czech music

3 | 2004

quarterly magazine

David Eben

Harry Halbreich

Dagmar Voňková

EuroArt Praha 2004 / 2005

International Festival of Chamber Music

Festival programme:

Martinů Hall, Liechtenstein Palace,
Malostranské Square No. 13, Prague 1
Beginning of concerts 7. 30 PM

Opening concert September 21, 2004
J. L. Dusík, J. M. Franco, B. Smetana, A. Bax
Jana Boušková - harp
Stamic Quartet

October 19, 2004
September 24, 2004 - Sion (CH),
September 25, 2004 - Martigny (CH), October 20, 2004 - Jičín
J. Brahms, J. Balissat, F. Mendelson-Bartholdy
Enseble A Cordes de Valere (Switzerland)
Jindřich Pazdera, Josef Kekula - Violins

November 23, 2004
J. Suk, E. Schulhoff, A. Dvořák
Penguin Quartet
Jan Pěruška - Viola
Vladimír Leixner - Cello

December 14, 2004
December 15, 2004 - Liberec
B. Martinů, D. Schnyder
Daniel Schnyder - Saxophone (USA/CH)
Stamic Quartet

January 18, 2005
January 17, 2005 – Liberec
R. Schumann, N. Hakim, M. Dupre, D. Pinkham
Hansjörg Albrecht - Organ (D)
Stamic Quartet

February 22, 2005
J. Haydn, E. Dohnanyi, T. Pálka, B. Martinů
Auer Quartet (Hungary)
Jan Pěruška - Viola
Vladimír Leixner - Cello

March 22, 2005
March 21, 2005 - Brno, March 23, 2005 - Děčín
M. Ravel, R. Pascal, J. Raff
Quatuor Satie (France)
Stamic Quartet

April 19, 2005
April 18, 2005 – Jičín
C. Nielsen, P. Nørgård, N. W. Gade
Kroger Quartet (Denmark)
Stamic Quartet

May 24, 2005
May 25 - Ostrava, May 26 - Olomouc, May 31 - Teplice
L. Janáček, M. M. Ponce, E. Angulo
Carlos Bernal - Guitar (Mexico)
Stamic Quartet

Closing concert – June 14, 2005
Partner concert - St. Pölten
W. A. Mozart, F. Schubert, F. Liszt, J. Takács, C. Franck
Robert Lehrbaumer - Piano (Austria)
Stamic Quartet

Contact:
EuroArt Praha s.r.o. festival, music agency, production of CD
Žalovská 122/11, 181 00 Praha 8
Phone: +420 603 277 995, +420 605 824 940, +420 603 889 198
Phone/Fax: 233 556 380
leixner@euroart.cz, lajnerova@euroart.cz, doubravova@euroart.cz
www.euroart.cz

FESTIVAL PARTNERS
ČESKÁ SPOŘITELNA
Škoda SIMPLY CLEVER
RENAISSANCE PRAGUE HOTEL
PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC

IN COOPERATION WITH
City of Prague
Ministry of Culture of Czech Republic

czech music

3 | 2004

Harry Halbreich
Bohuslav Martinů
Werkverz
Dokume
Biog

editorial

Dear Readers,
It is a great honour for me to be able to introduce myself to you as the new editor of the magazine Czech Music. I am looking forward to our regular quarterly meetings on its pages.
In this issue you will find an interview with David Eben, a great exponent of Gregorian chant not only as a performer but as a scholar as well. I would also like to draw your attention to the text from the famous musicologist Harry Halbreich, a profession of his love for Czech music. The erudite article not only provides interesting information for anyone who is just getting to know Czech music, but is also fascinating for those of us who "live" in Czech music. It is surprising and thought-provoking to see composers traditionally considered virtual opposites being talked about in the same sentence. Before the end of the year there will be another issue as we catch up with ourselves - as you will have noticed, this issue is coming out rather late and I offer my apologies for the delay. Reading to look forward to in the next issue will include a triptych of articles on E. F. Burian, a man of many talents and a controversial life, and a very interesting interview with an important Czech composer – Jan Klusák, who is usually so publicity shy that we are particularly proud to be carrying the piece.
In 2005 the magazine will have a new graphic design and will be conceived in a slightly different way. We want to include more materials with the same thematic focus in each issue, and to show Czech music in the broader international context where – we adamantly believe – it belongs.

Happy Autumn

PETR BAKLA
EDITOR

Contents

3 2004

Page 2 David Eben's Passionate Affair
LENKA KRÁLOVÁ

Page 6 FOK Orchestra
JIŘÍ PILKA

Page 10 Czech Music : A Life-long Story
HARRY HALBREICH

Page 14 Ivo Kahánek: The Universal Type of Pianist
JINDŘICH BAJGAR

Page 17 The Levers, Pistons and Wheels of my Blood
PETR FERENC

Czech Music Information Centre,
Besední 3, 118 00 Praha 1,
Czech Republic,
fax: ++420 2 57317424
phone: ++420 2 57312422
e-mail: his@vol.cz
http://www.musica.cz

