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Marek Kopelent

Exposition of New Music

Jaroslav Šťastný

Erwin Schulhoff



Český hudební fond

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editorial

Dear Friends,
Summer has arrived and with it a new number of Czech Music. A little more space in this issue has been devoted to Czech rock music, because there have been developments worth noticing in this area as well. There are interesting relationships and cross-overs between the music known as classical, and rock, and this interface has been the focus of this year's Exposition of New Music in Brno. We bring you a report on the concerts at this pioneering festival and an interview with its programme director, Jaroslav Šťastný.

Of course, purely classical music has its place here as well. This issue includes an interview with the composer Marek Kopelent, and since this year sees a major anniversary of the birth of Erwin Schulhoff, we offer an essay on his published scores as part of our free series on editions of the Czech composers.

I wish you a pleasant summer and look forward to greeting you again in the next issue of Czech Music.

Matěj Kratochvíl
MATĚJ KRATOCHVÍL
EDITOR

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lone knight

interview with marek kopelent

TEREZA HAVELKOVÁ

His own generation of composers sees him as a radical, while the young generation regard many of his views as conservative. In this country he has been a lonely long-distance-runner, always outside the mainstream, but he has fitted wonderfully into the context of world music, and above all the music known as “New”. The stigma of the previous era, when he was more performed and recognised abroad than at home, seems to have persisted, and many of his works are still waiting for their Czech premiere. At home his music has acquired the label of avant-garde and incomprehensible to listeners, but anyone who takes the trouble to listen to it will find that it is “surprisingly” lyrical. He has the reputation of an eternal critic, polemicist and even rebel. When he doesn’t like something, he writes to the papers. But he is by no means a quixotic figure. He is just one of those artists who take a position about what is going on around them. His views are strong and clear-cut. (Whether or not you agree with them is a secondary matter. The important thing is that he is a person who is willing to express them, and so motivate others to discussion). Since the revolution he has devoted much of his energy to organisational work, which includes running composing courses in Český Krumlov at which, thanks to his contacts, the guests include such international music figures as Sofia Gubaidulina, Vinko Globokar or Heinz Holliger. (It is a sad reflection of Czech attitudes to Kopelent that the courses attract only minimal interest from the media and professional public) The French government has honoured him with the title of Chevalier des arts et des lettres). This year in April he celebrated his 70th birthday.

You belong to the generation that came to maturity under the influence of the West European avantgarde of the Sixties and Seventies. What is your view of the later development of music? Do you think it has brought anything fundamentally new? What later elements are reflected in your own work?

Direct conflict with Western Europe ended at the beginning of the Seventies, and occasional visits to the Warsaw Autumn Festival gave me the chance of a peek into the international composers' kitchen. Otherwise I was too sunk in personal problems and the harsh situation of my country. The new development was the loosening up of the principles

that had unified the New Music of the Sixties. Influence from America increased, sometimes there were returns to the techniques of the 19th century, at other times to the Middle Ages, and the inspiration of folk music, the principle of collage and so on. Just a random list of names confirms the variety: Pärt, minimalists from the USA, Kilar, Krauze, Górecki, but also L. Kupkovič, Schnittke, and later Penderecki and so forth. In the context of the spread of the postmodernist creed, these valuable and individual trends remain viable, but one should add that there has not been such a sharp turnaround in every European country. Although I have an explanation for K. Penderecki's change of direction, the churlishness with which he

tries to distance himself from his share in New Music in the media makes it harder for me to accept his contemporary work. I also find it repellent when people on our scene who created works known as “mässige Moderne” under the old regime take refuge behind post-modernism in order to keep on with their conventional work.

You teach at the Music Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague. What does contact with students mean to you?

I very much enjoy teaching. In the years when I was isolated I didn't need to think about, and refine my techniques in composition with a view to handing them on. Working

in a school is a new dimension in the life of a composer. Teaching in a period of stylistic liberalism is a really difficult and often thankless task, and you have to get your views across by recommending them rather than by making strict demands. It's then up to the student how far he or she wants to trust the teacher; later he will find out when he should listened. I'm also finding out that teaching is 50% uncovering the personality of the pupil, and since artists are usually sensitive people it is very important to choose a tactful way of getting close to a pupil and advising. It also helps you mature internally, break out of your natural selfishness and through the students' views find impulses to re-evaluating or confirming your view of this or that musical phenomenon. And in doing so you also agree with works that have their own measure and are in harmony with their basic conception, but differ from your ideas in the way they sound. Teaching is an enriching activity.

How would you characterise your development as a composer over the last decades?

Either it's an accident or there's some logic in it, but I can divide up my work by decades according to its internal transformations. Sixties – getting to grips with the style of NM conceptually and in the parameters of composition, including efforts not to allow the important share of poetry to escape from the work, and to maintain a certain intimacy and concentration in the music according to need. Seventies – coping with the pressure of a totalitarian regime on me personally and the whole society – a problem that expressed itself in music that had a distinctly more structured quality. If my music increased in narrative quality, this was understandable, because one factor was my need to react to the situation using symbols. In the musical context I call this “genre derailment” or intarsis – the symbols are the bearers of a hidden content that is often ironic, reflecting



my relation to power. Eighties – the path from the fortress of defensive-aggressive reflections on the impact of power out through the gates into the sunny landscape of re-awakened faith. By giving preference to a certain system of intervals I achieved a brightening and purification of the note material. The time had also come for larger works: *Legenda o umučení sv. Vojtěcha* [Legend of the Martyrdom of St. Adalbert], symphonies, the oratorio *Messaggio della bonta* or *Ona skutečně jest* [She truly exists...] the first has not yet been performed in this country, and the second has never been performed.

The Nineties – the character of the note material remains, but teaching in a school, the need for the same discipline that I started to require from students, is having an effect on my music. There are no longer so many compositions, and I would say that they are more pared down, although some of them enhance the music with space.

One interesting aspect of your style is your work with text. In what way has your approach to text changed?

There's a transformation underway. At the beginning I was another person who tended to respond just to the mood of a text rather than analysing it. The post-war avant-garde led composers to cross the traditional boundaries of music. The arts drew closer, for example with concrete poetry (L.Novák). The freeing up of words, the shift of weight to musical parameters by the combination of letters, syllables, vowels. It was exciting. Collaborating with the director Josef Henek on numerous poetry programmes on the radio, and following the work of an actor with verse (R.Lukavský), all led me to a more complex treatment of text in musical composition. My *Modlitba kamene* (VI. Holan) [Prayer of the Stone] with R. Lukavský and the Czechoslovak Radio is a pure little example in this context, and the spoken word becomes music in my piece *Vrh kostek* (St. Mallarmé) [The Throw of the Dice] for four speaking soloists and tape. Not yet performed after twenty years either. Another element of my work with text is creating new relationships inside a chosen poem, for example by interpellating fragments of other texts, creating internal confrontation and synthesis and so on. I am also trying to influence students in this direction and so vocal music (like music for percussion, for example) is an obligatory part of the course in my class. It's strange, but the students don't have much enthusiasm for experimenting, searching, taking risks...It's a generation that prefers a comfortable life...

Many of your works show a tendency to extend beyond music (combination with words, space, events). What has led you to this approach?

The motives behind my pieces are various, but always matters of principle. I don't seek out unconventional forms of presenting a work just for external effect. For example, *Etres fins en mouvement* (Fine Beings in



Motion) is something I wrote for Percussions de Strasbourg, and at their request as a spatial piece, since the premiere was going to follow a spatial composition by K. Serocký. In *Appels* for 12 vocalists I was embodying the idea of a lonely individual's search for kindred beings – the inspiration came from mountain calling songs and so forth – by integrating the space into the work (acoustics), the movement of the singers in space and suchlike. The most complicated piece so far is the spatial oratorio in honour of St. Agnes of Bohemia, *Lux mirandae sanctitis*, designed for all the accessible spaces of the former St. Agnes Convent. The musicians move around by exchanging places and direct movement in the corridors, the public moves around as well, and a communication network is created between the different groups and players, with it all directed from one place by transmitters. It is a plan based on an idea.

