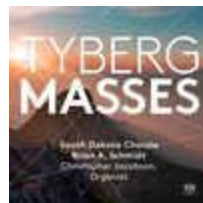
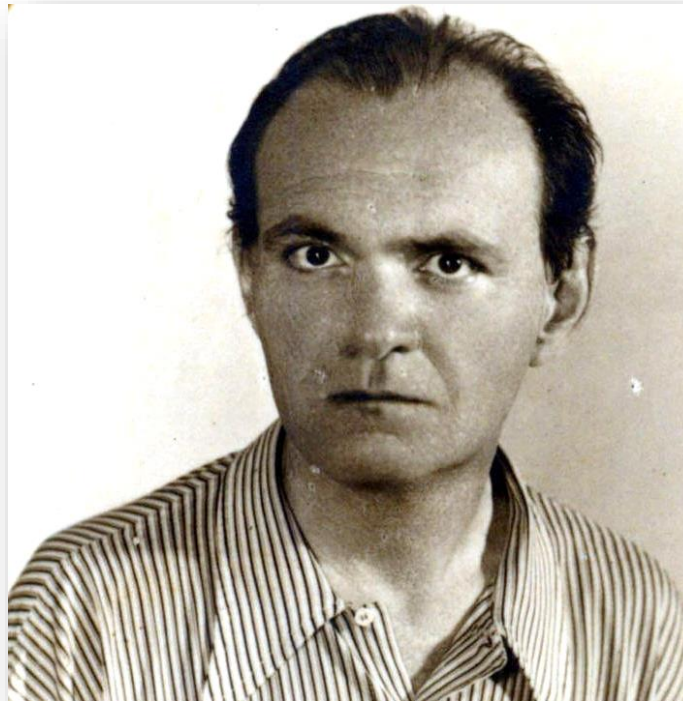


# Marcel Tyberg (1893-1944)

27 January 1893, Vienna - 31 December 1944, Auschwitz-Birkenau  
Austrian composer, conductor and organist. His music is late-romantic in style.



Marcel Tyberg  
[Tyberg Masses](#)  
South Dakota Chorale, Brian A. Schmidt, Conductor  
Christopher Jacobson, Organist  
(SACD, Hybrid, Multichannel, Album)

PentaTone

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Source: Text below about 'The Tyberg Project' is from booklet CD with Tyberg Masses

## The Tyberg Project

### Lost in the Holocaust

In the years immediately before the Second World War II, Marcel Tyberg was a promising young composer whose Second Symphony had been premiered in the 1930s by the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of Rafael Kubelik. But for more than sixty years his name (pronounced 'Tee-berg') has been languishing in limbo, following his arrest by the Gestapo in 1944 and his deportation from his home in the northern Adriatic town of Abbazia in a cattle car, headed for an undisclosed concentration camp. Nothing more was known of his destiny except for an unconfirmed rumor that he had hanged himself on the train rather than face almost certain torture and extermination at the hands of the Nazis.

There were only a few insiders who remembered Tyberg, an introverted loner whose real life was in the torrents of music swirling around in his head. He cared little for acclaim and fame, and several times declined offers to publish his music. He did not thirst for fame nor did he crave earthly possessions. Even those few insiders presumed that his compositions had perished along with the composer.

But in February of 2006 a feature article in *The Buffalo News* (USA) disclosed that Tyberg had been so fearful of deportation that he had given all of his scores to a family friend, Dr. Milan Mihich, who died in 1948. Dr. Mihich left the Tyberg scores with his son, Enrico, who and was then a medical student and had studied harmony with Tyberg. In 1957 the young Dr. Enrico Mihich was offered a research position with the

Roswell Park Cancer Institute in Buffalo, New York State, where he went on to establish a brilliant career as developer and director of its Cancer Drug Center.

The Tyberg scores lay fallow for many years, while Enrico Mihich was absorbed in cancer research then. But in the 1980s, he began to make discreet inquiries with conductors of the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra (BPO) aimed at obtaining first American performances of Tyberg's orchestral works, all to no avail. In the mid-1990s Dr Mihich turned back to Europe and made contact with the aging Rafael Kubelik, who was overjoyed to learn that Tyberg's scores had been in safekeeping for more than half a century – but his death in 1996 put an end to that avenue of exploration.

More recently Dr. Mihich found a willing and enthusiastic partner in the current music director of Buffalo

Philharmonic Orchestra (BPO), JoAnn Falletta. "Tyberg's music is extremely powerful, rich and profound," Falletta has declared, "and very worthy of performance and recording."

Marcel Tyberg was an accomplished composer, conductor and pianist. Notable conductors such as Rafael Kubelik and Rodolfo Lipizer premiered his pieces at venues in Prague and Italy. His eclectic compositional style embraced popular dance music as well as enormous symphonies on the scale of Mahler. Unfortunately, due to the conditions of World War II, Tyberg, only 1/16th Jewish, was sent to his death and his musical career was prematurely extinguished. For this reason, many basic details about his life are still unknown.

