

László Somfai:

Composition without prospects of publication: Bartók and the Great War

Although Bartók gave up composition in the first months of the war – he interrupted the work on the ballet *The Wooden Prince* and the 2nd quartet –, in the spring of 1915 he already finished new compositions (Romanian sets for piano), in 1916 created significant scores (*Suite for piano op. 14*, song cycles *opp. 15–16*, etc.), and 1917–1918 belong to his most productive years. The July 1918 contract with the publisher Universal Edition offered the chance to revise his scores written in the war years. This essay investigates three cases: *Fifteen Hungarian Peasant Songs* which was ready to print in 1914 but Bartók revised it in 1918 by replacing three movements; omitting the 2nd movement of *Suite op. 14*; and the reason why *op. 18* includes only *Three Studies* instead of the planned “six or seven.”