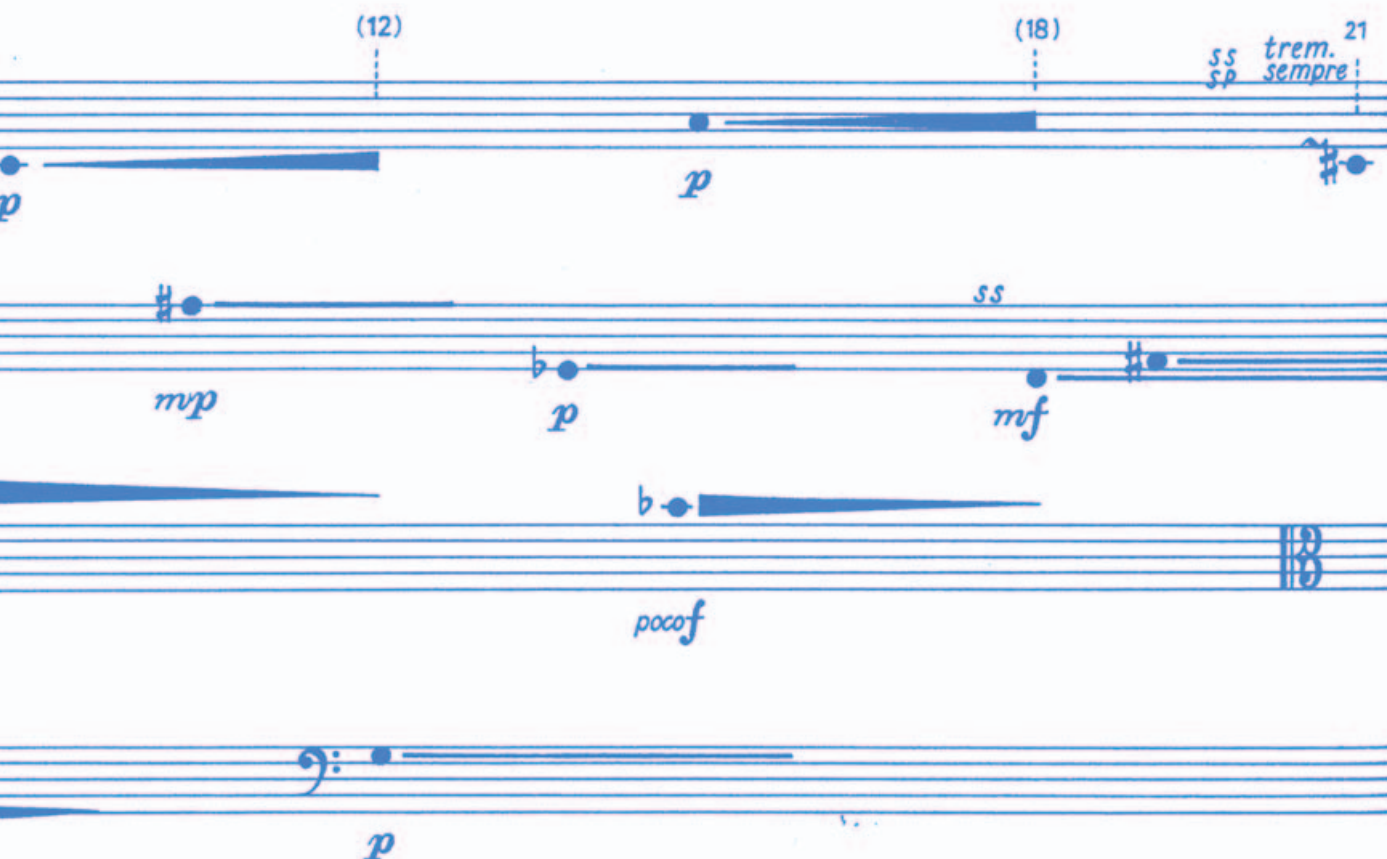
What does commitment as an artist mean to you, whether on the level of composing, or in civic life?

It's not so much a case of must as a case of ought. I would never give priority to some systematic committed message in my work, but commitment has been my fate to the distinct distaste of people who don't like it when an artist burdens his work by reflections on his own problems and those of soci-

ety. But if an artist has an idea, even a purely musical ideal, "let him" commit himself to it entirely. Civic commitment is obviously a task for society as a whole. People in this country for the most part don't know how to commit themselves: they don't have a method or aim, and are frightened of becoming unpopular, for example, if they take up a critical position. They are usually indifferent to the community, and they excessively denigrate politics because they don't want to be engaged themselves. At home I was brought up to civic responsibility, and I got a lot out of being a member of the Masaryk-Mohyčán club when I was growing up after the war, and studying at the French Lycée. 40 years smothered out sense of citizenship, and now it's the moment (and a duty) to overcome one's ego and get involved. Especially since 1989, in a free society, I devote a considerable amount of my time to public activities and societies even at the expense of creative activities.

During the Eighties you tried to get Czech culture, however belatedly, to accept New Music as the style of the later 20th Century. This never actually happened. What kind of influence does it have on the form of the Czech scene now, and in the future?

That's a sad assertion. Today voices are being raised in various quarters saying that



3rd String Quartet (1963)

NM was a blind alley, and one keeps hearing people talking about new techniques instead of about style and so on. The rejection of NM, a rejection enforced by the communist regime, made it easy for artists to stop trying to connect up with world trends. It's as if they were waiting for the appearance of various kinds of return to the past. What they have forgotten, of course, is that many of the "returners" had been trained in NM and that this influences their thinking even in their new approach. The Prague Academy of Performing Arts was a bastion of conservatism and in instrumental and vocal teaching it still is. The performers do not know the new style, they have been trained to resist it or despise it, and they often cannot cope with the new techniques of play. After a time the young will take over the posts of the old and these opinions will be passed down the line. The situation is the same with the outlook of people in the media who have created, or at least never removed the false barrier between listeners and NM. The Czech music scene has undeniably suffered as a result of these attitudes as far as its status in Europe is concerned.

What in your view is the image of Czech music at West European festivals? What is lacking in our music?

It's natural that individual Czech composers should be involved in the occasional presen-

tation of their pieces here and there. What is important is whether this is involvement in a local even or a famous festival. Unfortunately it is still the case that festivals determine the state of contemporary composing in the world. Some of our composers head for the USA. It's a large territory without strong fixed traditions, and this has operated in favour of world music in the past – just remember John Cage, and what he achieved in the 30s and 40s without connection with contemporary music in Europe. One the other hand you can't seriously believe that any "performed in the USA" label is a guarantee of the quality of a work at international level. Not even an appearance in Carnegie Hall always means world class. We lack the ability to export works that are objectively worthy of it, regardless of personal ties in our small society. Such export has not, unfortunately, become the rule. The fault lies with the managers in a position to decide on foreign engagements for Czech musicians, and also with performers, soloists, orchestras that put together programmes with no regard for good quality, truly modern and individual works. It's as if the hierarchy of musicians created under totalitarianism somehow still lingers on in the subconscious. (Good examples include the presentation of a work of O.Flosmann by a Czech group in a Czech Season in France. It is no wonder that young people cannot get their bearings when many

teachers at the Music Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts do not help them, otherwise they would be rehearsing work by Jan Rychlík to the benefit of Czech music. (Sticking to traditionalist views is something that then damages the whole of contemporary Czech music. It creates the impression abroad that there is nothing interesting here. And those who ought to be getting onto the international scene suffer as well. Concert organisers abroad must take some of the blame too, since they approach us in an unimaginative way without their experts coming to take a closer look. The experts then have no source of information: where is everyday comment on what is new and emergent in Czech music, where are reviews, analysis and so on?

czech-lithuanian music contacts in the 19th and 20th centuries

VÍTĚZSLAV MIKEŠ



Jeronimas Kačinskas

Music is one of several areas that deserve a chapter to themselves in the history of Czech-Lithuanian relations. These relations go back deep into history. At random we might mention the mission of St. Vojtěch to Pagan Prussia, the deliberate elevation of Duke Vytautas the Great to the Bohemian throne, the Jagiellon Dynasty and so on. Musical contacts between the Lithuanian and Czech Lands started to develop more vigorously in the 17th-18th centuries and especially in the 19th century, and have continued to deepen up to the present. Since these contacts usually ran in the Bohemia to Lithuania direction, they have been almost entirely overlooked in Czech musical historiography. In this essay, on the basis of a concise overview, we shall try to show that Czech-Lithuanian musical relations have been quite extensive and significant, and have been unjustly neglected.

Teaching has been one of the most important forms of Czech musical influence on Lithuanian music. This was particularly evident in the later 19th century, when the organ and orchestral schools founded at the courts of music patrons and producing a whole series of subsequently important figures became a distinctive phenomenon for the emergent Lithuanian national musical tradition. At one such school, opened in 1874 in the small town of Rokiškis, Rudolf Liehmann, son of Dvořák's teacher A. Liehmann, worked from 1883-1904. He taught the organ here and his pupils included such names as Mikas Petrauskas, Juozas Tallat-Kelpša and Juozas Gruodis.

