

No Exit remembers composer Ladislav Kubik

by Jarrett Hoffman



How should we remember someone after they pass away?

Czech-American composer Ladislav Kubik died in 2017, and many of the obituaries written for him described an impressive career — from his Guggenheim fellowship to first prizes in several major competitions and a 26-year teaching post at Florida State University.

One short article included below went in a different direction. You got the sense from reading it that this writer really *knew* Kubik, and that his loss was personal.

The writer was Tim Beyer, director of No Exit. And that new music ensemble will give the premiere of Kubik's

2017 *Nocturnes* in three free concerts next week devoted to the composer's works. *Nocturnes*, a No Exit commission, turned out to be Kubik's last completed piece.

The performances take place on Monday, April 15 at 8:00 pm in Drinko Hall at Cleveland State University, Friday, April 19 at 7:00 pm at Heights Arts, and Saturday, April 20 at 8:00 pm at SPACES.

Years ago, as a composition student at Cleveland State, Beyer made a trip to Prague to study with Kubik at his Czech-American Summer Music Institute. That came on the recommendation of Greg D'Alessio and Andrew Rindfleisch, Beyer's two teachers, who had also attended the festival.

"He was just an amazing man on all levels," Beyer said of Kubik. "He was a teacher's teacher, and as a composer, you can hear for yourself. But as a person, he was extraordinary, a very kind man. You meet those people who are almost more of a force of nature than a real person — that was Ladislav. He had such a good way about him, and

he was very gregarious and charismatic. With that, his music, and what he did as a teacher, he was just larger than life.”

When No Exit commissioned *Nocturnes*, the plan was to have Kubik visit Cleveland to be here in person for a retrospective of his works. “He sent me a handwritten copy of the piece, and by the time I got it and tried to get in touch with him, he had passed,” Beyer said.

No Exit will surround that world premiere with Kubik’s 1979 *Duo Concertante* for violin and piano, 1978 *Sonata* for viola, 1995 *Elegy in Two Movements* for cello, and 2003 *Trio “Metamorphoses”* for clarinet, cello, and piano.

“We wanted to present as much of a span of his career as we could,” Beyer said. “Any composer who’s been at it for a while wasn’t doing the same thing in 1978 as they were in 2017.”

But first, it was a struggle even to get *any* of Kubik’s music following his passing. “I spent seven months digging under every rock, and couldn’t find anything,” Beyer said. “There are copyright disputes with his publisher, and even the Czech government has been involved.”

Then Kubik’s copyist, and his son, Petr, came to the rescue. “They were able to get us most of the music,” Beyer said. “At one point, Petr actually went through his father’s things to see what he could find. It was a very intense process.”

Beyer said that both Petr and Magdalena, the composer’s daughter, will be in town for the second and third concerts of the series.

Sad News About Ladislav Kubik



It is with a heavy heart and great sadness that I report that Ladislav Kubik has died. He was an extraordinary composer, an extraordinary person..... truly larger than life. We extend our deepest felt sympathies to his family and those close to him. He was a remarkable human being.

No Exit had planned for their 2018-2019 season to present a series of concerts – comprised entirely of Ladislav’s work – that would serve as a celebration of this great living composer. Ladislav wrote a new piece for us – which we just received a few weeks ago – to be premiered during this series of concerts. We plan to still move forward with this program although it is heartbreaking that the context of these concerts has changed.

If you are not already familiar with Ladislav’s work, I would encourage you to go online, seek out his music and discover his brilliance for yourself.

You will be so dearly missed Ladia.

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