



Fran Lhotka

**Koncert za gudački kvartet
Concerto for String Quartet**





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Zagreb, 2023



In the inter-war years in particular, Lhotka played an important role in the development of Croatian music with his artistic creations, abounding in graceful episodes and powerful gradations.

Krešimir Kovačević¹

Fran Lhotka was born on December 25, 1883, in the town of Mladá Vožice in Bohemia. In 1899 he became a student of the Prague Conservatory, studying horn and composition; he was taught composition by Karel Stecker, Josef Klička and Antonín Dvořák. Six years later he graduated in both courses; the graduation piece in composition was the “*Rej*” *Scherzo in F Major*, performed for the first time in the Musikverein Hall in Vienna. After he had done his military service, and worked for a short time as a teacher in a branch of the Moscow Conservatory in Yekaterinoslav (today Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine, once part of the Russian Empire), he arrived in Zagreb, in 1909, and accepted the job of first hornist and rehearsal pianist in the Opera. The increasingly better organisation of the concert scene and the reform of musical education made Zagreb an apt place for young composers to make a name for themselves. They arrived (mostly returning) from their training in Vienna, Prague, Budapest, Berlin and Paris, and in 1910 Lhotka was a teacher in the Music School of the Croatian Land Music Institute, later to be the Music Academy. In 1912 he left the Opera, and devoted himself full time to teaching and to composition. He worked as a teacher until the end of his life (he died on January 26, 1962 in Zagreb), with a break for World War II, when he went into retirement. Showing himself an all-round, talented and competent musician, along with the harmony that he taught the longest – forty years – in different periods he also taught horn, conducting, music theory, instrumentation, composition, orchestral score analysis and history of music. His lectures were attended by some of the most important Croatian composers and musicians of the future period - Ivo Brkanović, Bruno Bjelinski, Krešimir Kovačević, Stjepan Šulek and Slavko Zlatić. In addition, as conductor, from 1913 to 1921 he led the *Lisinski* Singing Association, greatly changing and improving on the previous choral practice, for which he won the title of “pioneer of high quality choral singing in the country”.² He also conducted the orchestra of the Music Academy (1922 – 1941) and for a short time the choir too, regularly winning lauds in Zagreb and in guest appearances, particularly for his championing of the performance of works by domestic composers, but also for the presentation of the masterpieces of the world repertoire. For some time he ran the Community Orchestra of the Croatian Music Institute (1923 – 1930) and occasionally conducted the Zagreb Philharmonic Orchestra. He proved his worth as an organiser and manager. He had administrative duties at the Academy, twice being dean, for a total of twenty years. In addition, he played an important role in its attaining the status of a tertiary level institution, and is to be credited with the beginning of the work of the City Music School in Zagreb – now the *Pavao Markovac* Music School. Lhotka complemented his teaching work with valuable manuals on conducting (1931) and harmony (1948), and of course as composer made his mark on the training of new generations of musicians, writing a number of piano and orchestral works for children and young adults.



Well-appreciated as a teacher, Fran Lhotka soon stood out for his compositions as well. He arrived in Zagreb when the European *music of transition* of the first two decades of the 20th century was in full swing. The oeuvres of Dora Pejačević, Josip Hatze and Blagoje Bersa were part of the new profiling of Croatian modernism. Lhotka found himself in the midst of the revolutionary Western European novelties and freedoms typified by the works of Arnold Schönberg, Igor Stravinsky, Anton Webern, Béla Bartók and Aleksandar Scriabin and of the increasing dominance of the “national course” in music. At the time when writing in the spirit of folk music confirmed that a composer belonged to a national culture, and was

- 1 Krešimir KOVAČEVIĆ: *Hrvatski kompozitori i njihova djela* [Croatian Composers and Their Works], Naprijed, Zagreb, 1960, p. 243.
- 2 Slavko Zlatić, after: Pavel ROJKO: *Fran Lhotka kao muzički pedagog* [Fran Lhotka as a music pedagogue], in: Fran Lhotka 1883. – 1962.: *Zbornik 3 Društva skladatelja Hrvatske* [Proceedings 3 of the Croatian Composers Society], Zagreb, 1985, p. 16.





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I.

Tempo rubato (appassionato)

Violino 1 *f* *ff sf*

Violino 2 *p* *ff sf*

Viola *mf* *ff sf*

Violoncello *p* *ff sf*



3 *pizz.*



4 *p* *p* *p* *arco*





2
5

f *ff sf*
p *ff sf*
mf *ff sf*
p *ff sf*

3

7

pizz. *arco*

3

8

p *pizz.* *arco*

3

9

p *pizz.* *arco*

3

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10

11

Poco meno mosso

15

16

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cresc. molto e poco a poco accel.

Musical score for measures 17-18. Measures 17-18 show a piano introduction with a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The dynamic is marked *mf*.

Musical score for measures 18-19. Measures 18-19 show a piano introduction with a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The dynamic is marked *ff*.

accel. poco a poco

Musical score for measures 19-20. Measures 19-20 show a piano introduction with a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The dynamic is marked *f*.

Allegro (non troppo)

Musical score for measures 20-21. Measures 20-21 show a piano introduction with a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The dynamic is marked *f*.

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607

System 1: Measures 607-611. Treble and bass staves. Includes slurs and dynamic markings.

612

612

sul G

pizz.

System 2: Measures 612-615. Treble and bass staves. Includes 'sul G' and 'pizz.' markings.

616

616

arco

System 3: Measures 616-619. Treble and bass staves. Includes 'arco' marking.

620

620

System 4: Measures 620-623. Treble and bass staves.

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623

Musical score for measures 623-627. It features four staves: two treble clefs and two bass clefs. The music includes various rhythmic patterns, slurs, and dynamic markings like 'pizz.' and 'b'.



628 **Molto allegro**

Musical score for measures 628-632. It features four staves with a 4/8 time signature. The music is marked 'ff' and 'arco'. It consists of rapid sixteenth-note passages.



633

Musical score for measures 633-637. It features four staves with a 4/8 time signature. The music includes triplets and slurs. Dynamic markings include 'pizz.'.

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