

# *Friedrich Cerha at 90*

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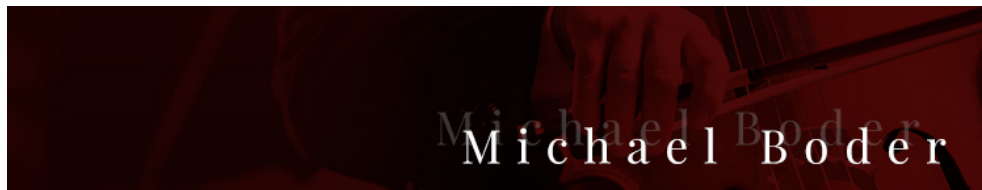


Mr Cerha was revolutionary with his *Spiegel*, a work I heard when I was very young and which had a strong influence on me as a teenager and on my fascination with contemporary music. I believe I huddled around an old wireless set to receive this piece late one evening in a broadcast from some German or Austrian radio station. His music continues to fascinate, encompassing many different styles, often going back to earlier 20th century music as a point of reference. This includes several string quartets which surely will remain in the repertoire of many quartets for many years to come.

Dear Friedrich, a very happy 90th birthday year.

**Irvine Arditti**

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Friedrich Cerha is certainly one of the truly great composers of our time. His imagination, his sense of sound and his infallible feeling for structure and beauty are unmistakable. He has bestowed many gifts upon us all! And his completion of *Lulu* was an endlessly important feat. Thank you!

**Michael Boder**

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A dark red, semi-transparent banner featuring a close-up of a hand playing a piano. The name 'Christoph von Dohnányi' is written in a white, serif font across the center.

## Christoph von Dohnányi

My dear, esteemed Mr Cerha,

It is a pleasure to send every good wish for your 90th birthday and thus take this opportunity to reflect upon one of Vienna's great musicians. Cerha – a life devoted to music, and not just his own. Not a man for the tabloids. PR is not his thing. He leaves nothing to chance, it seems. Cerha knows, develops and hears what he writes. His oeuvre will outlast many a fleeting musical moment in today's music.

Friedrich Cerha, one of the great and significant composers of our time, whose opera *Baal* I took much pleasure in premièring at Salzburg.

Dear Mr Cerha, I wish you all the very best for your birthday – and many thanks!

With warmest wishes,

**Christoph von Dohnányi**

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A dark red, semi-transparent banner featuring a close-up of a hand playing a piano. The name 'Marino Formenti' is written in a white, serif font across the center.

## Marino Formenti

In my eyes, Cerha is the master of synthesis, of connection: the connection of structure and fervour, material and gesture, time and sound, order and devotion, tradition and present day, northern precision and that specific kind of Austrian humour called "Schmäh". He was and is a veritable pioneer of interpretation who is perhaps still being discovered on the international stage: I consider even his early performances of works by Anton Webern with the ensemble *die reihe*, for instance, to be far more beautiful and correct, and setting more benchmarks, than others that have been heard and lauded.

**Marino Formenti**

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## HK (Nali) Gruber

Friedrich Cerha is a huge continent. I have been gradually discovering him since I first played double bass in the ensemble *die reihe*. He is distinguished by his meticulous approach, both as a composer and as a conductor. I have seldom experienced such analytical work during rehearsals as when he is present. I admire the large spectrum of his compositional work, the diversity of his stylistic ability to change and renew, and also his curiosity with regard to the work of his contemporaries and his predecessors, and I admire his memory and ear, for instance when I conduct one of his works or sing them as a chansonnier.

My most heartfelt congratulations,

**HK (Nali) Gruber**

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## Georg Friedrich Haas

Friedrich Cerha – the ability and courage to do the right thing at the right time. Without becoming deterred. Without being afraid to take risks...

Cerha has created an œuvre of immense breadth – from *Fasce* and the *Spiegel* to *Keintate*, from *Netzwerk* to *Baal* and *Rattenfänger*, from the string quartets and *Curriculum* to *Bruchstück, geträumt*. And he always remains himself. Please write many more works for us!

**Georg Friedrich Haas**

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## Martin Haselböck

Friedrich Cerha – in his works he repeatedly builds bridges between tradition and today's world. He is familiar with the ramifications of modernism, but has been able to retain his curiosity and thus a fresh approach to composing with which he repeatedly surprises us in new forms and guises. A magician of structures and guises who has had a key influence on European modernism as a writer, teacher, savant and performer.

### Martin Haselböck

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## Lothar Knessl

If I blank out the extensive, small facets of his independent musical thinking in the 20th century, the *Spiegel* cycle remains as an unshakeable, shining solitaire – inadequately assigned to the key words “mass structure” and “soundscape”. I would also mention his completion of the 3rd act of Berg's *Lulu*. It took years, and his own work was put on hold. In 1958 when the ensemble *die reihe* was founded, a pivotal dive into contemporary music was consistently continued here in Austria thanks to Cerha and Schwertsik. A conductor, solo violinist and teacher, Cerha is a facilitator and performer of new music: informative, defining, indispensable.

