

Cambridge Elements

Elements in Women in Music

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JULIE REISSEROVÁ
(1888–1938)

Czech Composer and Feminist

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Abstract: Regarded as the “first Czech woman composer of importance” by the *Grove Dictionary* in 1954, Julie Reisserová’s name has since virtually disappeared from the musical and musicological landscape. Reisserová, one of Albert Roussel’s most famous Czech students during the interwar period, was not only a successful composer in her time, but also an active feminist. Her music was generally well received and performed by prestigious musicians. The only comprehensive study of her life and work, published in 1948, was written by Jiřina Vacková. If Vacková was able to investigate the personal archives of the diplomat Jan Reisser – Reisserová’s husband – before they were seized and/or destroyed by the communist regime, her book remains hagiographical. This Element draws up a new biographical sketch of the artist, reviews Reisserová’s thoughts on the status of women composers between the wars, considers the reception of her six surviving scores, and examines her style.

Keywords: Julie Reisserová, woman composer, Czech music, feminism, women’s studies

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