Ten years ago Marcel Tyberg's oeuvre, once remembered only in the hearts

and minds of friends, emerged from Enrico Mihich's Buffalo basement to be reintroduced to the musical community. Thus far, the Foundation for Jewish Philanthropies, in conjunction with Dr. Mihich and JoAnn Falletta of the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra (BPO), has funded performances of three lieder, two piano sonatas, and the copying of his Trio, Sextet and recordings of his symphonies. These efforts place Marcel Tyberg among the most recently rediscovered composers whose lives and careers were cut short by World War II.

## Tyberg's Life and Work

Friends described him as a brilliant musician with an "all-embracing musical knowledge." His unique appearance made him easily recognizable in his home of Abbazia. His "large dark eyes radiated gentleness

and childlike joy." They gave life to his whole face and filled it with a "clear dreamy gravity." "He greatly resembled Beethoven, especially in his mouth and chin," and some thought in his musical creations as well. He was a "strange spiritual man," who seemed to "walk a step further on this earth than was granted to most humans."

Marcel Tyberg (Jr.) was born in Vienna, Austria on January 27, 1893. His father, Marcell Tyberg (Sr.), was a prominent violinist, and his mother, Wanda Paltinger Tybergova, was a pianist and colleague of Artur Schnabel in the Leschetizky school. Because Marcell was a well-known violinist in Vienna, Jan Kubelik—the famous violinist and musical patriarch—and his family became close to the Tybergs. Over the years, Marcel became close to Jan's son, Rafael Kubelik, and although twenty years stood between Marcel and Rafael,

theirs was a friendship that would last to Tyberg's death and beyond.

As of yet, little is known of Marcel's education and musical training. It is assumed not only that Marcel received a musical education from his parents, but he also had formal training in the art of orchestration, counterpoint and harmony, as evidenced by his works. His residence in Vienna and future friendship with violinist, conductor, and composition student Rodolfo Lipizner (1895–1974) at the Vienna Musical Academy suggests that Tyberg was a colleague at the Academy.

In 1927, the Abbazia Symphony Orchestra appointed Rodolfo as permanent conductor. Marcel (I) Tyberg (Jr) and Jan Kubelik were later listed as two of the young conductor's preferred soloists; perhaps in the case of Marcell, a section member. This appointment

brought the Tybergs to Abbazia, a resort town between Italy and Yugoslavia on the Adriatic Sea. Upon the founding of the Gorizia Symphony Orchestra in 1930, Lipizer not only continued to invite Marcel Tyberg and Jan Kubelik to perform as soloists, but also handed the baton of the Abbazia Symphony Orchestra over to Marcel.

After the death of his father in 1927, Marcel and his mother remained in their villa on the Adriatic Sea. As an article by friend Marion Schiffler explains, for the remainder of his life Tyberg "hung on his mother with the greatest love and reverence. She was described by all as an unusually generous gentle woman." In Abbazia, with the help of his mother's love and impeccable copying abilities, Marcel completed his Scherzo and Finale for Schubert's Unfinished Symphony (1928), Second Symphony (1931), Sextet (1932), First

Mass (1934), Second Piano Sonata (1935), Trio (1936), Second Mass (1941) and Third Symphony (1943).

For a living, Marcel played the organ in local churches, taught harmony to young students, composed dance music under the pseudonym Till Bergmar (rumbas, tangos, slow waltzes, etc.) and performed his music with his inherited orchestra. To supplement their income, his mother, a well-known pianist whose playing was "especially moving," taught piano and gave local concerts. Toward the end of his life, Tyberg, Schiffler wrote, contentedly lived in "indescribable poverty and supported himself and his mother only through lessons."

Satisfied with the little he owned he lived happily unknown. However, he was not entirely secluded from the outside world. As mentioned above,

he sporadically performed as a soloist with the Gorizia Symphony Orchestra, performed his dance compositions with a small orchestra, conducted his Masses and Chamber works with the Abbazia Symphony Orchestra, and even called on his childhood friend Rafael Kubelik to premiere his Second Symphony with the Czech Philharmonic at some point during the 1930's.

On July 25, 1943, Tyberg revealed his unrestrained piety in a performance of his Te Deum [a work that is lost] used to consecrate the enlarged Abbazian church. This historic date for Italy, on which the Italian Grand Council captured and dismissed Benito Mussolini as premier of Italy, occurred only weeks before Italy's surrender to the Allies, an act that would seal the fate of Marcel and his mother.

