

# czech music

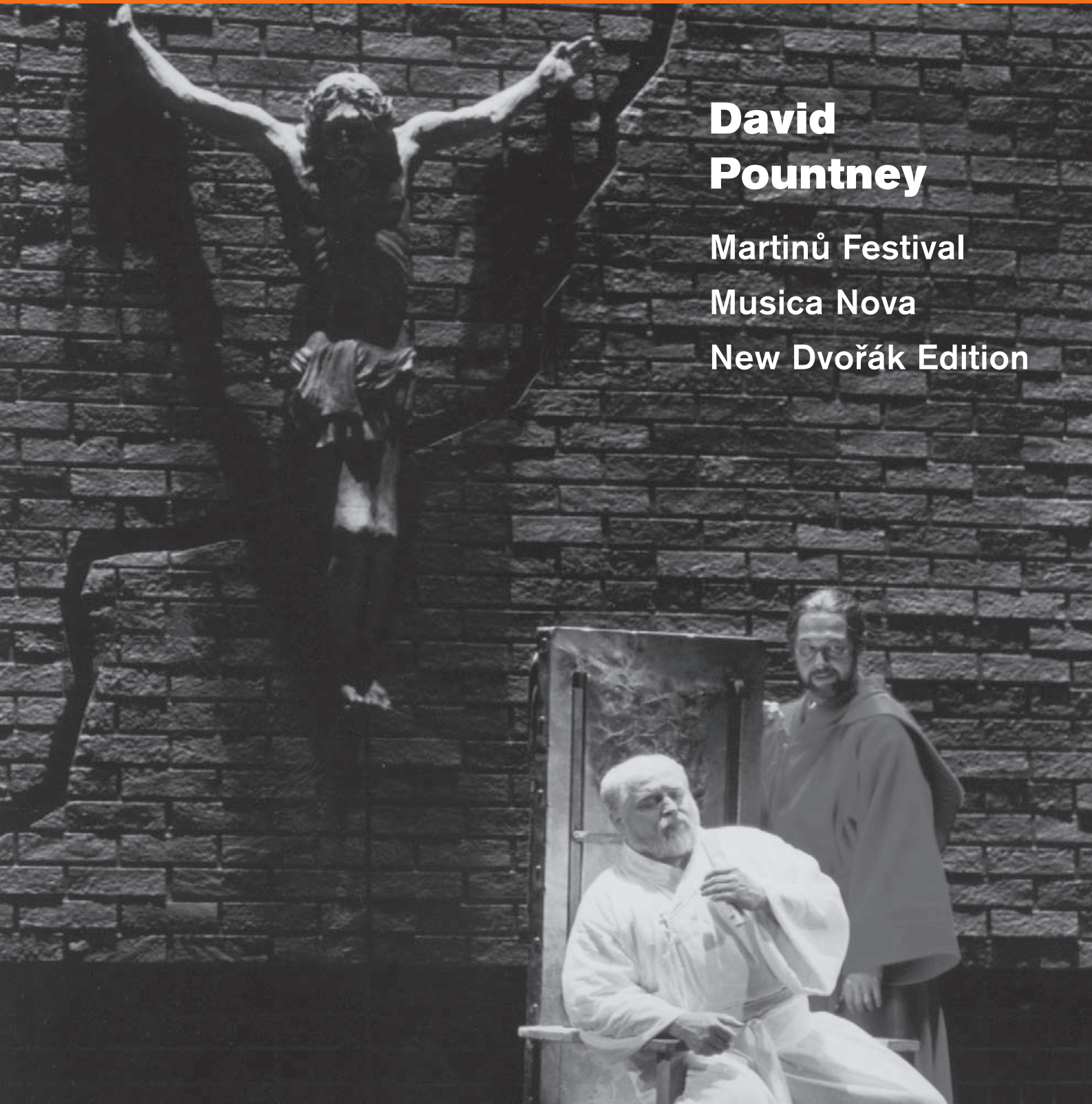
1 | 2002 bimonthly magazine

**David  
Pountney**

Martinů Festival

Musica Nova

New Dvořák Edition







## editorial

Dear Friends of Czech music,

time flies, everything including music is in a constant state of development and we too have no wish to be left behind. As you will have noticed, we have decided to give our magazine a new, more modern suit of clothes this year, but the changes will not be just on the surface. We shall be continuing to offer you information on new Czech music, but we shall also be focusing more on the area of performance. In this issue you can read an interview with David Pountney, an Englishman who has for years, and with great success, been devoting himself to the staging of Czech operas and whose most recent venture has been a new production of Bedřich Smetana's *Čertova stěna* [The Devil's Wall]. We shall also be giving space to theoretical and historical problems in music. This time we offer an article on the subject of the edition of the works of Antonín Dvořák, which we should like to follow up with studies on editions of other Czech composers. Folk music is another undoubted part of Czech music. We therefore present reviews of two interesting new CDs in this area. Naturally we welcome all your comments and suggestions. I hope that in all the changes life brings us, your interest and your favour will remain a constant. I wish you a happy two months before we meet again with a new number of Czech Music.

*Matěj Kratochvíl*

MATĚJ KRATOCHVÍL  
EDITOR

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# the drums beat and the trumpets sound

SYLVA KOVÁŘOVÁ, published with the kind permission of magazine Týden

**Bedřich Smetana's last opera *Čertova stěna* [The Devil's Wall] (1882) is the most rarely performed of the composer's works. When composing it Smetana was already struggling with illness as well as with Eliška Krásnohorská's intractable libretto. Musically, however, it is a deeply felt, strong and innovative work. The National Theatre in Prague invited the English director David Pountney to direct the new production, which was premiered shortly before Christmas.**

**Here in the Czech Republic you are regarded as a tireless promoter of Czech opera abroad. How did you find out about Czech music?**

It all began by accident, like many of the best things. When I was a student I spent a lot of time with my friend Mark Elder - now a conductor - discovering new music. We used to take records out of the library, more or less randomly. So once I came across this old, battered Supraphon record of Katja Kabanova. It is one of these moments that I can absolutely remember, lying on the carpet in the sitting room of this apartment in North London. As soon as I heard this music, not knowing anything about it, it was an absolute revelation, the door opening. Only then did I begin to find out more about this very special music.

**Czech opera was probably not in repertoire very often at that time in Britain ...** There had already been the beginnings of a tradition of performing these pieces in Britain - by Charles Mackerras for example. - so they were a little bit known. But I wanted to learn much more about it. I actually soon became a real bore telling everybody about Janáček, how great the music is and that it definitely should be done.

**And then, finally, somebody told you to stage it yourself?**

Well, then a completely stupid piece of luck happened. There is a little festival in South-Eastern Ireland, in Wexford. It's a very charming little fishing town with an 18th-Century theatre. People go there to get drunk, have fun and go to the opera. Quite

serious but not too serious. They don't have much money, so they are always looking for young people - singers, directors - to fit the tight budget. They asked me to direct some excruciating, painful, embarrassing Bellini opera. But of course I was happy to say yes. It was my first invitation. Then it turned out they were also planning to do Katja there. They asked another director, much older than me, to do it. And he was foolish enough to say, "Oh, listen, this Czech stuff is far too miserable and gloomy for me to come to Wexford. If I go there I want to do something that is more fun." So they gave him the Italian piece and asked me to do Katja.

**It was your first Czech opera?**

I had in fact done *Huďbicka* before, as a student.

**But Janáček was the turning point. It can't have been easy for a young, not yet very experienced director, to begin his career with such difficult piece?**

For a director I think all those Janáček pieces are fantastic. I don't think any of my colleagues were clever enough to realise that they are actually rather easy to direct. It is music and theatre about life, not about opera. It is not about people singing arias, conventions or pompous display. It is about real life. You can take those libretti and make a film out of them. So it is a wonderful thing for a young director to do, because you can just focus on the people and what they are doing. You don't have those mass scenes of chorus to deal with. Also there was something that intuitively moved me about this music and also about

the Czech mentality, which I think is represented in those pieces. A combination of a very realistic, humanistic compassion with a whimsical sense of fantasy.

**But at first you were moved just by the music itself ...**

The first interest came absolutely because of the music itself. But as I began to know the other pieces then I was just absolutely fascinated by the eccentric and fantastical subjects he chose - the *Makropulos Case* for example. - or the interesting combination of animals and human beings in *The Cunning Little Vixen*. These were brilliant and original ideas for an opera. Janáček was writing for the stage with the same fluidity one would associate with a film script. He is never bogged down by telling a story from A to Z, but just cuts, like in a film, and the story is told by juxtaposition and contrast. This is also a very telling way to use music as a narrative form: with brief, telling strokes rather than long explanations.

