

## Abstract

Karl-Birger Blomdahl. A musical biography with focus on the relation between words and music in his early works. Part I and II. (Karl-Birger Blomdahl. En musikbiografi med inriktning på förhållandet mellan ord och ton i hans tidiga produktion. Del I och II.) Dissertation in Swedish by Christina Tobeck. Summary in English. 472 + 467 pages including excerpts from music editions, manuscripts, photos, and other illustrations. Studies from the University of Gothenburg, Department of Musicology, No. 73, Gothenburg 2002. ISBN 91-85974-70-6.

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The purpose of this thesis on the Swedish composer Karl-Birger Blomdahl (1916-1968) is to study how and why his inclination to incorporate extramusical ideas in his music changes over time.

The idea of a connection between life and music is the foundation of this music-biographical study with a focus on the relation between word and music in Blomdahl's early works. The study is not limited to vocal works, but also encompasses instrumental compositions, where the music stands in relation to an extramusical content of ideas in some demonstrable way, using musical vocables in the tradition of Constantin Floros and Ingmar Bengtsson. Poetic ideas and messages are traced in instrumental works via works tied to a text.

The oratorio as a genre is discussed, and then an attempt is made to determine what modern oratorios and major choral works Blomdahl might have been familiar with around 1950. Special attention is devoted to various principles for creating unity between text and music.

The history of the works' coming into being is investigated, and the musical and cultural environment is illuminated.

The account is chronological and extends up to and including the first performances of *In the Hall of Mirrors* in 1953. The oratorio is based on poems from the collection "The Man without a Way" by Erik Lindegren. Its apocalyptic character is connected with violent world events. Blomdahl shared Lindegren's feelings of powerlessness and despair as a young man during the Second World War.

"In a deeper sense, music, like art, is an expression of life experience", Blomdahl summarized. The thesis shows how he put his aesthetics into practice, i.e. in creating music – vocal as well as instrumental.

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