At roughly the same time (1883-1905) another Czech musician, Josef Mašek (lit. Josefas Mašekas) was pursuing his music and teaching career at the orchestral school attached to the court of Bogdan Ogiński in Rietavas. This school worked very closely with a similar institution in nearby Plungės, which belonged to Ogiński's brother Mykol. One of the students here was the young M. K. Čiurlionis, later the founder of Lithuanian national music and a painter of genius. Mašek was supposedly the man who recognised Čiurlionis's creative talent and recommended his further training.

Even earlier than Liehmann and Mašek, Zdeněk Fibich set out for Lithuania and worked there from 1873 as a teacher of secular choral singing at five schools in Vilnius. This was not one of the happiest periods in Fibich's life (the death of his son and sister-in-law and the onset of his wife's lung disease), and so after 11 months the composer decided to return to Prague. Nonetheless, even in this relatively short time Fibich had developed a knowledge of Lithuanian culture. It is known that at O. Hostinský's suggestion he even thought of composing an opera called "Konrád Wallenrod" based on the eponymous Mickiewicz poem that draws on Lithuanian history.

Another great Czech musician, the conductor Váňa Suk, twice stopped for a short while in Vilnius (in 1890 and later in 1893). Before he became famous throughout Russia he conducted the orchestra of the Krtavov Private Opera in the Lithuanian capital.

One episode that deserves detailed and wider attention is that of the triangle formed by the Czech Nonet - Jeronimas Kačinskas - Alois Hába. In 1924-1928 the Czech Nonet led by Emil Lechner was active at the music conservatory just founded by Stasys Šimkus in the port town of Klaipėda. The

members of the nonet made important contributions to the development of instrumental play among Lithuanian musicians. J. Kačinskas, later regarded as one of the most assertive and radical Lithuanian composers of the Thirties and Forties, was studying piano and composition at the Klaipėda Conservatory at the time. On Lechner's recommendation he was admitted to the Prague Conservatory in 1929. He joined J. Křička's class, but like many other Czech and foreign students he also registered in the course on the quarter-tone and sixth-tone system taught by A. Hába. Hába's pioneering experiments so entranced Kačinskas that it was under their influence that he wrote his graduation piece - "Second String Quartet in the Quarter-tone System" (1931).

Kačinskas's return to Lithuania did not mean the end of these contacts. The Lithuanian composer corresponded intensively with Hába, showed great interest in new ideas in micro-interval music and told Hába about his own activities, which included the opening of a class in quarter-tone music at the Klaipėda Conservatory. Kačinskas also wrote articles for the journal *Muzikos barai*, in which he warmly praised Czech music and spoke of Prague as an important European cultural centre. He



Alois Hába

asked Hába for an article, and the latter posted the journal an essay entitled "Jeronimas Kačinskas – the first Lithuanian composer of quarter-tone music" (1931).

Kačinskas continued to work with the Czech Nonet, who commissioned him to write a piece for them. The composer responded in 1932 with three movements of a "Nonet" (he finished the fourth movement in 1936), which Hába said was one of the best European modern works of music of its time. With this opus, written in athematic style, the Czech Nonet made successful appearances not only in Lithuania (positive reviews appeared in many local papers after its tour of Lithuanian towns in 1932), but throughout Europe, including Czechoslovakia (the premiere of the complete four-movement piece was presented at a Czech Nonet concert in Prague on the 19th of February 1937). The Nonet was also performed at the time of the SIMC (International Society for Contemporary Music) in London in 1938, at which A. Hába helped to ensure the acceptance of Lithuania as the first of the Baltic countries to join the organisation.

We meet the name Kačinskas in the Czech Lands once again, but in rather sadder circumstances, when the composer spent some time in Lednice when he was fleeing from Lithuania to America.

Jeronimas Kačinskas de facto started the tradition of Lithuanian musicians studying in Prague, since after him many other Lithuanians came to the city to perfect their art. They included the conductor Vytautas Marijošius, the choirmaster Antanas Vaičiūnas, the violinist and teacher Elena Strazdaitė-Bekeorienė, and for a short period the composer Kazimieras Viktoras Banaitis.

Jaroslav Galia was particularly active in developing contacts between (not only) Czechs and Lithuanians. His career was very varied, and included a period as choirmaster in Rostov and music teacher in Novorossisk,

Irkutsk and elsewhere. In 1921 he joined the diplomatic service, and became ambassador in Lithuania and Estonia, where he zealously promoted Czech music (he was a contributor to the Lithuanian journal *Muzikas* and the Estonian journal *Muusikaleht*). He composed a "Te Deum" which was premiered in Kaunas in 1928 during the celebrations of the tenth anniversary of the founding of the Lithuanian Republic. Galia was also a personal friend of the Lithuanian composer Česlovas Sasnauskas, who in 1911 wrote the first version of his "Requiem". Five years later J. Galia instrumentalised this piece (the reworked version was performed in 1930 in Prague).

Sasnauskas became friends with another Czech musician, Hynek Vojáček, who was for many years a bassoonist in the Imperial Opera in St. Petersburg, and who seems to have had a significant influence on Sasnauskas's direction as a composer.

In addition to direct personal contacts we can also find occasional inter-cultural influences in the work of Lithuanian and Czech composers. One example can be found in the music of Antonín Dvořák. In 1877 he got to know the musician and leading Czech philologist and Baltic specialist Josef Zubatý, who introduced him to Čelakovský's translations of Lithuanian folksongs. Dvořák chose some for his choral work "Five Songs for Male Voices on Words from Lithuanian Songs", op. 27 (1881).

The contemporary Czech composer, Ivan Kurz, also drew on Lithuanian culture when in 1979 he wrote a two-movement string quartet with the title "Notokruh" [Note Circle], inspired by a picture cycle by M. K. Čiurlionis, called "Star Sonata". The piece was first presented in Prague in 1981, performed by the Lužecký Quartet, and it is still one of the author's most successful works. Kurz himself has happy memories of the Lithuanian premiere of "Notokruh", which received great ovations at the Gaida Festival

in Vilnius in 1996 (played by the Vilnius String Quartet).

Our country has provided inspiration for Lithuanians in its turn. For example there is a surviving letter from Čiurlionis to his patroness Bronislava Wolmanová, written during the composer's travels through Europe: "Prague is beautiful and fascinating city, with old Gothic towers all over the place. The Old Town is like a fairy tale: a beautiful, black gate, darkened by the centuries; a bridge lined with the tall statues of saints; streets so narrow at places that you can pass through them only on a bicycle. I visited the Rudolphinum, or Arts Museum, and saw the Holy Family by Michelangelo, The Martyrs and St. Augustine by Rubens, and Portrait of a Boy with a Dog by Van Dyck. The museum has several halls, but I mention only the pictures I liked. My impression of the Kunstgewerke Museum are very chaotic; I can't begin to enumerate all that I saw there: Italian majolicas, Greek and Roman antiquities, Persian vases, (...)."

Another Lithuanian composer Feliksas Bajoras also came to the former Czechoslovakia and drew on the atmosphere in his work. Under the influence of his visit to the CSSR he wrote a one-movement symphony for strings, called "Stalactites" (1970). He gave programmatic names to the different episodes of this work, each relating to a place in the Czech Lands or Slovakia (The Tatras, Lidice, Vyšehrad, Prague etc.).

We hope that this overview (which has been far from exhaustive) has at least suggested the richness of the theme. Let us then express the hope that Czech-Lithuanian musical contacts, which continue to thrive (for example with concerts in both countries, or the teaching work of the Lithuanian harp-sichordist and organist Giedre Lukšaitė-Mrážková at the Music Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague etc.) will deepen in the future.

exposition of new music 2002

PETR BAKLA

The theme of this year's Brno Exposition of New Music Festival was "Roots in rock". The programme did not lie, since most of the music presented at the 15th ENM really did have roots in rock: pregnant rhythm, improvisation, and composer-performers.



Mondschein Ensemble

As you will gather from the interview with the festival's programme director Jaroslav Šťastný, this year's programme was an experiment and also an attempt to make a virtue of necessity. Bad experience with professional performers led Šťastný to give space to young and "unspoilt" musicians and composers, whose cultural background naturally fitted in well with the festival theme. Nor should we overlook the effort to appeal to a wider audience. The exposition covered a great variety of musical activities of a kind hard to classify but nevertheless clearly orientated towards the ever broader and more complicated flow of alternative music. "Classical" New Music was in the minority. But let us admit the fun-

damental lesson: the music that had no roots in rock, or had long ago forgotten them, was the more interesting.

Microworld

Petra Dubach and Mario van Horrik from the Netherlands are very disciplined improvisers who know what they want. Their affection for each other shows in their music. Whether they are playing on linked up electric guitars, playing machines, or aluminium strips, the basis of the music remains the same: a subtle course of events at the level of accumulating layers of overtones, a sudden clash of aliquots, a descent into the interior or sound. Unaggressive music, beautiful à la Cage. The pieces have no higher structure – they begin

and end without undergoing very marked transformations. What is interesting and fundamental takes place beyond the real play of the musicians. The instrumental action necessary to produce the "material" (i.e. an electronically processed signal) is in fact intrusive, and a regular pulse as a source of all the events seems not to suit this music. But as I was told, it is necessary: if playing is irregular that wonderful web of fermatas cannot emerge.