**Do you prefer to have the opera translated into English or to keep the original libretto?**

The production of *Huďbicka* that we did when I was a student at Cambridge, I translated. I did the translation with Martin Kubelík, the son of the very famous Czech conductor Rafael Kubelík. It was actually a nightmare, because he was terrified of his father, who would look at this translation, tear it up and tell him to do it again. But I was the one who was stuck struggling to put this into English. And in fact it was quite bad. I know this because recently somebody





rang me up saying "You are the only one who ever translated the Kiss into English and we want to do a production of it now." So I had to look at it again and it was so terrible I had to rewrite the whole thing. It was the first translation that I'd actually ever done. But Katja was in Czech with several Czech singers in it. This was very lucky for me, because I had two great Czech singers in the cast, Ivo Žídek and Sonja Červená, and they taught me an enormous amount. And it was conducted by a Czech, Albert Rosen, with whom I did many productions and who became a very good friend. He was a crazy and very loveable character with one of those terribly dislocated life stories that people in Middle Europe suffered from if they were of that generation, and through years of working in Ireland he had become a kind of Czech/Jewish Irishman: a potent combination, and quite thrilling after the right quantity of whisky! When this Katja turned out to be a big success, I was

able to persuade the Welsh and Scottish opera companies to let me do a complete Janáček cycle: these pieces were all done in English, which is still the right solution - I think - though it is no longer fashionable. **Subtitles are not the alternative for you?** Well, I hate the whole idea of subtitles. The whole point about live theatre is that it is live. Therefore, to me, it is kind of crazy if the audience pays to be entertained and then you walk out onto the stage and start addressing them in a language they absolutely have no hope of understanding and have to READ to find out what you are saying. It is a kind of impertinence really! What also annoys me a lot - now that it is fashionable to do performances in the original language - is that a large percentage of these performances that are described as being for example in Czech are not in Czech at all. It is simply gobbledy-gook that sounds vaguely like Czech. The conductors always say "we must get the sound of the

authentic language", but they are not getting that sound, or at best it's a kind of a bad approximation of what that sound should be.

**How has the perception of Czech opera in England changed over the last 30 years?**

The fundamental change has been that what was once thought of as something obscure and possibly incomprehensibly provincial is now recognised as central to the entire European tradition: it is quite clear, for example, that Janáček is one of the leading 20th-century opera composers, and without question the most original. He is someone to be regarded alongside Alban Berg and Benjamin Britten. Nobody would have claimed that 30 years ago.

**How would you explain this change? Who was responsible for it?**

Well, Sir Charles Mackerras and I have been waving the flag quite vigorously. The Edinburgh Festival played an important role: Lord Harewood brought the National





Ivan Kusnjer, Dana Burešová

Theatre to Edinburgh in the 60s, and Brian McMaster who runs it now did a whole festival based around Smetana three years ago, which included my production of *Dalibor*. There has been lots of Janáček during the last years. Compared to other countries, like France for instance, where Janáček has hardly appeared, he is really pretty well known in England. Jenufa has had at least five different productions in Britain since the war.

**And what about the other Czech composers. For example Smetana? How often is he played there?**

Well, everyone knows the *Bartered Bride*. His other pieces are not really being done, except by me - I did the *Two Widows* and *Dalibor*. Martinů's *Julietta* and *Greek Passion* have both been done twice. We did a production of Dvořák's *Rusalka* in E.N.O., which was a kind of landmark event. So it is now quite known because of that. It's still in the repertoire 20 years later. Actually that is the production of mine I would most like to be seen in the Czech republic because Czechs who know it from the video all say "It's fantastic, but you could never do that in Prague." I would like to test that!

**But back to Smetana. Don't you think he is perhaps too "Czech" to be understood abroad? What do you concentrate on when interpreting his pieces?**

Any piece that is a good theatre piece jumps over those boundaries. Any interesting work of art has to have a life of its own. The author creates it with specific intentions; ideas of what he wants to say. And if that has that grain of truth or life in it, this gradually becomes more important than whatever it was he thought he was saying at the time. This kernel of meaning goes on changing and developing and of course every different audience, every different generation brings its own different taste,

reactions. They change the piece too, simply by sitting there listening and looking at it. So gradually the work of art evolves into something that would probably be far away from what the original composer intended at the time. Lots of people make criticisms on this basis. They say that something is not authentic and is not what the composer had wanted. But a composer or any artist should be tremendously complimented when another generation takes their piece and adds a different meaning to it simply by their natural responses. That's what makes it a living thing, not something frozen.

**So do you think that it isn't necessary to study the period or the author's intentions? That a work of art should speak for itself?**

There are people who don't want to know anything about the work they are interpreting. They want simply to have an instinctive reaction on the spot. But I actually find it good to know what was in the original creator's mind, if only to give myself the liberty to ignore it! I'm always very interested in what political ideas lay behind what this person was trying to say and why they chose to say it in this certain kind of way. In Smetana you can constantly hear in certain parts of his work that he is banging a certain kind of drum labelled "Czech history", saying, "We Czechs had a glorious history", and the trumpets play and the drums bang. You hear something which possibly makes even Czechs feel uncomfortable now - after all Nationalism has made this extraordinary journey from being an idea of the Left in the 19th century to an idea of the right - and still travelling rightwards! - in the 20th. So it is useful to understand where all this ceremonial pomp in Smetana is coming from. Then you can choose to ignore it or somehow find a way around it.

A composer or any artist leaves behind things some of which are profound and

some of which they thought it necessary to say at the time. It is like stones on a road: they obscure the way but they are not the road: you have to get around them somehow to get to the things that are interesting. Painting doesn't need an interpreter; it is just you and the painting. But works for the theatre only exist in two dimensions - in a book - until we come along and realise them in three. And they are difficult to study in two dimensions; only a very few people can open a score and hear the music just off the page. So thank God we are necessary.

The act of interpretation has to be a mixture of arrogance and courage mixed with humility and knowledge. If you think the piece is such a precious piece of china that you don't dare to pick it up and drink out of it, then you are not capable of interpreting it. You are too afraid of it. You have got to be prepared to say, "Well, I feel it like this so I am going to put this in a different context." You've got to bring it to life for this one particular occasion. Then the piece goes back onto a library shelf and next time it will be completely different. Hopefully.

**You have visited the Czech Republic several times during the last 30 or so years. Has it helped you to understand the Czech mentality and subsequently Czech music in any new dimensions?**

Well, I started to get really hooked to the Czech music and of course I wanted to come here and see where it all came from. It was in the middle of the Cold War - I came here in 1972 for the first time, for the Prague Spring Festival. I met a girl at a concert so afterwards I came back a few times to visit her and I got a sort of connection to Prague in those days. I learned a lot. **It was the first time you visited a communist country?**

I had spent a few months in Eastern Germany before that, observing the work of the *Komische Oper* in Berlin. All the most interesting ideas about directing opera were coming out of East Germany at that time. Those people had had such a raw and brutal upbringing that they sought in opera a way of expressing really deep and terrible emotions. This was quite a revelation for someone from a much cosier English background. Opera in England in the 60s was still marooned in the drawing room - a decorative object. The East German directors showed that it could be a dangerous wild beast. Now there is a whole generation of British directors who learned about the potential of this wild beast, and then added a dash of English irony and humour to it, which has actually made a very potent and interesting combination. I went to East Germany immediately after I left university. That meant I had had a bit of understanding of what Eastern Europe was like. But there was a completely different feeling about Prague, about the Czechs - this might be a completely romantic idea of my own - I never thought at that time of the Germans as being victims because of their Prussian



mentality of applying an ideology in an exceptionally thorough way. But it was clear to me when I was in Prague that the Czechs were victims, there was a kind of tremendous melancholy

**Now, let's speak about music again. Was the Devil's Wall your first co-operation with the National Theatre?**

I had had some discussions with a previous management. But it didn't come to anything.

**Did you know this opera before the theatre asked you to stage it here?**

I knew it; I had heard records of it. But I cannot say I had studied it very carefully before. They said it is going to be a difficult piece to do, but I like doing difficult pieces. It is partly a speciality of mine. I don't do much of the standard repertoire.

**So, was it a difficult piece to do?**

I think it is a very difficult piece. There are some kinds of difficulties that are inspiring, that lead you somewhere. A difficulty is in a way something that is unpredictable, unexpected, and does not lend itself to a standard solution. Those are creative difficulties. And then there are other kinds of difficulties that call upon your craftsmanship. To know how to get yourself out of a sticky situation, how to make something that might be clumsy in the original into something not so embarrassing.

**What sort of difficulties did you have to overcome while directing this opera then?**

Devils are I think a major difficulty, especially when they dance! Ballet dancers being devils are a sure source of embarrassment, so I decided to make the whole chorus dance instead, because after all the devil is something inside all of us, not someone who scampers on with ballet pumps on. The chorus were horrified at first - "this is where the ballet comes on" they cried. But they worked really hard at it and I think they enjoyed it in the end. The mixture of pseudo-historical ceremony, comedy - especially not very funny comedy - and a really serious emotional story is quite confusing and not surprisingly this unlikely combination sometimes gets quite clumsy. On the other hand stories that are not straightforward are sometimes more interesting than ones that are. I learn a lot from looking at the cinema. It amazes me how people even in Hollywood manage to make very successful films out of very complicated and quite obscure dramaturgical devices. Films like *Traffic*, this quasi-documentary which tells four or five different stories, ranges over a vast geographical terrain and somehow connects all these stories together. That is a very intelligent commentary on a problem that probably affects every single city in the world. It sounds a very improbable recipe for a successful Hollywood film but actually it is a success. What I'm trying to say is, the more freedom comes into the way people are prepared to think or accept juxtapositions of ideas and images, the more it ceases to be a problem if there is a story line that is a bit crazy or weird. You don't have to



Valentin Prolat, Věra Kavanová - Poláchová

tell a story in a straight line from beginning to end, and the Devil's Wall certainly takes a few curves on the way. Actually this is one of the things that Janáček developed in an absolutely revolutionary way. His very early opera *Osud* is conceived exactly like a film script, almost a Joycean stream of consciousness. And for that very reason almost impossible to realise on the stage. It is in fact the 20th-century way of thinking, disjointed, fragmentary.

