

In remembrance of Otto Tomek

(1928–2013)



Otto Tomek

Otto Tomek died on 18 February 2013. As shown by the tributes from our composers, he was more than just an important sponsor and someone who made things happen. He was a familiar figure who had maintained strong links with Universal Edition AG since 1953. This is where his professional

career began and it was here that he fulfilled significant roles to the last. One of the most important of these was to discuss, listen and encourage. As Chairman of the Supervisory Board for many years (until 2010) and Head of the Artistic Advisory Board he also had a lasting influence and impact on the development of Universal Edition.

Tomek studied musicology with Erich Schenk in Vienna and wrote his dissertation on Structural phenomena in 16th and 17th century music. After gaining initial experience at UE, Tomek took up a post at West German Broadcasting (WDR) and in his position as Head of the New Music Department and the Studio for Electronic Music he transformed Cologne into a centre for contemporary music. As programme coordinator of the concert series Musik der Zeit, he was responsible for numerous world premieres and provided Karlheinz Stockhausen, Pierre Boulez, Mauricio Kagel, Bernd Alois Zimmermann, György Ligeti, Luigi Nono, Morton Feldman and many others with a working environment that could hardly have been more ideal.

Following the death of Heinrich Strobel, Otto Tomek became Head of Music at the former Südwestfunk (South-West Radio – SWF, now SWR) in 1971, where his responsibilities included the programme of the Donaueschinger Musiktage (Donaueschingen Music Days) as Festival Director from 1971 to 1974, and where he founded the SWR Experimental Studio for acoustic art in Freiburg im Breisgau in 1971.

In 1977 he was appointed Head of Music at the former Süddeutscher Rundfunk (South German Radio – SDR, now SWR) in Stuttgart. From 1977 to 1989 Tomek was Artistic Director of the Schwetzingen Festspiele (Schwetzingen Festival).

He was also editor of the anthology Igor Strawinsky (WDR: Cologne 1963), publishing editor of the Neue Zeitschrift für Musik (New Journal of Music) from 1967 to 1978, and also of Teilton – Schriftenreihe der Heinrich-Strobel-Stiftung des Südwestfunks (1978–1989; 6 volumes).

With his wealth of knowledge, his tireless commitment to 20th and 21st century music, and the heartfelt warmth of his great personality, he will always remain a shining example to us.