Jeff Beer

The German multi-percussionist Jeff Beer likewise declares an interest in the sound aspect of his pieces, and care for every single note. Trained as a pianist and composer (and also a painter, sculptor and photographer), he began to write for percussion simply because pieces by other composers seemed to him too superficial. Although frequently asked to compose for others, he won't entrust his pieces to anyone else and is their only performer. Although he has good quality recordings of his pieces, he has not yet made any CD since he says he has not yet achieved an ideal performance. Pathological perfectionism? I don't think so. Beer's pieces radiate concentration, discipline and humility. His music is free of empty effects and redundant superfluities. He does not succumb to the usual "in piece X he uses all the possibilities of instrument Y" syndrome, which for some strange reason is often regarded as a plus. The virtuosity of Jeff the instrumentalist is entirely in the service of Jeff the composer. His pieces are genuinely profound and Beer approaches them with great responsibility. And he has patience. He played five pieces. Mira 3 for solo marimba is played at a very fast tempo with soft sticks on a large drum, and the instrument thus acquires a much more colourful and denser sound than usual. A solid block full of minor gradations, rhythmic twists, surprising accents and sudden enrichments of a central minor third starts at a low pitch and returns to it from a higher register. All this is accompanied by a slowly changing deep fermata



Jeff Beer

providing an experience similar to that offered by the Dutch duo. The small *Drei Gefässe* for bronze bowls (Beer for the most part uses only the sound of the damped bottom, and ringing tones are employed only very sparingly) was followed by *Warka*, a piece for large frame drum. In Jeff's words, he started on the piece ten years ago and it still isn't ready. But even in this "unfinished" state it is remarkable. Xylophone sticks, various kinds of strike and various sonorities, a dramatic and at the same time a magical effect. *Schlagzeugstück III* is a meaningfully structured composition for a set of cymbals, gongs and other pieces of metal. It exemplified Beer's avoidance of showy effects and his concentration. As an encore Beer played a quiet piece for two cymbals using a sophisticated stick technique and occasionally a bow. For me personally, Jeff Beer's performance was the high point of the festival.

Theatre

The Worldchester group is proud to subtitle itself "International Association for Work with the Public". At the Exposition this work with

the public took the form of a smarmily dim-witted introduction that would put its architect Ladislav Kozderka's health at risk at any decent educational concert. After the performance of *Pulling* for flute and electronics by the composer Jean Hasse, the group presented its own stage concert *Prostupy* [Permeations?]. It was another confirmation of my theory that we usually don't have a spiritual experience in places where it has been advertised in advance. Costumes, endless "mystical" entrances and exits, candles, Feng-jün Song kneeling behind a sheet, uncritically multicultural and very banal music.

The solo appearance by Dan Dlouhý left me with a similar impression – the impression of attempt to save problematic music (although in this case significantly less problematic) by visual effects. I fear it is a futile battle.

The builder of very bizarre instruments (wind, string, percussion) Hans Karsten Raecke is a kind of tonal equivalent to Harry Partch. His music does not consist of compositions in the usual sense of the word, nor of free presentation of the instruments. Raecke

caresses his instruments. In the best sense of the word, this prosperous looking gentleman is in my view the only dignified attraction for Charles Bridge.

Eric M.

Eric M., who calls himself a DJ, was convincing proof that there's no electronics like full-blooded electronics. He has a gramophone, a mix panel and other emblematic gizmos, but he also has one terrific advantage: he is able not to work with rhythm. He exploits a broad range of material that is basically hand made on the spot and non-tonal (creaking, rushing, crackling, scraping and lots of other sounds that it is hard to name), without referring to anything too concrete and identifiable – I'd call him a kind of abstractly concrete musician. The absence of explicit rhythm frees his hands for ingenious work with stereophonics, changes of dynamic and above all density of sound. The impression of his music owes a little to *Logothetic Scores* – Eric M in fact also uses graphic scores. The well-thought out long pieces that formed practically the whole performance consisted in a double alternation of two contrasting blocks: a continually disintegrating and renewed space inhabited by sometimes very ear-splitting sound objects, and a massive wall that despite all its dynamic brutality was hiding melancholic filigree events. It was here, during the second presentation of the wall at the complete end of the composition, that the only real notes in the whole work were to be heard, and in all their quiet simplicity they had the impact of a revelation. I have never, perhaps, heard a more convincing ending and a more relieved quiet following the maximum loudness of the wall. A short encore was already playing in modest two-time, but it did not spoil the impression.

Future?

The Cely Quartet is an amateur quartet of students of musicology at Masaryk University. As the members themselves explain, they are not aiming at top performances, but only



Miroslav Pudlák, conductor of MOENS

at sufficient performances. The ensemble presents pieces by kindred composers, most from student ranks as well. I don't regard it as important that the pieces they played were not much more than school exercises. Much more fundamental is the fact that here we have a group that plays contemporary pieces without requiring financial reward and therefore independent of external (state) funding. If the quartet continues its voluntary activity, improves, adds more interesting pieces to its repertoire and finds (or has it already found?), fellow travellers, I see it as a chance of survival for new music.

moens

The Mondschein Ensemble in enlarged form ended the Exposition, playing Peter Graham's *Subida* and Andriessen's *De Staat* conducted by Miroslav Pudlák.

Peter Graham (real name Jaroslav Šťastný) had chosen part of the poem starting "That all should be pleasing to thee" by St. John of the Cross from the book *Subida al monte Carmelo*. In harmony with the poem the piece skilfully and non-descriptively evoked a turning away from the trivial bustle of the world to inner tranquillity and absolution. I don't know if use of almost the same large number of players as for the Andriessen composition was deliberate, but if so, it seemed to me unnecessary. I believe that a smaller number of players with tidying up of the score would have benefited the piece. But even so it was good. .

The Dutch composer Louis Andriessen had arranged texts of a more secular kind, extracts from Plato's *Republic*. He personally attended the performance of his thunderous and extrovert minimalist composition. The famous *De Staat* rang out and the 15th Exposition of New Music was a thing of the past.

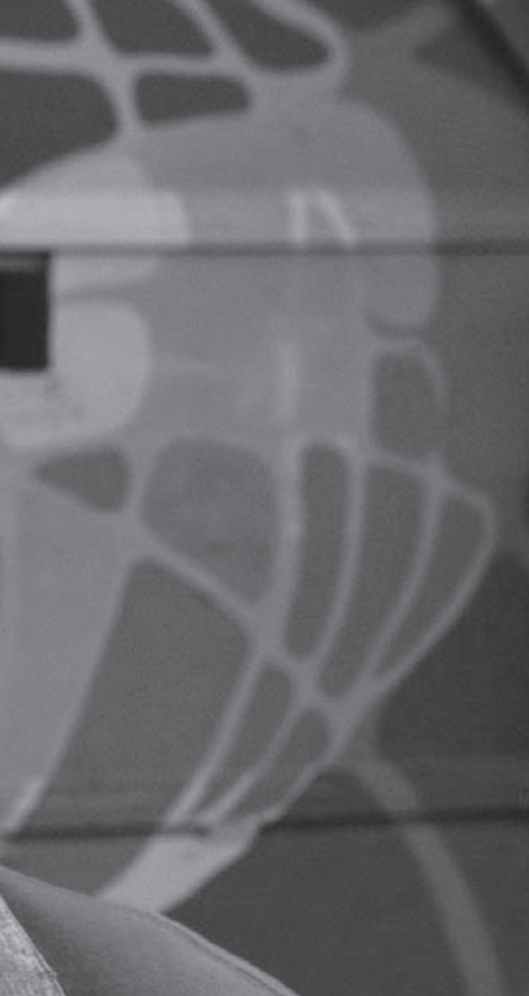


I think the programme design of this year's Exposition of New Music is pretty daring. This is a festival with a classical musical tradition, but quite a large part of the programme is devoted to the kind of music that is usually labelled "alternative". Is this a deliberate attempt on your part to emancipate such music and put it on same level as serious classical music?

If you take a closer look at this year's programme you will see that it includes only one genuinely "alternative group", and that is Sledě, živé sledě [Herring, Live Herring]. In any case, these genre overlaps have been on the festival programmes since 1992, and over the years we have had appearances from people like Iva Bittová, Pavel Fajt (twice!), Vladimír Kokolia with "E" or the Dutch Orkest de Volharding (which was originally an expressly anarchist band). I believe that some expressions of these genres deserve a place in a festival of contemporary music.