**Your approach towards opera direction is rather modern. The Czech opera public on the other hand is quite traditionally oriented. Have you got into any situations while directing the Devil's wall for the ND, when you had to be, let's say, diplomatic?**

It doesn't have anything to do with being Czech or being in Prague. When I started working as the artistic director at the English National Opera in London, every single one of our premieres for the first three years was furiously booed. There is always this sort of battle about ownership. People use culture as a way of asserting certain kinds of political or social agendas. Perhaps some people, for instance, have certain beliefs about the Czech nation and want it to be represented by a certain kind of culture: they believe they own this culture. And then somebody comes along and subverts this, so of course they protest. But actually a lot of this protest has nothing to do with what we are doing to the culture; it is because we seem to be attacking these peoples' idea of privileged ownership. This idea emerged in a very funny way during the Devil's Wall: there is a scene where all the girls come secretly to try to marry Lord Vok - because he is rich and powerful of course. But their boyfriends find them and give them a good spanking! I realise that this refers to a specific Czech custom, but as you can imagine such a scene is

certainly very comic from an Englishman's point of view. But the men's chorus always seemed unbelievably solemn during this scene, and I was struggling to get them to give some life and humour to this clearly ridiculous incident. The truth came out when I asked the girls to squeal when they got spanked - a perfectly normal reaction you might think. But one particularly lugubrious male chorister protested loudly in German: "Aber dass ist ein Männer Chor - von Smetana geschrieben!" In other words, for him this wasn't any more a comic scene in an opera which had some basis in action and reaction, but was a holy icon - a "Male Chorus" standing as a bastion of Czech culture. The irony that this protest had been made in German was certainly not lost on me since if you ask an Englishman with which culture he associates a "Männerchor" with he will certainly answer "German"!

We can never afford to imagine that culture is innocent of politics: this goes to the heart of what people think culture is for. The only function of state-subsidised art in my opinion is the idea that imagination is a vital part of social life, of democracy itself. Only if you are able to imagine the pain of others can you become a civilised person. The purpose of art is like a massage for the imagination. It kicks you and asks: Are you still awake? Are you actually imagining anything? Are you thinking, dreaming? Do you have poetry inside you? Therefore people always clamour to control how this imagination is stimulated and who is doing this stimulation. Although art often seems to be very irrelevant, it affects the way people think, and what we think is what we are.





Thomas Sanderling, Martin Hršel, Zdeňka Kolářová

# the bohuslav martinů festival 2001

PETR VEBER

The Bohuslav Martinů Festival held every December in Prague has been attracting more interest and praise with every year that passes. The festival in 2001 was already the 7th in line. The composer was born on the 8th of November 1890 – 111 years ago.

"The results are visible. The festival is having an effect at home and abroad," said the director of the Bohuslav Martinů Institute, Aleš Březina. In his view Bohuslav Martinů's music is now being accorded the recognition it deserves, and the next step is to present a more varied and complex image of his extensive legacy.

This time too the small but ambitiously con-

ceived and well organised several-day event proved an unambiguous success in terms of the power of the original idea and the achievements of the organisers. The concerts arranged by the Bohuslav Martinů Foundation were packed and the composer's music evidently charmed the audiences. The intensive concert series also showed that the composer is beloved of performers, as the quality of the results testified.

The now traditional introductory event was a concert by the laureates of the competition bearing the composer's name, which takes place in December just before the festival. This time the competition – open to piano trios and string quartets – attracted seven trios and three quartets. The winners were

the piano trio consisting of Barbora Sejková, Daniela Oerterová and Radim Navrátil. In addition to the fresh laureates there were appearances by winners from the preceding year. Of particular interest was Štěpán Doležal, a member of the Bennewitz Quartet, who played Bohuslav Martinů's Sonata da camera for cello and chamber orchestra with full tone and technical expertise. Ravel's Tzigane for violin and orchestra was the occasion for an impressive exhibition by Academy [AMU] student Roman Patočka, who played with sympathetic brilliance. The young ensemble the Martinů Collegium (Lucie Hůlová, Martin Sedlák and Vladimír Strnad) drew the lime-light in the Concertino for piano trio with the accompaniment of string orchestra.



Their accompanying orchestra in the Martinů Hall of the Lichtenštejn Palace was the young Berg Orchestra conducted by its artistic director Peter Vrabel.

This concert also included Patočka's premier performance of the Czech Rhapsody for violin and piano in a form with orchestral accompaniment. Here the large symphonic repertoire linked to the name of Martinů acquired another element – a spectacular piece and one that there is no reason not to play often in the future. The contemporary Czech composer Jiří Teml, who has already brought several other Czech classics to life in new arrangements, has managed to produce an authentic sounding orchestration.

The Emperor Quartet from England presented (9.12.) Martinů and his British contemporaries Benjamin Britten and William Walton. The festival had another foreign guest as well, this time from Israel. In the Spanish Hall (10.12) the young highly musical flautist Sharon Bezaly with Bohuslav Matoušek played Martinů's Concerto for flute, violin and chamber in a joyful and spontaneous fashion – with ease, lightness of touch, attentively and with unconcealed and direct emotional commitment. Apart from this piece, the performance high-points were the Stravinsky score Apollon musagete and the absolutely convincing Toccata e due canzoni by Martinů from the conductor Jiří Bělohlávek and his young Prague Chamber Orchestra (The Prague Philharmonia). Their interpretation gave new clarity to the form and sound of this surprisingly serious, lyrico-tragic music. The concert was undoubtedly the crown of the festival.

At the closing concert (13. 12) the Czech Philharmonic was conducted by Thomas Sanderling, a not very well known artist of Russian origin, instead of the originally advertised Vladimir Ashkenazy Thomas Sanderling. It was the first time he had appeared with this orchestra. The programme in the Rudolfinum, entirely of music by Martinů – the Allegro symphonique, Concerto for two pianos and the 4th Symphony – had the charge and self-evidence of the standard classical repertoire, and one could wish nothing more for the legacy of this still “modern” composer. The symphony in particular emerges with the appropriate gravity and energy, without sliding into flatness at the end. The protagonists of the evening were Zdeňka Kolářová and Martin Hršel, the well-known Prague piano duo.

After terrorists destroyed the lives of several thousand innocent people in the USA on the 11th of September 2001, the Bohuslav Martinů Foundation decided during preparations for the festival symbolically to dedicate this year's event to the victims of the terri-



Sharon Bezaly, Bohuslav Matoušek, Jiří Bělohlávek



Benewitz Quartet

ble act and to those who had lost people close to them. “At the time of the greatest threat from German fascism the United States in accepted many exceptional people from throughout the world. One of them was Bohuslav Martinů, who obtained American citizenship,” the president of the board

of trustees of the fund, composer Viktor Kalabis, said in the context of the dedication.

# musica nova

LENKA DOHNALOVÁ

On the 9th - 11th of November the jury of the 10th Musica Nova International Correspondence Competition in Electro-acoustic music met in Prague. The competition is traditionally held for the field known as pure autonomous electro-acoustic music. For reasons of quantity and the difficulty of establishing comparative criteria the competition does not include pop music and multimedia.

In Category A - i.e. music simply for EA medium the finalists were mainly composers in what is known as the acousmatic line (from Canada, France, and the Birmingham Electro-acoustic Sound Theatre of Jonta Harrison - from Great Britain). This line is primarily developing the spatial aspect of sound on real and virtual levels. The winning entry was *Industrial Revelations* by an Englishwoman now living in Norway, Natasha Barret (29). Natasha Barret also works with the Birmingham Electro-Acoustic Sound Theatre (BEAST). Her piece was praised for the vivid representation of an interesting source of inspiration (the sound of an industrial complex spreading through a nearby natural valley), and above all for its spatial dramaturgy, precise articulation of sound surface and careful mixing. Second place went to H. Tutschku (Germany) for his 8 channel, one again spatially conceived piece *Migration pétérée*, and the third to Canadian Ian Stewart for his piece *Phosphor Bronze*. Category A as a whole represented a concentrated experience of what can be achieved in the field of pure autonomous music in the strict sense of the term.

Category B, designed for live vocal or instrumental part/s (or at least potentially live) and medium, is always more diverse in style. The compositions are evaluated as artistic wholes, and so the electro-acoustic part is not separately judged. The first place went to a young composer who had been a competition finalist last year - Dagmara Jack (17) from Poland with her piece for soprano and tape *Raasz II* (untranslatable) inspired by Jewish culture. In second place was Italian Massimo Carlentini with a piece for flute and computer music called *Recykled*. Dagmara Jack's composition was praised for its balance and expression and the excellent performance of the soprano.



