at the professional and college levels, and some will work well for amateur and student performers. I was recently assisting a pre-college patron find scores for orchestra and chamber ensembles by persecuted composers. While looking through the Forbidden Music Regained catalog and websites, we were able to find multiple works to fit their needs. I was happy to see how excited they were by the options and by the recordings and biographical information provided. It was gratifying to see that they would be able to quickly navigate possible scores, listen to recordings, and narrow their search to pieces and composers that they found compelling.

The breadth and depth of Forbidden Music Regained is astounding. I've been researching the life and music of Ernst Bachrich for around a decade. Bachrich's life and music is similar to the composers covered by this series, but he lived and worked in Germany and Austria. Because of my interest and research in suppressed music and musicians, I'm especially impressed with what the Regained team has accomplished with the thirty-three composers in the series. It represents a tremendous feat of research and publishing. It is currently the most significant endeavor of its kind—a worthy task I hope more publishers join in the coming years.

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