

# **An Analysis of Věroslav Neumann's *Sbohem, Praho* (*Good-bye, Prague*)**

by

**Dr. Amy Dunker**

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**Instrumentation:** Piccolo  
Flute 1 – 2  
Oboe 1 - 2  
Bassoon 1 – 2  
Eb Clarinet  
Bb Clarinet 1 – 3  
Bass Clarinet  
Eb Alto Saxophone 1 – 2  
Bb Tenor Saxophone 1 - 2  
Eb Baritone Saxophone  
  
Bb Trumpet 1 – 2  
Flugelhorn 1 - 2  
Horn in F 1 – 4  
Trombone 1 – 3  
Tenor Horn  
Baritone 1 - 2  
Tuba 1 - 2  
  
Timpani  
Chimes  
Percussion I: Suspended Cymbal, Triangle, Tambouring  
Percussion II: Tam-Tam, Triangle, Snare Drum, Suspended Cymbal  
Percussion III: Bass Drum, Cymbals

**Harmonic Language:** Tonal (Bb Major, C Major, G Major, Ab Major, Bb minor)

**Meter:** Mixed (5/4, 6/4, 4/4, 3/4, 9/8, 12/8, 6/8)

**Texture:** Counterpoint, Melody and Accompaniment

**Duration:** 8 Minutes

**Grade:** 5

**Composition Date:** 2002

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### **Composer Bio:**

**Věroslav Neumann** (b May 27, 1931 at Citoliby near Louny, Czechoslovakia; d November 21, 2006, Prague, Czech Republic) gained a formal education in composition at the Prague Academy of Arts under Jaroslav Řídký. Parallel to this, he learned his compositional skill from practical experience, as well as from collaborating with a wide range of amateur and professional ensembles. Later on, teaching assisted this contemplative composer, modern in his thoughts and sentiments, in finding his personal language on a highly professional level in chamber and symphonic music, as well as in the simpler forms for young and amateur music-makers.

It is no coincidence that a considerable share of his work is represented by vocal compositions, among which, the most numerous, are songs, choruses, and songs or cycles for children in various age groups and levels of difficulty.

Neumann's vocal works, striking in their originality, are profoundly effective musically. High appreciation has been accorded to his chorus *Soleils Couchants* (Setting Suns) at the International Choral competition in Tours (1982). He was awarded prizes at the World Festivals of Democratic Youth and Students in Warsaw (1958) and in Helsinki (1962). In 1987, the Panton Publishing House Award was given to him for his *Songs of Defiance and Strength* while the Union of Czech Composers and Concert Artists Prize was given to him for *Atlantis*. Many of his songs for children have been included in various anthologies in the USSR and the German Democratic Republic where they have become a permanent feature on

the repertoires of local choirs.

An intimate knowledge of instruments as well as of the potentials and mentality of young instrumentalists have stimulated Neumann in writing instructive works for diverse instruments and chamber ensembles.

Věroslav Neumann began to systematically turn his attention to symphonic and chamber works during his mature creative stage. In these works, there is marked evidence of his desire to continue to be communicative in his musical expression, endeavoring to impart to the listener, in an intelligible way, the prevailing complicated language of music. A clearly positive response to his *String Quartet*, organ compositions, *Symphonic Dances* and other works, some of which met with appreciation in Czechoslovak competitions, have proved his approach to be successful.

A specific feature of Neumann's work is his **intelligent wit** which he has shown to good advantage equally in his thirty-minute *Chimney Opera* and in his shorter forms, even in mixed choruses, which are traditionally considered to serious in tone. The humor, combined with his singular demonstration of feelings and expression in both his lyrical and dramatic works, point to important characteristics in Věroslav Neumann's compositions which are interesting from many points of view and most appealing.

Věroslav Neumann was the Director of the Conservatory of Music in Prague, Czech Republic after the Velvet Revolution from 1990-1998.