**NATASHA BARRETT (born 1972, England), began to be interested in EA composition as a postgraduate student with J. Harrison and D. Smalley. She works with the Birmingham Electric-Acoustic Sound Theatre. She lives in Oslo in Norway where she is a composer, teacher and organiser of musical life. She has won awards in a series of international EA music competitions (Linz, Bourges, Varese and others). In the Musica nova 2001 competition she won first prize in Category A (only electronic medium) with her piece *Industrial Revelations*.**

LD: You compose tape and live EA music, and music for theatre and dance. Could you name your most known, or in your opinion most interesting compositions?

NB: I guess that my tape piece 'Little Animals' is currently the best known of my works internationally. It has been played over 20 times in public, and broadcast over radio in five countries. This piece was composed as part of my doctoral degree. It received first prize in the category for tape music Bourges in 1999. This piece, and some of my theoretical writing, has also been published in the *Computer Music Journal*. However, I think that some of both technically and compositionally. For example and 'The Utility of Space' (2000). I also create sound installations, and my multi-channel installation 'Displaced : Replaced' is a work I am particularly pleased with.

LD Which of them were commissioned and which of them take origin from your initiative?

NB: I have a repertoire of live and tape pieces from the period of my doctoral degree, which I finished in 1997. None of these works were commissioned (apart from a short film) because they were part of the degree research. Most of the works completed since my doctoral degree have been commissioned.

LD: You finished your studies with Jonty Harrison and Denis Smalley. Could you say how these two people inspired you in EA music?

NB: Maybe the most valuable thing I learnt from Jonty Harrison was how to perform tape music. The Birmingham EA sound Theatre, lead by Jonty, is based on the

French tradition of sound diffusion over a large number of loudspeakers filling the concert space. The idea is, through performance, to articulate the music through the three-dimensional space of the concert hall, and for this to be successful even for a large audience where many people may be sitting away from the central listening-position. Working like this not only drew my attention to the importance of performance in tape music, but also to the detail that can be achieved in the composed sound-field. Denis Smalley has written some valuable texts that are standard reading for many in the UK. Denis was my doctoral degree supervisor, and made me find ways to express myself through writing. Being able to write about one's own work, as well as other composers' works, on an aesthetic as well as technical basis is something I think is important for a composer's development. Denis also composes interesting music.

LD: You also co-operate with Birmingham EA Sound Theatre. Do you think that this multi-channel sound performing of music (in French terminology s. c. acousmatique) inspires you in other kinds of music as well (instrumental, music for theatre)?

NB: I worked for one year with BEAST during my master's degree in 1994. I mention above how working with BEAST influenced by tape work. I was always thinking of how the composed sound space could be like a real three-dimensional sound field. This is also important to me in relation to theatre performance and instrumental music. Our



perception of the world is not 'flat', it is 3-D. When it comes to theatre I was experimenting with spatial theatre before working with BEAST, but only later worked out how to take advantage of both the immediate and structural articulations of theatrical space.

LD: This Sound Theatre serves students of the university. Do you think that the chance of high quality reproduction of EA music in school inspires students to compose in this genre of music?

NB: BEAST is run by Jonty and his current students. However, it is a public organisation, playing international works, performing in venues around the UK, and sometimes even taking the whole diffusion system to another country. I suppose the students are the ones who benefit most. When one is thinking about reproduction quality, one also has to consider the composition studio. Often a piece of music sounds at its best if you are a single person listening in a very good studio. The loudspeakers and sound quality in the Birmingham studios are exceptionally high. Listening in the studio environment is very important - it is the sound laboratory! Of course in a concert, one is dealing with more than one person in the ideal listening position. In this situation the studio reference is no longer relevant and concert diffusion takes on a new perspective. In addition to experiencing a high quality concert, one also sees an audience's response and gets the great feeling that all composer's and performers get after playing their music in public. So to answer the question, I think inspiration comes from the combination of a high quality working environment and a concert system through which to perform the music.

LD: You are now living in Oslo. What is the situation for young composers (especially of EA music) in Norway?

NB: EA music in Norway has a very short tradition. EA music as a compositional study is not taught in the music conservatories or the universities. The only option a student has to work with EA music is to take a course in music technology. Then one can sometimes get access to a studio, and if fortunate, have a teacher who can guide and advise on musical and aesthetic issues. NoTAM (Norwegian network for acoustics, technology and music) also runs a summer course each year that includes aesthetics and composition. So the situation is not good for an EA student composer in Norway. I would not have stayed in Norway as a student! It is different for instrumental music. Things are changing, but slowly. But the good side is that support for contemporary music in general is quite good (all types of contemporary music). If you are lucky, after completing a good education and working professionally for some time, gradually the working situation becomes more stable.



**DAGMARA JACK (born 1984, Poland), studied music from the age of 4, and won her first prize for composition at the age of 14. She has attended a series of courses (IRCAM, Brussels), and now studies composition with Hans Peter Kyburz and Roland Moser at the Music Academy in Basel. She was a finalist in the Musica nova 2000 Competition and in 2001 won first prize in Category B (instrument or voice and tape) for her piece Raasz II, inspired by Jewish culture.**

L.D. You are very young composer. You obtained your first composition prize in the age of fourteen. I have also read that you see composing primarily as a "kind of work". It is interesting for me that such a young person takes such a sober view. Were you what they call a gifted child, did someone specific inspire you as a child, or is your personality so structured that you are perfectionist in all your activities?

DJ I remember that I always wanted to create something. Sometimes it was a sculpture or a painting. When I was a child I discovered I could put it all together in music. Music can represent every art. When I write a piece I see a painting reflected by the music. I compose because I need to. I'm a perfectionalist in composition, and in another activities I'm very stubborn. I know exactly what I want to do and I do it.

LD Which of your compositions do you think the most interesting (especially in EA music)?

DJ I work equally hard on all my electro-acoustic pieces. The only difference is the way of working. From my pieces for tape I very much like "Raasz" because it is my personal answer to questions often asked about Jewish culture.

LD You are a mix, a Polish-Nigerian, if my information is right. Do you think that this gives you some kind of special inspiration or sensibility? You have written several times you are fascinated by Jewish culture. Why?

DJ Sometimes I take my inspiration from Jewish culture but I'm also interested in

Indian and African culture. My piece for tape "Satyamangalam" was inspired by the Indian legend. Of course my heritage is important for me.

Nigerian music is very rhythmic and fast but as yet I haven't used any Nigerian themes in my pieces.

LD You are now studying in Germany, where you took a lot of courses last year. Is it useful for you? Why?

DJ I think that courses are very useful for all composers. It provides an opportunity to meet each other, communicate with people and work with great professors. Courses helped me to find my individual way of composing. I think that every composer should participate in those courses.

LD What do you think is fundamental in composing EA music (and other music too) for you personally and for the future of the genre?

DJ Generally what is important for me in music is to communicate with the listeners. When I write a piece I think during these few minutes I have an influence over people. It is some kind of power or psychological game. I feel it especially in electro-acoustic music because in instrumental there is greater contact between musicians and public than between composer and public.

For the future of music the main thing is contact with people.

LD What is the situation of young composers in Poland today?

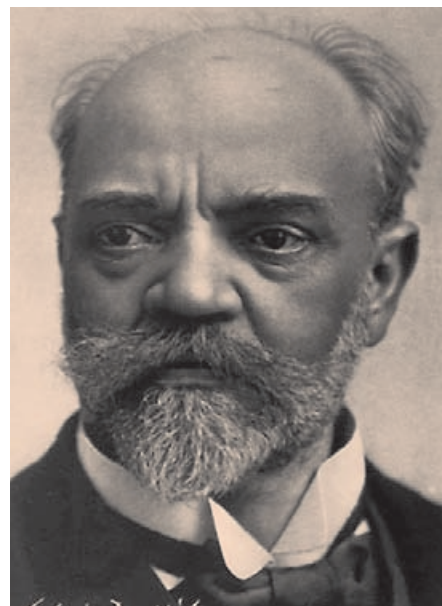
DJ The situation of young composers in Poland is quite good. In Poland there are a number of festivals where the pieces can be performed (for example "Warsaw Autumn" where my piece was performed in this year). Also there are very good musicians who like to play contemporary music. I think people are open to contemporary music and they will be more open if this music becomes more popular.