In my view after 1970 the alternative scene in our country started to stand in for serious music. Normalisation had a major impact on the atmosphere in music schools. Admittedly they had never been much inclined to progressive trends and experiments, but there had been some artistic ferment at least. The authorities managed to eradicate it by the effective method of not accepting the brightest and most talented students (often from "politically problematic" families), and quite a lot of people who actually obtained places in

the schools were not relying on skill or natural gifts. The atmosphere changed, with interest in music itself giving way to more pragmatic calculations on how music could be exploited for personal gain, and suddenly it was all more about competitions, deals... Of course there were exceptions, but this was the kind of atmosphere that became the norm in our music schools. In practice this meant that contemporary serious music, always a fairly unwelcome element anyway but one that had nonetheless begun to develop in the course of the Sixties, was practically eliminated from academic circles. My hypothesis is that the people who failed to get into the music schools or for various reasons didn't even try, but had a creative spirit and wanted to find a way for themselves rather than being satisfied with what they were given, were naturally drawn to rock. They found support in legendary figures of the time such as Captain Beefheart or Frank Zappa and many other unconventional artists in the framework of rock, which was the fundamental form of expression for that generation. These frustrated individuals began to create music in the rock idiom that later ceased to be rock, and started to be called "alternative" instead. Their enthusiasm helped them to attract a public and they formed a certain community. In the field of serious music all such experiments more or less foundered. And so in this sphere the alternative scene did a great deal that essentially should have been done by someone else.



with **jaroslav šťastný**, programme director of the exposition of new music, on programme design, alternative, music, professional and other interesting matters...

point of view, aren't we trying to unify incompatible approaches?

It's a complicated issue. Rock music brought a basic change in forms of musical expression that has influenced the idea of music as such. General musical feeling has undergone a shift. In my view one of the most important features of rock is the complete identification of musician with music. With "serious" music (which emerged from feudal society), it is quite common for there to be a kind of distance a "servant" (= the performer) has to fulfilling the requirements of his "master" (= the composer). Sometimes it is even essential to have a "bum-bailiff" (= a conductor). At the festival we have been trying mainly to present music that is close to rock in spontaneity, even though it diverged from rock long ago (Petra Dubach & Mario van Horrik, Jeff Beer, Eric.M, but also Kavan + Klíč for example, or Dan Dlouhý). On the other side we had an "alternative" band here, Sledě, živé sledě (Herring, Live Herring), whose music is composed in a relatively sophisticated way. My aim as programme designer was to find out to what extent such a combination would work. It seems to be true that people are less interested in finding ways of uniting and more interested in defining themselves against something or someone, which is a process that different musical genres symbolically serve. Within the bounds of practical possibility I am trying to change that: I pick a programme that I think is accessible to what you might call a rank-and-file listener. If these people come, they are not usually disappointed, and many things are a discovery for them.

But still, don't you think it would be worthwhile to try at least a little to fill the gaps that exist here? We know many "classic" pieces of New Music only from recordings, since they have either never or virtually never been performed in this country. Even from the point of view of the "alternative" public it might be more enlightening than including alternative bands in a festival of serious music.

At this year's ENM the function you suggest is represented by Louis Andriessen, for example, whose music I consider quite communicative. Other "great" composers have also been played several times over the years. The problem about presenting this music is mainly a financial one. We need outstanding performers if this difficult music is

to be played properly, but in this country there are practically no performers who have devoted sufficient time and energy to new music for them to be able to master the pieces of the great world repertoire adequately. We therefore have to limit ourselves to other composers, and even here there are difficulties. There are not so many high-level performers even abroad. This type of music is essentially the legacy of music cultivated by the aristocracy or church – it is hothouse music, which needs support and is dependent upon people who are able to concentrate on it fully. You can't imagine Palestrina coming home from a day's work in the fields and dashing off masses for slapdash performance in the local church... People completely forget the problem today.

You have already mentioned the attitude of professional musicians and the atmosphere at music schools. I have the feeling that in this area the alternative scene has a head start because it's voluntary, and works even without state subsidy. Do you think it's realistic to expect anyone to create a group, e.g. of students from the Janáček Academy of Performing Arts [JAMU], devoted to enlightened interpretation of modern serious music and prepared to work without regular and reasonable pay?

The alternative scene certainly has a head start in this respect. A group of the kind you describe does not exist in such a form. Of course, if someone can find some money, he will find some musicians with it. But they don't have the chance to devote the necessary amount of time to the pieces. There are people who would very much like to do it, but for basic material reasons they just can't afford to. Ex-Prime Minister Klaus's idea, i.e. everyone just has to make money for himself, isn't one I find very helpful here.

Do you think that approach for example of teachers to contemporary serious music will gradually change? Is there any hope that there will be more students with an interest in contemporary serious music?

That depends mainly on the kind of students they will be choosing at entrance tests. Apart from Ivo Medek, none of the teachers have been to the festival. At the moment JAMU is not exactly the centre of contemporary musical thought. And at the moment I see no trends towards improvement.

It's true that the public for most concerts of contemporary serious music is primarily made up of people from the "Alternative side".

Yes. Although our public at the festival is relatively diverse – from pensioners to secondary school children. It's more or less a question of a certain attitude to life – curiosity, willingness to take a risk and try something new in case it appeals. The festival is definitely not a "music just for experts" affair, and experience has exploded that old myth long ago. For years our public has contained hardly any professional musicians and music students, even though they could have learned a lot from many of the performers.... I think that the capacity to seek out new paths independently is something that is very much weaker in the young generation. This young generation is noticeably more conformist than preceding generations – for example drug-taking is a particular form of conformity.

I admit that recently I've been wondering if we haven't gone to the opposite extreme. Alternative music was earlier ignored, but now "serious music" is becoming a dirty word. People don't like to hear it, but there is a considerable difference between an alternative musician putting his idea of serious music into practice, and a classically trained composer who gets inspiration from rock, and even here the results can be very unpredictable. Do you think that a genuine synthesis is emerging, or is it only a form of political correctness? From the purely musical

breath, pulse, light

TEREZA HAVELKOVÁ

Out of the womb of HAMU [Music Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague], which is not exactly a synonym for progressive ideas and openness, comes the second remarkable project in six months! Both projects emerged “from below”, on student initiative, and although they were more tolerated than encouraged by the school, they offer a certain hope that the iceberg may be beginning to stir.

Following the “opera” project from composers Michal Nejtek and Marko Ivanović, with director Jiří Heřman (see Czech Music 1/2002) in November last year, on the 25th and 26th of March audiences at the Ponoc Theatre could see a “dance” project with music by Ondřej Adámek and Michal Rataj and choreographies by Tereza Indráková, Mirka Eliášová and Ioana Mona Popovici. (By the way, both projects were produced by Martin Cikánek, who is studying music management at HAMU.)

The evening of three choreographies entitled “Breath, Pulse, Light...” was based on compositions in the category known as “concrete music” (“musique concrète”) – music created in a sound studio and using various electronically processed sounds from the real world.

The three compositions showed how diverse this kind of music can be. Adámek's “Breath, Pulse, Run...” combined it with the sound of the acoustic instruments of a small ensemble (the Moens Ensemble), Michal Rataj's “Breath, Time, Moment...” created a dialogue between concrete music and solo flute, and “Breath, Shadow, Nothing...” by Ondřej Adámek was independent, without the element of combination with live music. Adámek and Rataj also differ as composer types – Rataj is introverted and lyrical, while Adámek is more extrovert and abstract.

The choreographies also represented three different approaches. The movement was most closely tied to the music in Mirka Eliášová's choreography for Rataj's music, which involved the movement of the flautist

as well as the dancers. There was thus not only a dialogue between recorded music and flute, but between the flautist and the dancers. It is a pity that the flautist (Lenka Kozderková) gave rather a wooden impression and her “choreography” was mainly limited to movement between different “stand-points”. It was an interesting idea, however, and once that could certainly be developed. The choreographer Tereza Indráková (Breath, Pulse, Run...) produced dance that was only very loosely related to the music – the movement did not follow the inner motions of the music, and seemed to have its own logic. In places, unfortunately, it raised the question of whether the choreography was an expression less of aesthetic vision than of a certain helplessness in the face of “abstract” music, but there were still many fine moments. Ioana Mona Popovici (Breath, Shadow, Nothing ...) incorporated elements of theatre of movement into her solo performance and so created a kind of micro-story, or perhaps framework for the expression of certain feelings. Although some elements seemed rather gratuitous (toppling a vase full of water, pouring granules into a box with a guinea-pig), the performance was convincing as a whole.

