

7 **Symfonie A dur**

op. 7

**Symphony in A major**

1905

**Moderato assai**

cl I  
pp tranquillo  
vle, vcl, arpa  
cl II  
p  
vla, arpa

**Quasi maestoso**

cor I  
f

**Moderato**

pp cor I con sord  
cl  
f  
archi, cl, fg

**Vivace**

ff  
vle, vcl  
ff tutti

**Scoring**

fl I, II, III/picc – ob I, II, ci – cl I, II in A/B, bcl in A/B – fag I, II – cor I, II, III, IV in F – tr I, II, III – trbn I, II, III, tb – timp – trgl, ptti – arpa – archi

**Duration**

ca. 40 min

**History**

Ostrčil started composing the *Symphony* in the autumn 1903, he finished individual sketches of its four movements on 10 January, 28 February, 20 April, and 22 May 1904. The beginning of the work on the score is dated to 23 July 1904 in Wrocław, however, Ostrčil temporarily abandoned it and shifted his attention to *The Ballad of the Dead Cobbler and the Young Dancer* (cat. no. 6) instead. He returned to the *Symphony* early in 1905 and completed the instrumentation of the first movement on 29 January, the second on 22 March, the third on 4 April, and the fourth on 27 April 1905 (see *Autographs*). In the spring 1905 Ostrčil was considering also writing another opera based on the story “Zahořanský hon“ [The Hunt in Zahořany] by Alois Jirásek. Even though in the end he decided not to, he incorporated the idea of a grotesque night scene in the trio of the second movement of the *Symphony* (NEJEDLÝ 1935: 107-108)

The premiere took place a year later on 25 April 1906 in the Prague Rudolfinum and it was performed by the Czech Philharmonic under the baton of František Špilka, while in 1909 the composition was conducted by Vilém Zemánek.

Ostrčil himself performed the composition three times overall, in 1916 for the first time. He was not satisfied with the work of his two predecessors as evidenced by the letter from Ostrčil to Nejedlý from 25 July 1915 (ZACHAŘOVÁ 1982: 110): “I have just received a note from the Philharmonic asking which one of my compositions I wish to be performed in the upcoming year. I want to include my Symphony. [...] I think I will be asked to conduct it and I would like to show how I actually see it. So far I had no luck in this regard.” / [*Teď právě jsem dostal přípis z Filharmonie, kterou svou skladbu si přeji míti v příštím roce provedenu. Chci tam dáti symfonii. [...] Myslím, že budu zase vyzván, abych ji dirigoval, a rád bych ukázal, jak si ji vlastně představuji. Dosud jsem s tím neměl štěstí.*]

The second time he conducted the composition in 1928 during his stage in Gothenburg – it was one of the few performances of Ostrčil’s work abroad. The third time he conducted the *Symphony* on the occasion of his 50<sup>th</sup> birthday in 1929.

### Autographs

- Continuous sketch (Prague: NM-ČMH, SOO archives, folder no. 2996)  
70 fols., 333 × 260 mm in height, 12-line paper, written on 3-4 lines, pencil, parcellation in ink, 128 pp., paginated: 28+41+13+36. Cover made from a double-sheet of music paper, in Ostrčil’s hand, pencil: *Symfonie* | *skizza* [Symphony | sketch]. The end of the 1<sup>st</sup> movement dated to 10/1 1904, the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> movement: 28/2 1904, the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> movement: 20/4 1904, the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> movement: 22/5 1904.
- Score, clean copy (Prague: NM-ČMH, Tr B 260)  
Bound, black semi-leather binding, 343 × 263 mm in height, 348 fols., 24-line paper, different size of papers in the binding: 1<sup>st</sup> movement 320 × 250 mm, other movements 334 × 252 mm.  
On the binding stamped in gold: Otakar Ostrčil: | Symfonie A dur [Otakar Ostrčil: | Symphony in A major]. On the TP dedication in Julie Ostrčilová’s hand, ink: *Panu prof. Dru Zdeňku Nejedlému | ve vzpomínkách a vděku za | krásné, ryzí přátelství k na-|ší rodině. | Julie Ostrčilová. | Vánoce 1935* [To Prof Dr Zdeněk Nejedlý | in the memory of and the gratitude for the beautiful and sincere friendship with o-|ur family. Julie Ostrčilová]. Followed by 340 paginated pp., ink, occasional retouching and cuts in pencil, parcellation in blue pencil, infrequent interpretation notes in red pencil. On p. 1, the beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup> movement dated to: *Vratislav, 23/7 1904* [Wrocław, 23 July 1904], on p. 64 the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> movement: *29. ledna 1905* [29 January 1905], on p. 65 the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> movement: *15/2 1905*, on p. 204 the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> movement: *22/3 1905*, on p. 205 the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> movement: *25/3 1905*, on p. 234 the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> movement: *4/4 1905 | (večer | po div.)* [4/4 1905 | (night | after theatre)], on p. 235 the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> movement: *8/4 1904*, on p. 340 the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> movement: *27. dubna 1905 | večer dokončeno* [27 April 1905 | finished at night].