# a new critical edition of the works of antonína dvořák

JARMILA GABRIELOVÁ

Critical editions of notated sources represent one of the key and also one of the most specialist tasks of musicology. In most cases they take the form of a collected edition of the works of a single composer. The first monumental ventures of this kind appeared in Europe in the later 19th century in the shape of the collected editions of the works of Johann Sebastian Bach, Georg Friedrich Händel and Ludwig van Beethoven. As time went by editing methods continued to improve, demands on the level of critical notated text rose and the old editions started to be regarded as inadequate. The period after the Second World War, the Nineteen-Fifties and Sixties, brought a qualitatively new phase. Today activities in the field are unusually intense despite the fact that editions are always very demanding in terms of time and funds. There is increasing focus on 20th-century composers (Arnold Schönberg, Paul Hindemith and others) or composers of more local significance (Franz Berwald, Niels Gade etc.), alongside the creative phenomena of earlier epochs. The numbers of edition projects begun, underway or recently completed runs into dozens or even perhaps hundreds. There is probably no need to emphasise the fact that these projects are not being undertaken "just for their own sake". In contrast to the polarity of the earlier notion of the critical edition as either a contribution "to science" or as a more or less "practical" aid, in the great majority of editions today there is no strict dividing line between academic demands and the needs of performance. Top musicians, singers and conductors want to have a reliable notated text to hand – concert programmes and CD booklets increasingly indicate which notated edition the performers are using – and musicologists face the task of preparing and submitting such texts. At the same time the existence of a reliable text is a major boost for the works themselves and helps to determine their status in the practical musical world. There is no need here to belabour the point that major music publishers with their recording plans and commercial interests are very much involved here. In comparison with the world at large the critical edition situation in the Czech Repub-

lic is rather bleak, and the reasons have deep historical roots and contexts. In this country projects for publication of the collected works of important composers were started late compared with more advanced countries. Some of the Czech editions were compiled in extremely difficult conditions, and this naturally had an effect on the results – for example most of the work on the Study Edition of the works of Bedřich Smetana was done during the Second World War. Other projects such as the collected edition of the works of Zdeněk Fibich (started in 1950, the year of the 100th anniversary of the composer's birth) remained unfinished fragments. Another great composer, Antonín Dvořák – together with Leoš Janáček undoubtedly the best known and most frequently performed Czech composer abroad – seemed until recently to be doing relatively well in terms of editions. Work on the collected edition initiated in the year of the 50th anniversary of the composer's death (= 1954), proceeded very rapidly despite the unfavourable political and economic conditions. This was due to the care of the Committee for Publication of the Works of Antonín Dvořák, which was set up in the framework of the Antonín Dvořák Society in Prague and approved by the ministry bodies of the time. It was first headed by Dvořák's biographer Ing. Otakar Šourek (1883-1956) and later his son-in-law the composer and musicologist Jarmil Burghauser (1921-1997). The works were published first by the State Publishing House for Belles Lettres, Music and Art (SNKLHU), later by the State Music Publishing House (SHV) and finally by the Editio Supraphon in Prague. Problems developed at the end of the Eighties and beginning of the Nineties, and did so on several fronts at once. The change in political and economic conditions after 1989 and the consequent long-drawn-out problems around the privatisation of Editio Supraphon meant that edition projects were temporarily crippled. Added to this was a generation problem. The members of the original publishing committee were now old, retiring or dying, and the death of Jarmil Burghauser in February



1997 left a kind of vacuum. At the same time several foreign scholars and musicians with a good knowledge of Dvořák's work drew attention to the fact that the Dvořák edition in question – that over forty years had managed to cover the instrumental and vocal works but had ground to a halt faced with the complex problems of the as yet unpublished stage works – no longer met current academic standards in its original conception and did not provide a sufficiently reliable aid to performance either. The upshot was that at the end of May 1999 an international musicological seminar entitled Antonín Dvořák – the State of the Collected Critical Edition, organised by Jarmila Gabrielová, was held in Prague with expert participants and guests from England, the USA, Germany, Hungary and the Czech Republic. Its purpose was to make a responsible assessment of the current state of publication of Dvořák's works and to discuss ways and means of improving and reviving the project, or – more likely – starting an edition again. A motive force behind the seminar was the initiative and interest of representatives of the Bärenreiter Kassel – Editio Bärenreiter Prague Publishing House, which had publicly declared its commitment to work on Dvořák as well as to other areas of Czech music. The conclusions of the seminar were clear: with all respect for the labours of the previous generation, the Dvořák edition is today already out-of-date and in terms of use of source



materials, editing of notated text and critical apparatus meets the standards of the 19th century rather than those of today. A new critical edition was therefore urgently needed, and the first important steps in that direction have been taken.

Immediately following the seminar a major research project was conceived at the Institute for Music Science of the Czech Academy of Sciences in Prague under the aegis of its director Ivan Vojtěch. The project is entitled *Příprava a zahájení nového souborného kritického vydání děl Antonína Dvořáka*. Nová etapa dvořákovského výzkumu [Preliminary and Opening Phase of the New Critical Edition of the Complete Works by Antonín Dvořák. A New Stage of Dvořák Research], runs for the period 2000-2004 and is supported by a grant from the Czech Ministry of Culture. Work on the project, which is headed by Jarmila Gabrielová and which apart from the Institute for Musical Science of the Czech Academy of Sciences as grant guarantor involves the Institute of Music Science of the Charles University Faculty of Arts and the Czech Museum of Music - Antonín Dvořák Museum in Prague with its director Jarmila Tauerová, began in the Spring of 2000. Currently it is mainly at the stage of heuristics, which means registration (in the broadest sense), classification and "technical" preparation of the sources. The primary task in this field is to draw up

what is known as an "internal catalogue of sources" containing and describing in detail all the notated and non-notated sources for each of Dvořák's works; this catalogue always includes even those sources that are to day missing or have not been preserved. The catalogue is being drawn up using an analytical framework designed on the basis of experience with work on modern collected editions of the music of Carl Maria Weber, Robert Schumann, Richard Wagner and Johannes Brahms by the German scholar Klaus Döge and presented at another specialist seminar held at the Institute of Music Science of the Czech Academy of Sciences in March 2000. An informal group of volunteers from Prague musicology departments and young staff of the Institute of Music Science (Czech Academy) originally started work on the catalogue. In the first phase our method was to let every participant pick a Dvořák work or group of works according to his or her preferences and without regard for chronology. It soon became apparent, however, that we needed to proceed more systematically and chronologically, and this is what we are now striving for together. At present the people drawing up the internal catalogue are research staff Jan Kachlík, Tereza Kibicová and Cyril Šálek from the Institute (Czech Academy) and students/ staff from the Institute (Faculty of Arts, Charles University)

Marc Niubó, Ludmila Šmídová and Markéta Štědranská. A thorough overview of sources already exists in relation to the Dvořák works that have been or are now being edited for publication outside the framework of the new collected edition project by Milan Pospíšil (Dimitrij op. 64), Alan Houtchens and Jaroslav Holeček (Vanda op. 25), or Klaus Döge (Slavonic Dances op. 46 and op. 72, String Quartet in C Major op. 61, Symphony No. 8 in G Major op. 88 and Symphony no. 9 in E Minor "From the New World" op. 95, Cello Concerto in B Minor op. 104 and others). The results of this work are already in many respects extending, clarifying and revising the data in the otherwise invaluable catalogue by Jarmil Burghauser, and this is primarily because this work includes and registers a much larger circle of sources than was the custom in older Dvořák scholarship. The data is being processed electronically in the form of text files and stored in computers at the Institute of Music Science at Charles University Faculty of Arts; printed copies are archived there and in the Institute of Music Science of the Czech Academy. Another – and compared with the internal catalogue apparently simpler – field of heuristics is the cataloguing of Dvořák's correspondence and its classification from the point of view of its relevance to the notated sources which are either

Manuscript of the 9th symphony



directly or indirectly contained in it. The starting-point here is obviously the existing critical edition of Dvořák's correspondence and documents. In recent months the task of excerpting letters from already published volumes has been carried out mainly by musicology students Adéla Hlubučková, Dita Hradecká and Jana Kvochová, whose work is now nearly complete. These data are stored in a special computer database at the Charles University Institute. We are not yet producing a printed version for various reasons, but mainly because this database, at present containing up to 2000 entries, is as yet far from complete. Other tasks presently facing staff at the Czech Academy Institute and the Czech Museum of Music Jan Frei, Jan Kachlík and Cyril Šálek, will include the identification and itemisation of letters and documents that are as yet unpublished or at least not published in the collected edition of correspondence, and also letters from third parties, whether already published – e.g. the correspondence between the composer Johannes Brahms and the publisher Fritz Simrock – or unpublished.

In 2001 Tereza Kibicová with some input from Jan Kachlík took on the task of listing and conducting orientational research on the estates of important colleagues and personal friends of Antonín Dvořák. The main focus here was the notated music in the estate of the composer Karel Bendl, lodged in the music history archive of the Czech Museum of Music and also the estates of Jindřicha Káan, Hanuš Wihan and Josef Zubatý. The search for the music remains of the pianist Karel ze Slavkovských has not yet met with any success. Negotiations with some private owners of notated Dvořák autographs on the possibility of permission for scholars to look at these sources and procure copies has also not yet had the desired effect and we shall have to carry on trying. In recent months these negotiations have been conducted mainly by Jan Kachlík with the mediation or direct participation of the Director of the Czech Museum of Music Markéta Hallová, Miroslav Nový and others.

In the context of preparatory heuristic work on the new collected edition of the works of Antonín Dvořák one question that remains open is the use of the information in what is known as the "Dvořákian databank". The then director of the Antonín Dvořák Museum Markéta Hallová announced this ambitious project in 1991 an international Dvořák congress and reported on it again at an international symposium in Vienna in June last year. Undoubtedly, ten years of hard work particularly by the external employee of the Czech Museum of Music Eva Léblová and the late Milada Rutová have produced a mass of source data that is of great significance from our point of view. Instead of the originally planned computer database, however, to which there would have been online access, all the records have been hand-written on filing

cards that are now lodged in the museum depositary and are for that reason inaccessible to scholars. No less serious problems include the incompletely catalogued and so likewise inaccessible estates of Otakar Šourek and Jarmil Burghauser in the Antonín Dvořák Museum, and the uncatalogued archives of the Antonín Dvořák Society kept in the same place.