In general the music was the dominating element of the evening, but I firmly believe that there will be more balance in the future. This was a first effort at collaboration, after all, and quite unique in our environment here, but even without making allowances, we were witness to a good, professionally prepared performance. It is also important that this project, just like the earlier opera project, brought together not only students from different departments of HAMU, but also students from other schools (in this case the Duncan Center conservatory). Even more, it managed to address both the music and dancing publics, and such mutual openness is the most crucial element of all.



Both concerts were advertised as premieres of new concert programmes linked to the release of an album on the market (in both cases Guerilla Records), but neither has been christened yet. Looking on the Internet pages of both groups I found no indication that the christening would be at some other time and venue. Why no guests or godparents? I had to find the answer in the concerts themselves.

DG 307, Delta, 14.3.

Do Shashka, Klub 007, 27.3.

In the case of Do Shashka it is simple. The group puts its faith in anonymity, and remains hidden behind a projection screen throughout. From the pre-concert preparations I gathered that it has four members and they play the didgeridoo, bassoon, percussion and computer; if other instruments were also involved, I didn't find them. This is because the main structural components of Shaska's music are pre-recorded bases combining electronic body music, restrained noise and a few monotonous strings. As far as they live instruments are concerned the pleasant bassoon ostinato is the most distinctive, while the others fulfil the usual pseudo-meditative wannabe ethnic function. A few of the percussion parts played with brushes were an interesting exception. The whole concert took the form of a solid musical block (the new CD *Androgyne Haarem* is divided into ten tracks) accompanied by a violet tinted projection of sequences from pre-war films (including perhaps the *Cabinet of Doctor Caligari*, *Leni Riefenstahl* films, a sort of striptease, a black dance and so on). Through repetition and combination these occasionally produced intriguing micro-stories and definitely did not give the impression of pointlessness that most such exercises exude. Although a slight sloppiness is sometimes evident in Do Shashka's production, the group manages to create atmosphere, and one can find fault with only two aspects. One is the almost two-hour length of the performance and the other is the pseudo-erotic dance introduction on the auditorium parquet. The dancing couple unfortunately did not know how to dance and the text (the only one of the evening) that was endlessly repeated by the male dancer was genuinely endlessly awkward.

two premières or unchristened kids

PETR FERENC



DG 307

Sometimes it's better to leave out a prelude. The legendary DG 307 clearly had a much more subtle reason for not giving their new album *Šepoty a výkřiky* [Whispers and Cries] (see review in this number) a more ostentatious christening. It is most likely a matter of the humility of the band's moving spirit Pavel Zajíček, who sacrificed the five-minute christening "ceremony" to the consistent flow of the performance, a much more important ceremony. Possibly there was some other reason, but I must say I find this order of priorities very appealing. Of course, not even a DG 307 concert can start without an introduction, which Zajíček provided himself by reading several poems by his recently dead friend. Then the group appeared on stage in a brand-new set, with the leader accompanied by Pavel Cigánek (guitar, viola), Josef Rössler (keyboards, clarinet), Tomáš Schilla (cello), Ota Sukovský (bass guitar), Přemek Drozd (percussion), Dalibor Pyš (electric violin) and guest Jiří Alexa (trumpet). The group started off with a few songs from older albums, all the best versions that I have ever

witnessed. The initial *Tygr* [Tiger] and *Křídlo anděla* [Angel Wing] were particularly unforgettable. With one exception (Tango without guitar part in the intro), the new group combination made all the preceding combinations look weak by comparison. Sukovský is an especially strong reinforcement, who plays with much more dash than his predecessor Eva Turnová (today with Plastic People). Most of the performance came from the new CD. All twelve album songs were played in exactly the same order as on the silver disc. I am not quite sure whether this was the right decision, since it meant more than an hour of unknown songs all in the second half of the concert, which therefore lacked build-up. The encores, in fact, had to provide the climax. I also think that listeners respond much better and more easily to new pieces that are integrated organically between familiar songs, since this gives a clearer sense of the shifts in the band's composing style and performance combination. This, however, was my only tiny gripe about what was an otherwise splendid concert.

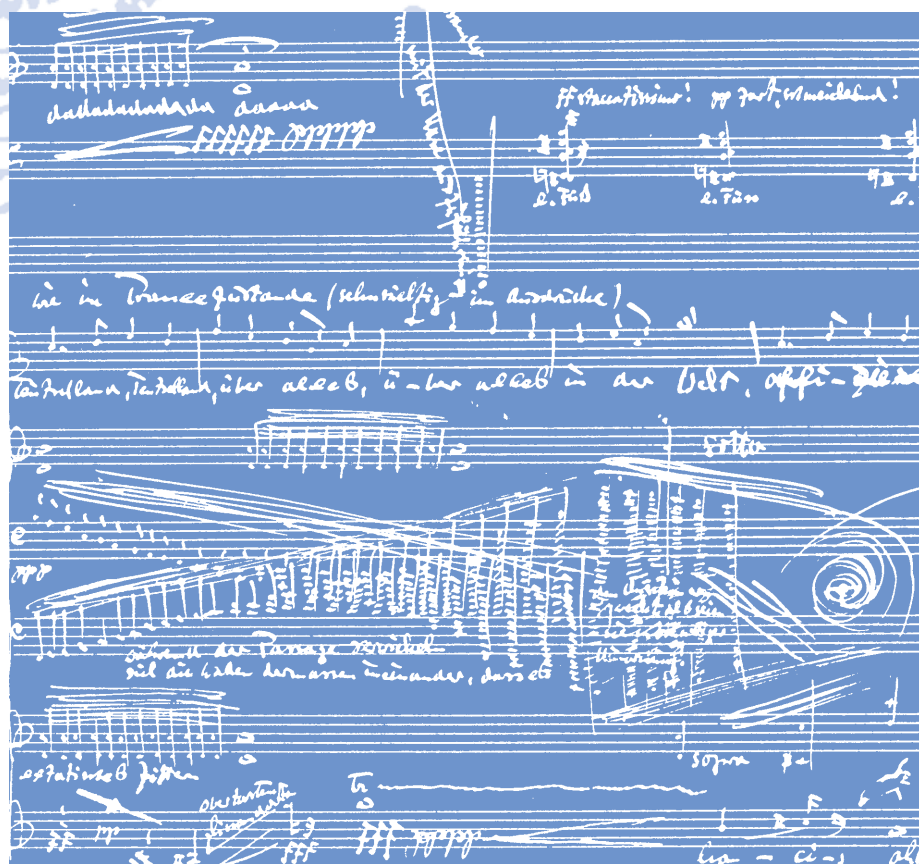
Erwin Schulhoff, who from the Thirties signed his letters to Czech friends with the Czech version of his name, Ervín, was born in 1894 and died in 1942. He died as a Jew and, even worse, a Jew with a Soviet passport and enemy to the German Reich in the internment camp in Wülzburg near Nuremberg. He had come to the attention of a larger musical public shortly after the First World War. After his return from the front he took up residence in Germany from January 1919, but he had already established contact with a Berlin publisher called Carl Hermann Jatho in the summer of the preceding year when he had been on three-month military leave. Idealists can be found even among publishers, and although not particularly rich, or perhaps for that reason, Jatho was one. On the 31st of July 1918 Schulhoff signed a contract with him on the publication of *Neun kleine Reigen* (Nine Small Dances) and *Fünf Grotesken* (Five Grotesques) for piano, and shortly afterwards, on the 8th of August, another contract for the piano pieces *Fünf Burlesken* (Five Burlesques), his first jazz cycle *Fünf Pitoresken* (Five Picturesques) and *Fünf Humoresken* (Five Humoresques), which were not, however published. The published editions had fine modern (cubo-futuristically conceived) jackets, One was designed by Schulhoff's sister Viola, who had studied at the School of Applied Arts in Dresden. Schulhoff was on good terms with Jatho and tried to get him to publish the *Rondi* for piano by his colleague Eduard Erdmann and pieces by Alban Berg, with whom he had been having a warm correspondence since 1919. This never bore fruit, however, since Jatho went bankrupt and the firm was taken over by a new owner, Ries & Erler. The firm is still in operation and in the early Nineties re-issued all the Schulhoff that Jatho had once published, now in one large volume.