### Lothar Knessl

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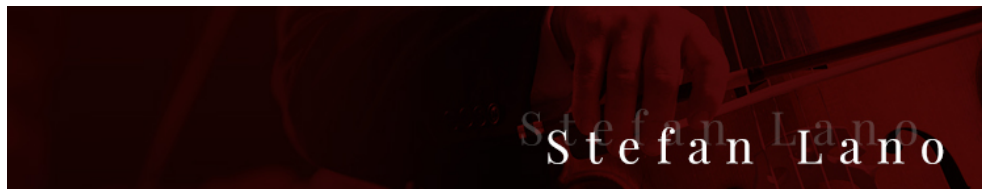
## Walter Kobéřa

It is undoubted that Friedrich Cerha is indeed one of the most significant Austrian composers in the 20th and 21st centuries. It is not least his seven-

part opus *Spiegel* that brought him international renown. He is one of those rare composers who are at home in almost any genre. Whether solo performance, chamber music, orchestral music or opera, Friedrich Cerha writes music that is always riveting and imbued with his own signature style. His immense importance is also shown in the names of those institutions that have commissioned premières, particularly of his operas: Salzburg Festival, the Vienna State Opera and the Wiener Festwochen, to name but a few. The fact that he has thoroughly polarised not least with his completion of Alban Berg's opera *Lulu* in turn testifies to his unique personality as an artist.

**Walter Kobéra**

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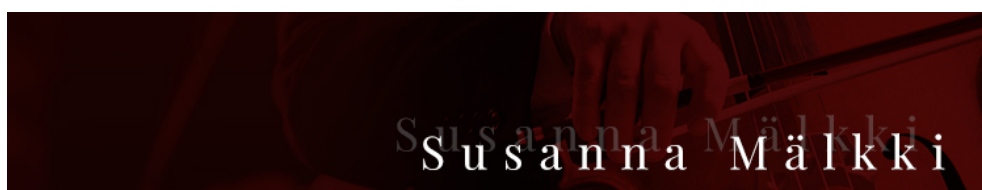


Many years have passed since UE Vienna made the wise decision to entrust the completion of Act III of Alban Berg's *Lulu* to Friedrich Cerha. When considering other examples of works completed by someone other than the original author, the magnitude of Cerha's achievement becomes all the more apparent. It is increasingly difficult to refer to a "national" music in these times where the admixture of musical syntax defies definition according to national origins. Yet Cerha's music is somehow, in the best sense of the word, Austrian, if not to say Viennese, and this is reflected in the detail and care with which he set Berg's intentions to paper as well as in the musical and theatrical ambience he created in his opera *Baal*.

Happy 90th birthday, dear Maestro Cerha! The memories of your artistic and personal integrity and kindness remain vivid even after some thirty-five years.

**Stefan Lano**

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Few composers represent the mastery of musical modernism in such a consistent and brilliant way as Friedrich Cerha. The richness of orchestral textures in the music, and his creative instrumentation, his ability to mix sounds, styles and colours of expression, are most impressive, powerful and communicative. Every work by Mr Cerha is a highly rewarding discovery.

**Susanna Mälkki**

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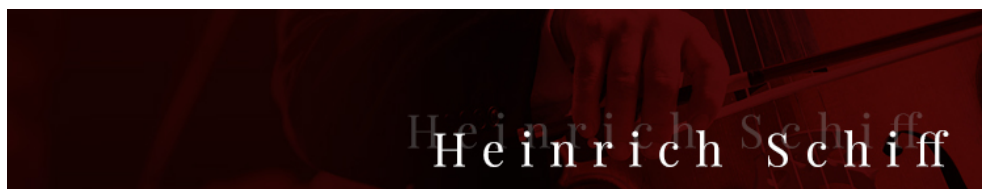


Today, as several years have passed since the word “avant-garde” ceased to describe a quasi obligatory place for all those who thought deeply about their own meaning in the world (of arts and – in a most lively and polemical way – in the world of music), in my opinion it is possible to encapsulate the singularity of musical thought of a certain Friedrich Cerha, his long and successful creative development, by way of example that although he is committed strongly to the necessity of invention on the relentless search for new compositional strategies, he has never stopped bearing testimony to a pure affinity with his cultural roots through his music.

Buon Compleanno Herr Cerha e *cento di questi giorni ancora!*

**Emilio Pomàrico**

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It is not possible to acknowledge or even describe the cosmos that is Cerha in just a few words – it is too big, too varied, too wonderful – but our love and admiration know no bounds time and again.

**Heinrich Schiff**



I have always been highly impressed at how unwaveringly Friedrich Cerha has produced his compositional works and how he has embraced various influences in order to open up new paths and landscapes for himself and coming generations with his compositions. His ever propulsive, musical thinking – together with perfectly crafted realisation in each of his works and the strong expressive power of his music – will (and must) be viewed by us as one of the most important creations of the 20th and 21st centuries. And I am also unwilling to leave unmentioned here that a magic is also inherent in Friedrich Cerha’s music – an incomparable beauty that continues to fascinate us ☐

**Arturo Tamayo**

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Cerha, whose pupil I was fortunate to be, meant a great deal to me even as a teacher. He took me from the restricted space that was my musical infancy and brought me out into the world of music. Fragile beauty and enigmatic humour, of which neither is wholly without wistfulness in the highly Viennese sense, pervade his compositions, although also submitted to entirely different stylistic directions over the seven decades. This pendulum that swings to and fro, mediating between tear-clouded beauty and roguish, cynical wit, measures up to the greatest of the great – Schiller, Mozart and Shakespeare. Should my grandchildren ask about Cerha one day, then I can say to them: He showed us that it is continuing, and he also showed us how.

**Johannes Wildner**