The preparatory stage of work on the new collected edition of the works of Antonín Dvořák also involves securing direct access to notated sources for editing or at least gradually obtaining copies. Here we have for a long time had to struggle (and are still in some respects having to struggle) with a range of technical and organisational problems. The Antonín Dvořák Museum in Prague – an institution with a quite unique status in terms of our work, because it possesses more than 80 % of all Dvořák sources – has at its disposal apart from the originals only black-and-white microfilms of Dvořák autographs made at the beginning of the Eighties in only one copy and since that time used for study purposes and for occasional provision of photocopies. Our limited resources mean that photocopies are too expensive and impractical. Xerox copies from the microfilms that can be made on special equipment are relatively cheap, but entirely unsatisfactory in quality as well as involving a rather long wait between order and supply. Colour photographs of the autograph sources taken with digital cameras and subsequent scanning of documents currently looks like the best solution, although it involves a great deal of time and energy.

In May 2001 a further Dvořák seminar was held in Prague, with a programme prepared by Dietrich Berke (Kassel) and Jarmila Gabrielová. Its aim was to summarise and assess experience and progress to date and look for ways to solve the problems described. Among the themes discussed by participants from both the Czech Republic and abroad was the overall arrangement of the edition in series and volumes, a specific schedule for the near and middle term, and the need for binding, codified editing principles of a kind that the preceding collected edition had lacked. Such principles are absolutely essential and crucial especially in a situation when in contrast to previous editing projects in Czech music there were plans for major input by foreign editors at a level corresponding to contemporary standards of scholarship and the importance and reception of Dvořák's music. The first version of edition principles formulated in line with the results of discussion and using reliable models, is now available in Czech and German as internal study material together with the overall plan for the new collected edition and the concluding records of discussion. An English version will be produced as soon as possible. The author of all these working texts is Jarmila Gabrielová. According to current thinking the first volumes of the new collected edition should

contain the four symphonic poems based on the texts of Karel Jaromír Erben (Vodník [The Water Goblin], Polednice [The Noonday Witch], Zlatý kolovrat [The Golden Spinning-Wheel] and Holoubek [The Pigeon], op. 107-110). Marc Niubó has already started on collation of the sources and preparation of a critical notated text. Since the Autumn of 2000 a special seminar has been running at the Institute of Music Science at the Charles University Faculty of Arts. Led by Jarmila Gabrielová it deals with problems of the edition, and within its framework two students, Petra Kvasničková and Michaela Vejvarová are currently trying to produce a critical edition of the seven short orchestral pieces (the so-called Meziaktních skladeb [Entre'acte Pieces]) of 1867. It will undoubtedly prove possible to use the same path for the edition of other minor Dvořák pieces.

Last but not least, the proposals and recommendations that emerged from discussions at the Dvořák seminar in May 2001 related to the institutional and organisational conditions necessary to ensure the uninterrupted course of work on the new collected edition of the works of Antonín Dvořák even after the current preparatory phase. In this context it is becoming clear that we need in the near future to set up a small but efficient "Dvořák Research Centre", that would fulfil management and co-ordination functions alongside its own heuristic and editing work. One could of course say that this centre already in fact exists in the shape of the working community of the young musicologists mentioned above, who have selflessly and with unstinting energy joined in work on the Dvořák grant. On the other hand, this centre still needs a specific institutional form. There is also the cardinal question – at present wide open – of how to secure long-term reliable material support and funds for its activities.

Musicology projects, the edition plans of music publishers and concert and opera production today have a strong tendency to centre on major anniversaries of major composers. As far as Antonín Dvořák and the new collected critical edition of his works is concerned, the magic date will be 2004, when the whole musical world will mark the 100th anniversary of his death. There is no need to press the obvious point that the fulfilment of our plans, i.e. successful completion of the preparatory phase and "launch" of the new collected edition would be a more than worthy contribution to this anniversary, not only in the domestic but above all in the international context. In the longer term this might open up prospects for proper critical editions of the works of other Czech composers whose works have been inexcusably neglected. Our experience over the last two years does not, however, suggest that the task will be at all easy.



# the situation of percussion instruments: multipercussion at the music faculty of the academy of the performing arts [HAMU]

TOMÁŠ ONDRUŠEK

In October this year the teaching of percussion was launched for the first time in the history of HAMU in Prague. It is a logical step and necessary for a school with a focus on soloists and an international reputation, and it is also admirable that in the unending struggle of the old against the new it has finally proved possible to introduce this discipline. I had been asked by the dean's office to present a teaching plan and after an appointments procedure I was entrusted with "building up" the field. Since the novelty has attracted interest in the musical world and voices from the professional and lay public are already to be heard asking questions, offering advice, criticising and admiring, I would like to use this space to explain my concept, i.e. my teaching plan for percussion at HAMU.

Marek Kopelent rightly asked, "What do you actually want to teach? Percussion is taught over six years at the conservatory. What can you offer on top of that? On finishing conservatory surely anyone can go straight to an orchestral competition and get a place in an orchestra. That is indeed true. Raising similar arguments in my own head, I became aware of the immense opportunity to develop something new. Here in the Czech Republic we have a unique foundation for it, one that is unparalleled in Europe: performers get their main, basic training at conservatory, and can then choose a soloist career and study at the Academy of Performing Arts, which was founded as a school for soloists. Given this tradition, it is more than logical that the percussion department at HAMU must be focused on multipercussion, the set of percussion instruments that forms the basis for solo and chamber music for percussion. Training in this category, which has in fact been the main form of percussion instruments for forty years, has meanwhile been catastrophic, in the sense of being negligible. It is obviously out of the question for an orchestral player to be a serious interpreter of solo contemporary music on multipercussion, just as a player in a jazz band is not a timpanist in an orchestra. We have to resign ourselves to the fact that today percussion instruments have to be divided into specialist categories and in this way their standards will be improved. We cannot pretend that nothing has been happening in these forty years. While earlier the multipercussion set did not exist, and there was no solo music for percussion or for solo marimba and the orchestral player could handle everything, today we are have roughly the following independent categories: 1) orchestral percussion instruments,

2) multipercussion, 3) marimba and vibraphone, 4) set (in the jazz department).

Categories of this kind were already adopted in America several years. In Europe, meanwhile, the only example is the Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatory. HAMU's decision therefore makes it one of the pioneers in the field. I should add that elsewhere in Europe efforts are being made to adjust training to the actual state of affairs, but these are taking place mainly on the private level, since the lack of conservatories means that higher music academies and universities cannot concentrate on the problem and specialise. Specialisation of the same kind is taken for granted for keyboard instruments, even though originally (e.g. in the Baroque era), it did not exist there either. So much for my basic thoughts. I shall now return to the teaching plan for percussion instruments at HAMU. The skeleton of the course consists of the following subjects: percussion set/multipercussion, preparation for diploma work, performance and improvisation seminar, rhythm studio, sound studio, chamber play, history and literature of the instrument and orchestral practice (the last three subjects taught by Vladimír Vlasák).

Now more details on several subjects: Percussion set is the main subject. We study the "classics" of solo literature (Stockhausen, Lachenmann, Feldman, Xenakis, Aperghis, Globokar ad.) and chamber music (Berio, Boulez, Noda, Hespos aj.), and also pieces by young Czech and international composers (Smolka, Ospalt, Graham, Lang, students at AMU), solo concertos with orchestra, marimba literature etc. The performance and improvisation seminar includes listening to compositions, comparison, creation of various multipercussion sets, notation, graphic compositions and improvisation. In the rhythm studio we develop our weakened feeling for musical time and its division: group rhythm exercises help us to find our lost rhythmic abilities. This is a very necessary element for the demands of new compositions. Studies here include the basis of African drumming, which is the starting-point for a whole series of compositions and their performance. Naturally we also practice improvisation.

The sound studio is a certain counterpoint to the rhythm studio. In the field of percussion instruments sound is as important as rhythm. It is necessary to develop feeling for the material and with it feeling for sound and its origin. The sound studio includes the making of instruments and objects, searching for sound, found acoustic

objects, the making of sticks, the use of unconventional acoustic materials and so on.

This then is how I approach the creation of a study department that aims to "produce" educated and musically sensitive players (soloists and chamber musicians), whose virtuosity does not consist solely in superficial technique. Graduates should have a well-founded and developed relationship to the new instrument multipercussion and be capable of playing modern music of the later 20th century. This involves knowledge of the new performance techniques that are precisely what the solo set requires, as well as creativity, ingenuity, the creation of acoustic sources and so forth. Study and rehearsal of the basic solo repertoire for percussion will introduce students to a wide spectrum of contemporary music: various notations and styles, interpretation, experimentation, the discovery of new possibilities and techniques, improvisation, the search for sound...