At the end of 1923 Schulhoff returned to his native Prague. The pieces he brought back Germany included his orchestral work *32 Variationen über ein achttaktiges eigenes Thema* (32 variations on an original eight-bar theme); it caught the attention of the then opera director of the New German Theatre, Zemlinsky, who included its premiere in his orchestra's subscription cycle. The premiere took place on the 25th of March 1925. Schulhoff himself conducted and invited the director of the Vienna-based Universal Edition Emil Hertzka. Hertzka accepted, since he had a warm interest in music from Czechoslovakia, was already publishing Janáček, Suk, Novák, Alois Hába, and Martinů, and liked Schulhoff's work as well. Hertzka was another music publisher who cared about more than money, and so he got on well with Schulhoff. Composers are rarely good businessmen, and Schulhoff was no exception. He had failed to inherit the business talents of his father, an adroit wholesaler, and so Hertzka's advice was invaluable to him on more than one occasion. Universal Edition's first project with Schulhoff was the publication of a piano arrange-

editions of erwin schulhoff

JOSEF BEK

Relationships between composers and publishers tend to be fickle. Composers – or most of them – pursue their musical aims with a considerable dose of idealism, while publishers are often coarse materialists whose highest goal is profit. It's a situation that often leads to flare-ups and foul-ups. Their are, however, exceptions, even if usually only temporary exceptions, and Schulhoff had the good fortune to encounter then at a crucial stage in his career, and for several decades after his death.



Manuscript of Sinfonia Germanica

ment of his ballet on an Indian theme, *Oge-lala*, which came out in 1925. When Schulhoff finished his first string quartet (actually his second quartet) in 1924, Hertzka advised him to delay the premiere until Internal Society for Contemporary Music's festival in

Venice in 1925, and promised that he would publish a noted edition at the same time. It proved a good move, since the work was well received and the piano part immediately sold well. From this time on Universal Edition published practically everything that Schulhoff

wrote: the piano *Ostinato*, which is a playful, sprightly celebration of the birth of his son, the *Sonata for Piano* dedicated to Thomas Mann, the *Deuxieme suite pour piano*, the *Duo for Violin and Piano* with dedication to Leoš Janáček, *Concertino per flauto, viola e Contrabasso*, the *1st Symphony*, second string quartet, *Cinq études de jazz* for piano, *Deuxieme Sonate pour piano*, *Sonate pour violon seul*, piano *Esquisses de jazz*, and *Ten Syncopated Etudes for piano* called *Hot Music*, mainly pieces from 1923 – 1928. At this period Schulhoff was one of the Vienna publishers' most published composers. He often exchanged letters with Hertzka and soon with the second man at Universal, Hans Heinsheimer, and their lengthy correspondence radiates sincerity and openness. Sometimes, for example, Schulhoff complained slightly about a health problem or about overwork, and did not hesitate to mention difficulties in composing, such as troubles with the libretto for the opera *Plameny* [Flames]. Sometimes, of course, there was the kind of grumbling usual between friends, especially on the part of the temperamental and not always diplomatic Schulhoff. Hertzka, for example, after returning home from the Berlin premiere of the 1st Symphony conducted by Erich Kleiber, wrote to Schulhoff that, "I would like to tell you that more than one person in Berlin suggested that your symphony should be turned into a ballet, I don't have to tell you that the work would have much better prospects if it could be given a theatre form as a ballet or pantomime than if only the concert form existed." This was too much for Schulhoff to swallow and he refused sharply, but the idea itself stuck in his head and shortly afterwards he started reworking his jazz suites into a ballet, the dance grotesque *Náměsíčná* [The Sleepwalker], keeping both men in Vienna well-informed about its progress. The contract with Universal Edition ended on the 31st of December 1929, but by now Schulhoff was so well-known and successful a composer that he could always find someone keen to publish one of his pieces. The first was the renowned Mainz publishing house Schott, which had been attentively following the composer's career from the early Twenties. As early as 1924 it had expressed interest in the *Fünf Stücke für Streichquartet* (Five Pieces for String Quartet) at its premiere at the international festival in Salzburg and in the following year published it. The *Divertissement* for oboe, clarinet and bassoon, premiered in Paris in 1927, was published by Schott a year later. At the Geneva Festival in 1929 Schott was attracted by Schulhoff's *Sonate pour violon et piano*, and immediately printed it, showing the same rapid response with the publication of *Hot – Sonate* for alto saxophone and piano of 1930. There was also interest in Schulhoff from the London house, J. W. Chester, which published his *Deuxieme Sonate pour piano* in 1927 and the *Sonata for flute and Pianoforte* in the subsequent year. *La sirene musicale* in Paris published at least one of his piano



cycles, *Suite dansante en jazz* in 1931. In the Thirties publishing interest seemed suddenly to fall away. Schulhoff had started to compose lengthy orchestral works, which are harder to get published in note form than pieces for smaller ensembles, and after 1933 Schulhoff himself disappeared from the international music scene. The main reason was the European political crisis. It was only after the war and the composer's death that he found someone who had not forgotten him, at least in his own homeland. This was Vlastimil Musil, Schulhoff's friend from the Ostrava Radio where they had both worked in 1935 – 1938. Thanks to Musil's efforts, Schulhoff's *Národní písně a tance z těšínska* (Volkslieder und Tänze aus Schlesisch-Teschen) were published by Panton in 1960, an a year later Musil brought off a real coup with the same publishing house: it published the *Sonata for Piano* of 1918, a piano arrangement of the oratorio *Manifest* (1932) and the score of the *Concerto for String Quartet* with accompanying wind orchestra under its original French title of *Concert pour quatuor a cords a l'accompagnement d'un orchestre des instruments a vent* of 1930. In the Sixties Musil managed to get the State Music Publishing House to publish the *Troisieme sonate pour piano* and the score of the *Fifth Symphony*. Panton also published the *Sonate für Violine und klavier* of 1913. The last publishing house to take up Schulhoff was Supraphon, which published his *Studies* (two pieces for piano), the *Third Symphony* and *String Sextet* (*Sexttet für zwei Violinen, zwei Bratschen, zwei Violoncelli*), all in the Seventies. Since then, nothing at all!

For many years the Western world seemed to have entirely forgotten Schulhoff. The turning-point came only with the efforts of Gidon Kremer, who brought his works back to concert life in the Eighties. Then – in 1992 I believe – I met the head of the Schott publishing house Dr. Peter Hanser-Strecker

in Dresden. He arranged the German edition of my monograph on Schulhoff in German, and also the speedy publication of all Schulhoff's previously unpublished pieces. The first came out in 1993, i.e. *Elf Inventionen* (11 Inventions) for piano, *Ironien* for four-handed piano, *Die Wolkenpumpe* (the Cloudy Pump) for baritone, four wind instruments and percussion on words by Hans Arp, reconstructed by Eduard Douša on the basis of a sketch, and the *Troisieme suite pour piano pour la main gauche*, dedicated to Otakar Hollman. Later years saw the publication of *Fünf Gesänge mit Klavier* (5 pieces with piano) originally entitled *Fünf Expressionen*, *Bassnachtigal* (The Bass Nightingale) for Bass Bassoon, the *Sonata for Cello and Piano*, *Musik für klavier*, which I reconstructed on the basis of a sketch with Tomáš Víšek, the *Divertimento for String Quartet*, the piano version of the *Concerto for Piano and Small Orchestra* commissioned by Michael Risch and the beautiful Thirties hit *Susi*, fox-song. Apart from these, Schott produced a re-edition of all the pieces published before the war and is preparing publication of other not yet published pieces. This firm also lends out performance material for chamber and orchestra pieces including the opera *Flammen* (Flames), the ballet *Náměsíčná* [The Sleepwalker] (*die Mond-süchtige*) and the major jazz oratorio *H.M.S. Royal Oak*.

More details are available on the Internet page <http://www.schott-online.com/nocache/smi/autoren/KomponistenAZ/2,849eb6033b7http>

invasion on the glass meadow

"Electronic Invasion 2002"

This year the Czech section of the International Society for Contemporary Music (ISCM) – after several years of more or less passive existence – made inroads into Czech contemporary music. The first action of this kind was a Czech-Dutch project in the field of electronic music arranged in co-operation between the Czech section of the ISCM, the Music Information Centre, the City of Brno, The Glass Meadow [Sklenná louka] and the Dutch foundation Gaudeamus, with sponsorship from the ČNHF [Czech National Music Fund] and the OSA Music Foundation.

Brno's Glass Meadow experimental centre is an ideal place for such actions. Two auditoria in one building, people already accustomed to coming here for all kinds of "weird" events for several years, situation in the centre of Brno.

The electronic invasion had been planned well in advance with the aim of presenting the leading Dutch musicians working in the field, which has a particularly long and successful tradition in the Netherlands. This was why a broad spectrum of musicians was chosen, representing different currents sometimes at very distant poles of contemporary music. And so those who met in Brno included the professor of composition at the celebrated Royal Conservatory in the Hague, Gilius van Bergeijk, Han Buhrs or the DJs well-known on world club scenes and appearing on MTV under the names DoNoTask and Carlton. Czech "electronic" was represented by Alois Piňos, Dan Dlouhý and Ivo Medek. While the "basement" was dominated by the two DJs, a series of electronic creations were perpetrated in the gallery with the significant name of "Štřepy" ["Shards"] by the following:

- Luc Houtkamp, one of the most important figures in Dutch improvised electronic music, a world famous saxophonist and interesting composer. He has limitless faith in the system and general principle chosen without major interest in colour or other parameters of composition. A remarkable vocal solo by Hana Buhrs with live – electronically modified voice, Luc performing on the saxophone – alas only sporadically.