## Nazi Movement into Southern Europe

In anticipation of the Italian surrender, the Germans reorganized their military command in southeast Europe early in the summer of 1943 so that it would be ready to take over the Italian-held areas and defend them in the event of a Western Allied invasion. After moving many troops into what is now Croatia, on September 7, 1943, Hitler issued Order No. 26, "Improvement in the Defensive Power of Croatia." Its main objective was to bring about closer collaboration between the German and Croatian armed forces. In addition, Berlin assigned each German corps and divisional command a special Croatian delegate for civil affairs, whose German influence was necessary for the protection of military interests. Therefore, the Croatian government enforced all Nazi laws

pertaining to Jews in the Croatian and German-controlled territories. One such German-controlled territory was Abbazia. Eleven days later, Marcel completed his final work, the Third Symphony.

Although Article 6 of the Law Decree on Racial Belonging of April 30, 1941 declared some selected Jews honorary Aryans and exempt from Croatian anti-Jewish measures, in the summer of 1943, Marcel's mother went to the local German officials and registered that her great-grandfather was a Jew, thus making her one-eighth Jewish and Marcel one-sixteenth Jewish. A few months after this fateful decision that would alter Marcel's life, his mother died of natural causes.

"For Tyberg," wrote Schiffler, "the death of his mother was a wound which never closed." He now gave

those who encountered him the impression of “a man who is not far from the end of his journey on earth and who, unknown perhaps to himself and us, has already raised his glance to that great unknowable which involuntarily frightens us.” On the back of the Third Symphony’s manuscript, Tyberg stated that he completed the work with tremendous difficulty and grief. Because he was creatively and emotionally exhausted, this work marked his compositional mortality.

## Tyberg’s capture and murder

In anticipation of his capture and possible deportation, Marcel entrusted all compositions and personal writings to his friend Dr. Milan Mihich. In addition, he gave Dr. Mihich a document authorizing him to take any action deemed desirable to preserve

his music. Only a few days before the Gestapo would take Tyberg in a night raid, he shared some of his compositions with his friends on the organ in the church of Volosca. Schiffler recalls:

*Shuddering and shivering, we listened to the uninterrupted flow of sounds that ranged from cheerful pastoral tunes to the greatest Beethoven-like outbursts. His face shone transfigured and happily smiling out of the dimness. There was a childlike joy and tenderness in him that is only seen in great souls shortly before their return home. The tears ran down my cheeks. We all had the feeling that he will not be with us much longer. Perhaps he felt it himself, too; he hardly knew any more where he was and who we were. It seemed as if he had to fulfill some final task—to play for his friends—and then to part and never return. As he ended, we silently embraced the completely exhausted*



*artist and only hesitantly did words of thanks pass across our lips. It was as if our thanks could wipe out this, his last gift. We shook his hand, one after the other. I was not able to utter a word. He, however, smiled, friendly and ingenuous, as if he wanted once more to let us take part in his unknown greatness. In that dark old church he stood like a saint in our midst, a strange ray of light—the first moonlight—fell at this moment through the high arched window onto his quiet face.*

Several months passed before rumors began to circulate of Tyberg's suicide. They were, it seems, erroneous. Only recently has it been discovered that he was indeed sent to the extermination camps San Sabba and Auschwitz. His recorded date of death is December 31, 1944.

## Tyberg's music preservation

In 1945, following the end of the War and the occupation of Fiume by the Communist Yugoslavians, Dr. Milan Mihich and his family fled Fiume to Milan. With him, he took only precious family possessions, including the entirety of Tyberg's catalogue. In 1948, Dr. Mihich died and the music and related responsibilities were left to his son, and Tyberg's former harmony student, Enrico Mihich, then a medical student at the University of Milan. Dr. Enrico Mihich later came to Buffalo and became a member of the Roswell Park Cancer Institute. Dr. Mihich to this day keeps Marcel Tyberg's music safely secured in his home in Buffalo.

Because of his persistence and respect for his former teacher, efforts have taken place in the last 10 years to

perform this forgotten oeuvre and reawaken the spirit of Marcel Tyberg so that all may enjoy these "great and immortal works" composed by a man "endowed by heaven."

The image shows two systems of handwritten musical notation. The first system is marked *Al. Tempo* and contains four staves of music with Latin lyrics: *up-tem-p-ti-son-um bap-ti-zae in re-mis-si-ona-*, *pecc-a-to-rum, et in re-nu-n-cia-ti-o-nem car-nis, et*, *in re-nu-n-cia-ti-o-nem sae-cu-li, et*, *in re-nu-n-cia-ti-o-nem*. The second system is marked *ritardando - / con tempo f.* and contains four staves of music with Latin lyrics: *no-nim pecc-a-ti-*, *no-nim pecc-a-ti-*, *no-nim pecc-a-ti-*, *no-nim pecc-a-ti-*. The score includes various musical notations such as clefs, notes, rests, and dynamic markings. At the bottom right, there is a signature: *M. Tyberg* and a date: *1871*.