My approach to work with students is formed by the principles of liberalism and plurality of views. At the academy level it is impossible to start from the working principle of the conservatory, which is more like a school (teacher-pupil), but it is necessary to create an art environment allowing encounter between personalities. I naturally also assume a high degree of independence in students, since this is a condition for the development of artistic personality. Percussion must not be allowed to be degraded to the purely instrumental technical level, but must make sure not to lose contact with the musical world. Because my own deepest memories are of various meetings with music personalities (e.g. H. Lachenmann or M. Smolka), I would like to arrange the same chances for students. I plan to invite leading figures in multipercussion, marimba and composition to lectures, for example the percussionists Christian Dierstein, Stefan Froleys, Jeff Beer, Stanislav Skoczynsky or Bernhard Wulff. I am also considering the possibility of semester exchanges with the Janáček Academy of Performing Arts in Brno. At the international level it would be desirable to arrange exchanges particularly with Paris (J. P. Drouot, G. Sylvestre), Moscow (M. Pekarsky), Karlsruhe (I. Nakamura), Essen (M. Schulz) and Warsaw (S. Skoczynski). The main long-term collaboration should, however, be conducted in HAMU itself, with the department of composition. This is the chief source of information for both sides: composers need to get to know an instrument from its foundations and therefore naturally need to work with a creative percussionist. It is impossible to work using antiquated instrumental handbooks. Multipercussion is a new instrument, a developing instrument and a changeable instrument (technical innovations, new acoustic sources...). Percussionists in their turn need composers as creators. Here there is enormous potential from which to draw inspiration, or simply an explanation for notation that is often hard to understand. In the case of new compositions, consultation with its author makes possible a genuine interpretation that is a kind of "co-creation" and not reproduction.

# the madman, the nun, the maiden and death

TEREZA HAVELKOVÁ

The basement of Divadlo Inspirace [Inspiration Theatre] is an intimate. In order to squeeze everyone in the audience sits on cushions, the and the orchestra plays in the next room with the music electronically relayed to the “theatre”. The stage and the auditorium are separated by a stretched mesh, which is alternately used as a projection stream. The stage design is simple, dominated by an illuminated cylinder of opaque glass (or some artificial substance?) set in the middle of the back. The costumes are very stylised, like the movements of the actors. The inventive and novel ideas of the director are very functional, and we get an impression of a peculiar economy of expression but at the same time great practicality. The young singers interpret their roles with conviction. The music, in which we can hear minimalism, rock and the classical legacy, maintains the dramatic tension throughout.

This is the face of “chamber opera” à la Michal Nejtek, Marko Ivanovič and Jiří Heřman (to name at least three architects of the evening). Attractively and professionally produced musical drama.

## An interview with Michal Nejtek (M.N.) and Marko Ivanovič (M.I.)



### Why did you decide to write an opera as your graduation piece?

M.I.: At our school the custom is for students to finish their studies with an orchestral piece which gets played just once in the Rudolfinum and there its life ends. Michal and I were sorry we would just have to do the same, and because we knew that in the fifties Luboš

Fišer graduated with the opera Lancelot, and it was later performed again, and because – at least as far as we knew – nobody had had the idea of writing a graduation opera after him, we said to ourselves that we would have a go. At the same time it was a challenge, because for many people opera is a dead genre, and I have to admit that for a long time I thought the same. I didn't know if there was still something to be communicated in the genre. And so we've tried it now.

### It seems to me that currently we're experiencing a kind of renaissance of opera. Do you see it that way as well?

M.N.: It looks that way. But I think it depends on opportunity. Opera houses today have a tendency to play new pieces and there are a lot of people who want to write them. Recently there were several competitions as well. The renaissance may relate to these practical aspects and won't necessarily carry on after a couple of years.

M.I.: My feeling is that it could also be connected to the fact that recently opera production practice has changed. It's reaching this country now too, with directors like David Pountney or David Radok. All at once it's clear that the older classical opera has its staging limits. J.A. Pitřinský for example struggled with it. To stage a real story with realistic dialogues from the last century in any other way than realistically is a problem and you always feel the disproportion between the music and the staging. Modern opera offers a broader spectrum of possibilities to all the elements that share in the staging process.

### What is it about opera as a genre that attracted you?

M.N.: I don't actually know if what I wrote was an opera. And that's why it attracted me. Just because I didn't know opera I wanted to write one. Only now, retrospectively, am I beginning to understand it a little.

It was also because we met an outstanding person, our fellow student Jiří Heřman. He is an opera director, but very “unstandard”. He had an interesting approach and so we chose the themes together with him. What happened was a different kind of interaction than the usual. Normally, you take a complete opera and put it on. Our operas were created jointly, and this meant an interesting interpenetration of two conceptual worlds – the director and the composers. The result was something that could be called opera, or then again not.

### You wrote the libretto for Dementiae praecox together with Jiří Heřman then...

M.N.: Yes, we chose them together. We didn't have a libretto and because we didn't want anyone else involved, we realised that the simplest thing for non-literary types like us would be to use a stage play. Witkiewicz's play The Madman and the Nun, which we chose in the end, has a good form in itself and there is a nice translation from the Polish, and so we simply struck out the text we didn't need. Originally we had other ideas, for example using a short story by Camus or Kafka, but this turned out to be too complicated.

### How was it with The Maiden and Death?

M.I.: My search took a lot of time and effort, and one reason was that I tried as far as possible to avoid stories or plays based on con-



versation. The dialogues would have had to be handled using some kind of declamation, and I didn't want that. Finally I found a story by Ray Bradbury, that had a poetry I liked. I had the feeling that it was the best fit for my ideas, but I wasn't myself able to create a libretto from it. For that reason I made contact with a colleague studying dramaturgy at DAMU [The Drama Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts], Anna Doubková. It was interesting for both of us, because neither of us new how to create such a libretto – all I knew was that unlike a play text not everything had to be conveyed verbally and it was possible to leave it to pure musical expression. I gave Anička an idea of how it ought to look dramatically, and she filled it out with text.

#### Can you briefly describe your operas?

M.I.: The Maiden and Death is a fanciful, symbolic story about an old woman who is shut up in her house and thinks about nothing but death and how to keep it away. Along comes a young man in white carrying a green bottle. He goes round the house and the old woman senses that he is death. It turns out that he is indeed death, but he takes a different form than the old woman had imagined, and this disconcerts her. The young man offers the old woman a bargain. If she goes with him, he will give her a day and a night after her eighteenth birthday. At first the old woman thinks the idea absurd, but during dialogue with the young man who realises that her whole life has been directed towards death and she understands that life and death are two sides of the same coin. At the end she agrees to the bargain and leaves in the form of a young girl to enjoy a day and night in the town with the young man as her lover.

#### What attracted you about this particular theme?

M.I.: Several levels. One is the level of action and ideas – the gradual inner transformation of the dying person. But what fascinated me even more was the overall atmosphere in which Bradbury had set the story. It all takes place on a summer afternoon, with everything summery and pastoral. That scent and atmosphere attracted me.

#### And Dementia praecox?

M.N.: The original model for Dementia praecox is called The Madman and the Nun, and naturally it's about a madman and a nun. The main character is Walpurg, a writer or poet for some unknown reasons incarcerated in a lunatic asylum, where he is treated in the worst possible way – with pills and straitjacket. The opera has five scenes. In the first they send a nun to the madman to pacify him. The nun is a defenceless creature, and in her way as unfortunate as the madman. They discover that their fates have been similar, and both have lost someone close to them. In the end they develop a relationship and the madman seduces the nun. This fragile balance is interrupted in the second scene by the remaining characters – the mother superior and two doctors, one a cynic and the other a Freudian who

has a prescription for everything. They obviously do not like the situation. The scene culminates with the madman killing one of the doctors. The third scene is a continuation of the first scene but continues further, right up to the merger of the two unfortunate souls. While in the first scene we proceeded from the spoken word, which we understand as official and civil, to the sung word, which is an expression of sympathy and contact, in the third scene we completely left the text out. The voice without text here symbolises the highest and absolute understanding. In the fourth scene the lovers are interrupted by the other characters and once again a dramatically intense situation develops, ending in Walpurg's suicide. The fifth scene is the absurd culmination of the play. The two dead characters Walpurg and the doctor return to the stage and as in some of the operas of Josef Berg they leave, in this case for the beach and taking the nun with them. Only the mother superior and Freudian doctor are left on stage, and they go mad because they have no idea what is going on.

I was attracted by the fact that this was an Absurdist drama (Witkiewicz is a kind of Polish Ionesco), but only reveals itself as such in the fifth scene. Up to that point it looks like normal stuff of the One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest type.

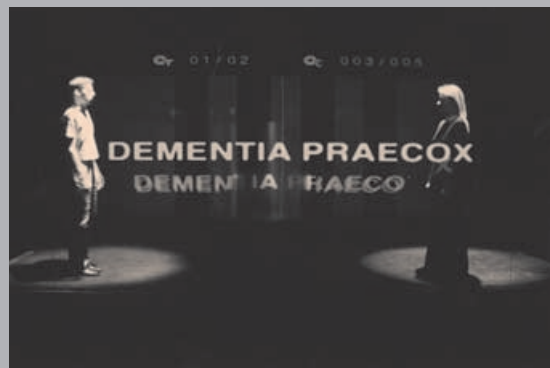
#### Your music is like a gift to performers. It doesn't make very heavy demands on them or require mastery of any special vocal techniques. Were you conscious of some limitations in this area and adapt to them, or did it just happen naturally?