- "Brno Bloc": "Tamtamania" by Ivo Medek with live appearance under the ceiling itself, premiere of Alois Piňos's "Zimní slunovrat" ["Winter Solstice"] in a multimedia version with video by P. Baran, and "Sublimace" ["Sublimation"] by Dan Dlouhý with theremine solo.

- Gilius van Bergeijk avows the kind of concepts which – in his own words – have long been outdated, e.g. sensitivity, sentiment, melodiousness or feeling. What could be heard of his music suggested there was either a yawning gap between his practice and his words or he has a very peculiar understanding of the concepts he mentioned. For example, at the seminar he played a piece made up of the first notes of the pieces he has in his home audio library in alphabetical order of authors with only minimal electronic modifications...

- Huib Emmer and Remco Schuurbiens - "...fascination with techno... Multimedia works based on musical improvisation. Interesting projections combining abstract images with real shots – often overlaid, music based on techno-rhythm, frequent cuts, overlap and layering. In view of the similarity of the models, primarily the result of the very character of the source material, as time went by there was a clear need for more striking change.

The Dutch guests also organised workshops with composition students of the Janáček Academy of Performing Arts and there was an accompanying event in the form of two Czech-Dutch exhibition at the Glass Meadow.

The event has been arranged on the basis of reciprocity. In the autumn there will be a presentation of Czech Electro-Acoustic Music in the Netherlands.

IVO MEDEK

boo

Listen Indies Records 2002

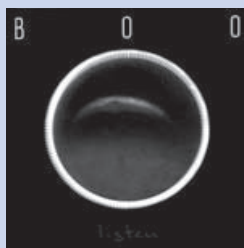
Total Time: 39:50

The Brno-Austrian quartet has created this second album in a tranquil spirit evidently meant as a contrast to the sound of the eponymous debut CD and also as a way of forestalling continuous comparisons with the earlier work of two of its members in the now alas defunct group Dunaj. The result is uneven. Half the songs to be found on Listen sound new and yet distinctive. The opening track, The Sea, combining Czech (Andrea Konstankiewicz - cello) and English (Christoph Pajer - guitar, violin) vocals is almost a piece of minimalist folk fun. Sunbeams, in a similar spirit, is given added character by the virtually jazz brush technique of Pavel Koudelka, and the final piece, The Answer is best defined as folk-rock. As a string prelude fades away the title track kick-starts into a rousing warm-up with ringing guitar and wild three-part vocals in the refrain.

Unfortunately the rest of the songs are not so fresh. The sheer length of some tracks (Lost On The Way) is really tiresome at times, Pajer's English texts are cliché-ridden and his vocals often suggest the desire for a tougher effort than he can actually manage. Dunaj orphans Josef Ostřanský (guitar, bass-guitar) and Pavel Koudelka play as we would expect, but in Koudelka's case the result is sometimes obtrusive, because his otherwise original style doesn't always fit in with the overall sound. At some points in the album he seems to have been simply "damped down" to "achieve quiet" without actually playing anything different from the "full throttle" parts. But even in these less successful pieces we can find fresh places, such as the venomous text of Don't Speak To Me, the acoustic prelude in Don't Worry, the vocal line in stanza Stones, and the consistently witty text of Lost On The Way, which is unfortunately successfully killed by unnecessary repetition.

Boo has only managed to get half-way on its voyage to tranquil waters. Dangerous shallows keep appearing.

PETR FERENC



extempore

Velkoměsto [Metropolis] Black Point Music 2001

**Total Time:
2 CD, 90 min**

Black Point is working hard on its archive series: the end of 2001 saw the release of a concert recording of Extempore's Metropolis programme. One



recording of Metropolis already exists - released in 1991 on LP by Globus International – but the sound quality and the performance were not exactly brilliant. The new CD presents a different concert performance (with the group in much better form). It is much better quality and is even mastered. The CD is

accompanied by a lavish 160-page booklet that maps the band's career and texts, and unlike the LP, it offers the complete concert programme.

Metropolis, gradually developed in 1979-1981, represented the summit of Extempore's output and was the first major achievement of its then leader Mikoláš Chadima. In the context of Czech unofficial rock it was a highly significant work, since Extempore is a rare example of a band whose musical high point coincided with the high point of its popularity. This is why Metropolis has had such a major influence on later generations.

Metropolis is formally composed of five parts, but is in fact made up of two. The first thirty-minute section (CD1) consists of "Themes I-IV" linked up attacca, while the second part (CD2)s "theme V" – Dreams of the Inhabitants of the Metropolis" is an hour-long bloc of songs.

Themes I-IV are long, still fresh pieces that really work. Mainly instrumental, but with a short vocal inset in the middle – they show Extempore continuing in its tradition of "composed programmes". If we leave aside the rather clichéd percussion breaks in the first theme and the fact that the third theme is slightly weaker than the others, we have to admit that it all fits together perfectly, is organically integrated into a cohesive whole (which given an average track of around 7 minutes is not to be taken for granted), and is never grating or overdone. Anyone who has followed Chadima's work over the last twenty years will realise immediately that the foundation of his future "macabre lyric" style was laid here, however much the singing and especially the texts are more a foreshadowing of new wave. The combination of ostinato, acoustic and noise passages (specially treated guitar) and typical Chadimovian melodies (especially in the first and last theme) created a distinctive music that in my view remains fully alive to this day.

Unfortunately the same cannot quite be said about the songs on the second CD. Although the tracks are mostly much shorter, they are rather grating. They suffer from figures that are too elementary, are much the same, and the mechanical application of the pattern noise passage – rock figure – vocals in invented language – often becomes tedious. Unlike the long themes, many of them give the impression of too many miscellaneous elements, even though they are usually based on a single riff. The level of the texts is also uneven, sliding from highly successful (Chlap a opice – The Bloke and the Monkey) to the today rather dated "bizarre banality" (Pod tramvají – Under the Tram), a characteristic vice of the future Czech new wave. Although there are pieces that come off, the vocal section gives an overall slapdash impression and more or less dilutes the inventiveness of Themes I-IV. There is no denying that Extempore was ahead of its time in its destruction of the accepted patterns of the time (or by paring them down to the bone) and in its power of expression. I am afraid, however, that the time finally caught up, paradoxically through the efforts of people who were inspired by Extempore's songs. Before Chadima had managed (if this was his aim.) to develop his pioneering project fully, and in more meaningful (= more purified) forms, Extempore broke up and its leader submerged himself in even deeper (and we shall add more successful) experiment. His later work therefore draws not on the songs but on themes I-IV.

It was others, then, who took the path mapped out by Metropolis, and even a superficial exposure to the CD is enough to convince one that the master's legacy was not been forgotten. In germinal, elementary form the songs on Metropolis contain almost everything that was to be distinctive about unofficial Czech Bigbeat in future years – both its merits and its weaker points. I have the feeling that it is only now, when both belong to the past, that we can fully appreciate this influence. The value of the pieces as stimuli can therefore hardly be doubted.

PETR BAKLA

CD SHOP

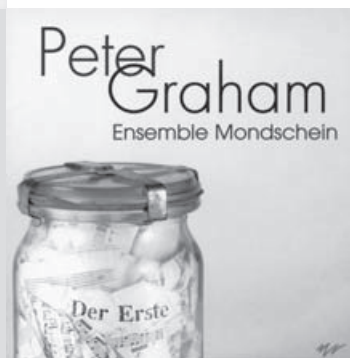
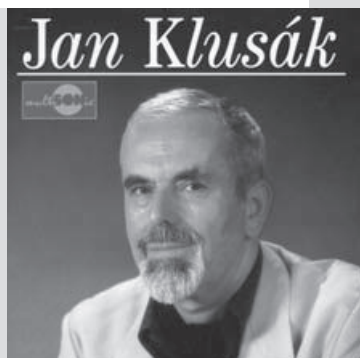
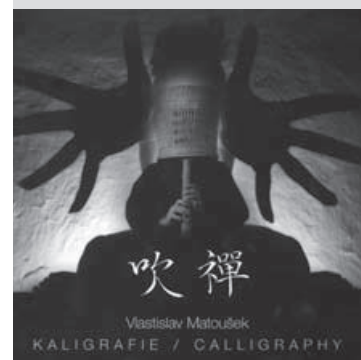
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