## Notes:

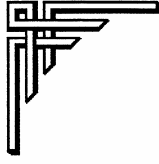
Inspired by 20th century Prague poet Jaroslav Seifert's poem, *Sbohem, Praho (Goodbye, Prague)*, Věroslav Neumann designed a work for symphonic winds in 2002. It is a creative musical expression whose playing follows upon the recitation of the Seifert poem. It was premiered by the Plzeň Conservatory Wind Orchestra under the direction of Neumann's friend, USA guest conductor, Joel Blahnik, for the closing concert of the 2003 school year on June 25, Plzeň, Czech Republic.

While composing *Sbohem, Praho (Goodbye, Prague)*, Věroslav Neumann tried to celebrate the marvelously beautiful city of Prague in the Czech Republic. This city located in the heart of Europe has been celebrated in music by many Czech composers before him, eg. the 19th century nationalistic composers, Bedřich Smetana and Josef Suk. It is not only Czech people who love this city; visitors from all continents are fascinated by it and enjoy its beauty. Visual artists are immediately drawn to sketch beauty of this Queen of European cities from many angles and views. This architectural marvel has become a place visitors desire to return to time and again.

It is well known that Prague heartily welcomed Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. It became a most significant city to him. *Don Giovanni* had its premiere in the Estates Theater. The villa Bertramka became home for him on his Prague visits and inspired the composition of music at the invitation of his hosts. Loved by the Prague public, Mozart visited Prague whenever he could. Here he was musically appreciated and felt very happy. His last visit took place a short time before his tragic early death.

The great 20th century Czech poet and Nobel peace prize winner, Jaroslav Seifert, has written a whole cycle of poems entitled, *Mozart in Prague*. The verse selected and presented here depicts with much imagination, Mozart's last departure from Prague. Inspired by this poem, Neumann was led to write this composition for symphonic band as a dedication to those who loved Prague and had to leave it. At the center of the composition is a Marcia funebre which was greatly influenced by this Seifert's poem.

Prague has many faces—architectural, historical, religious, musical, dramatic, political—and the life of its people projects many moods. The composer attempted to introduce many of them in at least abbreviated form within the composition.



## Mozart in Prague



If I say, Prague, woe to me,  
your eyes immediately shine on me;  
as if always under these roofs  
I threw down the burden from my shoulders.

And if I do not stand before you,  
everything around me sounds so false.  
If I say, Prague, woe to me,  
your eyes immediately shine on me.

I shall keep returning unknown  
and poor, even in rain, in winter,  
and I would not trade a straw bed in the corner  
for a palace in Rome.

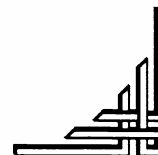
If I say, Prague, woe to me!  
He did not want to ride out of the gates,  
but he was tired by all the bustle.  
Prague is full of his music  
like a freshly bedewed pitcher.

Maybe the grey gentlemen will come again,  
he has already that face before his eyes;  
he did not want to ride out of these gates,  
but he was tired by all the bustle.

Surrounded by trunks on all sides,  
he huddled himself up in silence behind the curtain  
and they rode. This time the bells sounded to him  
like the blows of a death-knell;  
he did not want to ride out of the gates.

— Jaroslav Seifert

(translated from Czech by Mojmir Povolný)



**Form:**

A	ms. 1 – 42	Grave	BbM
B	ms. 43 – 84	Tempo di valzer Viennese	CM
Fanfare	ms. 85 – 93		
C	ms. 94 – 134	Quasi Marcia funebre	GM→CM→AbM→Bbm
B'	ms. 135 – 175		BbM
A'	ms. 176 – 197		BbM

**Theme 1 (Trombone I and II, ms. 4 – 6):**

*pp misterioso*

Trbn 1/2

**Theme 2 (Flute I and II, ms. 69 – 78):**

**Tempo di valzer viennese**

*p* *cresc. poco a poco*

Fl. 1/2

Fl. 1/2

**“Fanfare” Theme (Bb Trumpet I and II, ms. 85 – 86):**



**Theme 3 (Bb Clarinet I, ms. 96 – 98):**



**Theme 4 (Horn in F I and II, ms. 96 – 97):**



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