### MS copies

- Score (Prague, Czech Music Fund, inventory no. 1, previous owner: Syndicate of Czech composers)  
377 pp., ink, undated, unsigned [copyist Špok?, Špolc?], Ostrčil’s conducting notes, own parcellation, corrections of the musical text.
- Parts (Prague, Czech Music Fund, inventory no. 1, previous owner: Syndicate of Czech composers)

Ostrčil himself titled, parcelled and corrected the parts. They were arguably used in the performance on 10 December 1916 with the Czech Philharmonic under his baton as well as in Gothenburg on 8 November 1928 with the Gothenburg Symphony.

### Edition

None

### Performances

**Prem.:** 25 Apr 1906, Prague, Rudolfinum, koncert Jednoty pro orchestrální hudbu [Orchestral Music Cooperative Concert], Czech Philharmonic, František Špilka (cond.) ■ 31 Jan 1909, Prague, Czech Philharmonic, Vilém Zemánek (cond.) ■ 10 Dec 1916, Prague, Koncert Obchodní akademie [Business Academy Concert], Czech Philharmonic, O. Ostrčil (cond.) ■ 1920, třetí večer Uměleckého klubu [The 3<sup>rd</sup> Art Club Night], Ludvík Čelanský (cond.) ■ 1922, Czech Philharmonic, Václav Talich (cond.) ■ 8.-11. Nov 1928, Gothenburg, Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra, O. Ostrčil (cond.) ■ 14 Feb 1929, Prague, Municipal House, Koncert Radiojournalu – České filharmonie k Ostrčilovým 50tinám [Radiojournal – Czech Philharmonic Concert to Ostrčil's 50<sup>th</sup> birthday], O. Ostrčil (cond.) ■ 26 Apr 1939, Prague, Municipal House, 50. jubilejní koncert Orchestrálního sdružení [Orchestral Association 50<sup>th</sup> Jubilee Concert], Iša Krejčí (cond.)

### Discography

- CD Supraphon 1994, Prague Symphony Orchestra FOK, Jiří Bělohlávek (cond.), rec. 1980, published together with *Symfonietta*
- LP Supraphon 1982, 11102960, Prague Symphony Orchestra FOK, Jiří Bělohlávek (cond.), rec. 1980

### Correspondence

- Vladimír Helfert → Otakar Ostrčil, Brno, 5 June 1923: Helfert wishes to perform the *Symphony* with the Brno Orchestral Association and asks to borrow the score. (Prague: NM-ČMH, SOO archives)
- Otakar Ostrčil ↔ Zdeněk Nejedlý (ZACHAŘOVÁ 1982: 60, 61, 64, 66, 69, 76, 78, 79, 110, 111, 153, 190, 193)

### Literature

NEJEDLÝ 1935: 99, 105-111, 114, 125, 127, 148, 155, 320, 349 ■ HELFERT 1935: 135 ■ BARTOŠ 1936: 37-38, 74 ■ ČERVINKOVÁ 1971: 17 ■ DČHK 1 157, 158, 178, 217 ■ OČADLÍK 1995: 459-462 ■ ČERNÝ 2002: 116

**Periodicals:** Zvon 6, 1906, no. 34: pp. 542-543 (Z. NEJEDLÝ) ■ Osvěta 36, 1906, no. 6: pp. 553-557 (Z. NEJEDLÝ) ■ Hudební revue 2, 1909, pp. 191 (J. LÖWENBACH: critics of the concert on 21 March 1909) ■ Den 3, 1909, no. 6, pp. 1-2, also in book form Sebrané spisy [Collected works] 38, pp. 429-432 (Z. NEJEDLÝ) ■ Smetana 7, 1917, pp. 30-31 (Z. NEJEDLÝ: critics of the concert on 10 Dec 1916) ■ Hudební revue 10-11, 1917-18, pp. 144-145 (L. VYCPÁLEK: critics of the concert on 10 Dec 1916) ■ Hudba 1, 1920, p. 125 (B. TARABA, concert critics) ■ Smetana 12, 1922, p. 81-82 (J. BARTOŠ: "Jubilejní cyklus České filharmonie" [The Czech Philharmonic Jubilee Cycle], cycle review) ■ Göteborgs Tidningen 8 Nov 1928, 12 Nov 1928 ■ Göteborgs Morgonpost 12 Nov 1928 ■ Göteborgs-Posten 12 Nov 1928 (Ostrčil's stage in Gothenburg announcement and critics) ■ Gramophone, Aug 1982, p. 42, (W. S. MEADMORE, review)