M.N.: For me it was normal. I have a basic dislike for dodecaphonic melody and when I write for song I try to write the simplest, very tonal melody, and under it music that transcends it, and is far more complex and sophisticated. I had worked this way several times before, and so it came automatically and so probably it's very singable. Of course, there were places that we had to modify after agreement with the performers.

I deliberately didn't use special vocal techniques, because this would have been a problem. In this country people are not taught contemporary music performance practices and this essentially means that you can't use them. There are only one or two people who would be capable of singing something like that here. We had to take the situation as it is.

#### What did you have to do to stage your operas?

M.I.: We were lucky that we ran into Martin Cikánek, who is studying production at the Music Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts. He devoted a lot of time to the project. Even though it's actually a school event it is still a very expensive matter and some of the teachers were against it (specifically from the singing departments). So in the end we founded a civic association that we called the Club for Contemporary Opera, and we applied for grants for the association. But the money we obtained in this way wasn't enough, and the



decisive amount – roughly half I think – was ultimately covered by the school. I can't imagine carrying out a similar project outside the school framework.

#### It is my impression that to a great extent you two have a shared creative aesthetic. Do you feel that way?

M.I.: Your impression is a pleasant surprise for me, since I've heard several people say that our aesthetic approaches are different. Neither Michal nor myself see it that way, of course, and we have the feeling that we have an affinity. And this isn't our first co-operative project. We've already organised a joint concert at which we both presented a cycle of songs on the poetry of Bohuslav Reynek.

M.N.: Although our musical methods are sometimes different, our collaboration is based on the fact that intellectually we are very close and in most cases we also have common themes. That Reynek evening came about because we discovered quite by chance that we were both composing on Reynek's poetry. It has been the same with the operas. To put it in a nutshell, what we are thinking has a connection without our having talked about it specially. It's as if it happens outside us.



## kryštof mařatka

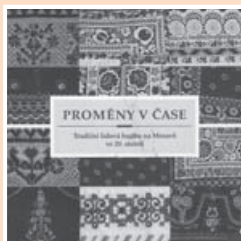
**Kryštof Mařatka · Exaltum, Trois mouvements concertants, Fables, Voja cello. Quatuor Kandinsky, Quatuor Castagneri, Francois Salque. LYRINX 1998, distribution - Harmonia mundi**

Kryštof Mařatka (born 1972) in recent years has become the only Czech composer to make a name for himself in the otherwise impermeable environment of French contemporary music. Numerous prestigious commissions from various French and other foreign festivals and performances by important musicians testify to his success. Mařatka has lived in Paris since 1994 after studying composition at the Prague conservatory. His first profile CD offered a glimpse of his extensive work through four chamber pieces dominated by stringed instruments. Mařatka's fame had preceded any experience of his music in my case and I have to confess that what I heard did not fit the ideas that I had formed earlier. For some reason I had expected a typically French music conceived in terms of timbre. Instead I found an expressive music not sparing with vibrato, seething with tones of colour and expression, a sequence of vivid acoustic events elaborated in subtle detail. And this first impression demanded I hear it again, which is a good sign.

Exaltum for piano quartet is wholly gripping and explosive in expression; it summons up a state of as it were dammed up energy. Towards the end the piece drops away spectacularly to its close. The impression is supported by the terrific performance of the ensemble Quatuor Kandinsky. Trois mouvements concertants for four cellos (one of them solo) combines romanticising melodiousness with passages of spherical sounding sound colours. In this respect the cellos offer brilliant possibilities that were all used to the limit. Fables for string quartet (performed with particular virtuosity by Quatuor Castagneri) brings a sequence of fourteen miniatures inspired by characters and situations from La Fontaine's fables. The miniatures follow on from each other in one stream creating a 14-minute chain form. I personally, however regard Voja cello, a twenty-five minute composition for solo cello on gipsy motifs as musically the crown of the CD. The virtuoso notated text for retuned cello (which I would happily recommend to leading concert soloists) consists in a broken polyphony of extreme passages and a fireworks of melodic and acoustic ideas. Unfolding on a large surface it is a "written down improvisation" played in a world that the author himself characterises as "imaginary folklore". This music is "gipsy" less in intonation than in its elemental dance rhythms.

A large solo piece that is definitely not a bore. Expression and virtuosity are in the foreground of Mařatka's music, but a second mysterious level is also present. Fundamentally Mařatka is the romantic type of artist. He has melodic ideas to hand and to achieve the desired expression he rejects no contemporary sound techniques including fully thought out micro-interval chromatics. Perhaps the riot of invention and a kind of hypertension at the level of expression can lead to a certain impression of improvisation and a loss of orientation in the whole. Certainly the dramatic passion of the music will not be to everyone's taste.

MIROSLAV PUDLÁK



## proměny v čase

**Proměny v čase  
[Transitions in Time]  
Gnosis Brno 2001**

Within a short period two CDs have been released that both try – each in a rather different way – to map folk music. Each approaches the subject from a different angle, both are undoubtedly valuable and both can be recommended to anyone who wants to get a better idea of our folk music.

The first CD is entitled *Proměny v čase* (Transitions in Time) and has been released by the Brno Gnosis company, whose owner Jiří Plocek is also responsible for its overall musical design. It maps the folk music of Moravia, i.e. the eastern part of the Czech Republic. The content is divided into two disks. The first contains historical recordings, the oldest from 1911, although most of them were made in the Fifties. Represented here are important performers from the different parts of Moravia, representatives of a generation for whom music was still a part of everyday life and not an isolated artefact. The quality of the recordings is naturally uneven as a result of the different recording conditions and their age. The general standard, however, is very good.

The second disk approaches the subject not from the chronological but from the geographical point of view. The different Moravian regions are here represented by recordings from groups who are trying to revive and preserve folk traditions today. They are mainly recordings from recent years and here we can listen to the different genres and different vocal and instrumental combinations typical for each area.

The booklet contains several articles on folk music, musical instruments and folk dances in Moravia and commentary on the individual recordings. Given the length of the text it would have been a good idea to add at least a brief summary in English.

MATĚJ KRATOCHVÍL



## dudy a dudácká muzika

**Dudy a dudácká muzika 1909  
[Bagpipes and Bagpipe Music]  
Ethnological Institute  
Czech Academy of Sciences 2000, 48:11**

The second new CD, entitled *Dudy a dudácká muzika* [Bagpipes and Bagpipe Music] 1909 is by comparison very specialised in its focus and draws on the western, or more precisely the south-western part of our country.

The credit for the work goes to Lubomír Tyllner, under the aegis of the Ethnological Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences and in collaboration with the Phonogrammarchiv in Vienna. The material presented on the CD consists of historical recordings made in 1909 by the important Czech musicologist Otakar Zich on the wax cylinders of an Edison phonogram. They are the oldest sound recordings of folk music in Bohemia. The first half of the CD presents recordings of a single performer, the piper František Kopčík, who lived from 1822 to 1915 and was the acknowledged master of the instrument in his time, although he was not a professional musician, but by trade a tailor.

The second half is composed of recordings of the typical ensemble of southern and western Bohemian known as "small peasant music" and consisting of bagpipes, violin and clarinet, accompanied by song. The quality of the recordings naturally reflects their age and the fact that wax cylinders are very fragile media. Nevertheless, thanks to painstaking work over more than a year the result is very good.

The CD is accompanied by a publication containing several academic articles. These include a technical discussion of the problems of transcribing the recordings from the wax rollers, biographical accounts of František Kopčík and Otakar Zich and a chapter on the musical life of the region. The publication has plenty of pictorial material and a great many notated extracts showing not only the melody of folksong but also the decoration and variations typical for bagpipe play. There is both an English and German resumé.

MATĚJ KRATOCHVÍL



## uspávanky

**Uspávanky [Lullabies] – Zuzana Lapčíková,  
Emil Viklický, Petr Růžička;  
Multisonic 2001, 59:58**

The dulcimer player Zuzana Lapčíková is not just a brilliant performer and sensitive singer of folk music, but also a passionate collector and an erudite ethnographer. For her new CD she has chosen twenty folk lullabies, mostly completely unknown to ordinary inhabitants of the Czech Republic, which today often exist only in the memory of the oldest generation and only in some parts of the country (it is a great pity that their precise area of origin is not identified in the booklet...) Lapčíková sings the short and simple lullabies in her pure and authentic sounding voice, but there the "ethnographic character" of the CD ends. The sensitive and subtly thought out accompaniment of Emil Viklický on piano, Petra Růžička on violin and Lapčíková herself on the dulcimer makes each song a unique musical experience, and gives the music of the lullabies a quality transcending the folk genre. Above all the piano of Emil Viklický introduces chord patterns that we could scarcely hear from the dulcimer. The often long forgotten songs therefore sound highly individual and at the same time contemporary.

I don't know if you can go to sleep while listening. I didn't manage to do so. The poetic texts and fragile music captured my attention too intensely. But you can certainly meditate with them.

TEREZA HAVELKOVÁ



HUDEBNÍ UDÁLOSTI  
V ČESKÉ REPUBLICE

2002

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