Czech Music is issued by the Czech Music Information Centre with the support of the ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic, Bohuslav Martinů Foundation, Leoš Janáček Foundation and the Czech Music Fund
Editor: Petr Bakla, Translation: Anna Bryson
Graphic design: Ditta Jiřičková, Photos: Karel Šustr (cover, p. 2–5, 19–20), David Port (p. 11), Zdeněk Chrapek (p. 15) and archives
DTP: HD EDIT, Print: První dobrá s.r.o.
ISSN 1211-0264
The subscription fee is 25 for Europe,
$ 30 for overseas countries, or respective equivalents.

david eben's passionate

LENKA KRÁLOVÁ

If today Gregorian Chant is no mere empty phrase for much of the Czech public, but means a kind of music they have actually heard, then most of the credit must go to David Eben. The Schola Gregoriana Pragensis ensemble, which he founded and now directs, has been giving concerts at home and abroad since 1989. The Schola was in fact founded two years earlier, but before the Revolution it could perform only during church services. David Eben (*1965), who originally studied Clarinet at the Prague Conservatory, developed an interest in medieval music at the Philosophical Faculty of Charles Uniersity, where he studied music from 1986. He only studied the direction of Gregorian Chant once the Schola had been established, going to the Conservatoire Nationale Supérieur de Musique de Paris, from which he graduated in 1991. Eben's theoretical, musicological work has been as essential to the project as his practical skills. The repertoire presented by the ensemble requires an understanding of the original sources, not just a basic ability to "decipher" them, but also a wider knowledge of the way specific chants were actually sung, and the techniques (endless questions) needed to produce the particular sound of the Schola. Eben has acquired this theoretical basis mainly on his visits and consultations at the Benedictine Monastery in Solesmes in France. The resulting combination of theory and practice is evident above all in the ensemble's repertoire. Its extensive discography, comprising ten CDs released over ten years (1993-2002) is testimony to a very well thought out conception of thematically distinct wholes that draw on the original sources. In addition to his teaching activities (currently he works at the Charles University Institute of Musical Studies), David Eben is the author of a number of programmes for the Czech Radio's Vltava Station focused on Medieval music – above all the ambitious cycle The Liturgical Year in Gregorian Chant.

Quite apart from these medieval interests, Eben has been making a successful name for himself in popular music as well. The Eben Brothers Ensemble, which is hard to classify and is somewhere on the borders of rock, jazz and folk, has already released three CDs at quite lengthy time intervals, the last album ***Já na tom dělám [I'm Working on It]*** in 2000.

affair

You started to get interested in medieval music and Gregorian chant when studying at the Philosophical faculty, and you founded the Schola Gregoriana Pragensis in your second year. Tell us something about your first experiences conducting Gregorian chant?

I can remember the first performance of our "embryonic" Schola cell at the Church of St. Wenceslas in Smíchov. It was Ash Wednesday in 1988. Two minutes before the mass started we flew out of the sacristy up to the choir and were trying to catch our breaths while we waited for the bell to ring as the signal for our entry. To be frank, at that moment I was gripped with horror at what I was letting myself in for, when I didn't yet even have a proper knowledge of the whole thing. But with the first notes it vanished, and was replaced by delight in the arching phrases of the chant, and then it just got better and better. Naturally it took some time before I had really worked out certain methods of conducting.

You then continued to devote yourself to conducting Gregorian chant, and studied it at the conservatory in Paris. Could you tell us what exactly the studies consisted in? When looking at your gestures I can't help thinking of the signs of neum notation, which originally probably recorded the movement of the conductor's hand.

Conducting Gregorian chant has certain peculiarities. There isn't any regular unit of rhythm in Gregorian chant, and so you can't rely on the classical conducting pattern of three or four-time. This means you need to find another element to allow communication between the conductor and the singers. I encountered my first guide to conducting chant on Professor Godehard Joppich's course in Essen. According to this school the conductor must really paint neums with his hand in the air, which has its logic.
I found an alternative to this approach when studying at the Paris Conservatory. Here you work with a more economical system of gestures, focused more on the overall guidance of the phrase. What is important is the idea that there are certain "rhythmic pillars" in the music, to which the flow of the music is directed – often these are the accents of words. And so the conductor should express this direction in his gestures and give the ensemble a corresponding impulse, but the signs of neum notation can still be a major inspiration for the gestures, since after all they are a brilliant way of embodying the agogics of Gregorian melodies.

What else did your stay in Paris give you, in terms of valuable experience?

I spent almost three years there and it was an experience that I'm still drawing on today. The most important element was probably my work with the French school Choeur gré-

gorien de Paris, which sings a choral mass every Sunday in the Paris Church of Val-de-GrČce. For one year I was responsible for these masses as conductor, and so I had "hands on" experience of the relevant repertoire. It's experience that is hard to come by unless you're a Benedictine.
I met with all kinds of other inspirations and interesting experiences as well, such as a tour with the Choeur grégorien de Paris to South Korea and China, for example. China was especially interesting. For instance we performed not just in a church in Shanghai but in the hall of some kind of house of culture, where the choral was accompanied by the loud noise of three revolving air-conditioning fans on the ceiling.

After your many years of experience, how do you react to Gregorian Chant performed by other groups? Are there sharp differences of opinion on the concept of interpretation?
The current scene as far as performance of Gregorian chant is concerned is very pluralist and it would be hard for anyone to claim that his interpretation is absolutely correct. It's true that discussion on the theme – even though academic in character – is often quite emotional. This is probably because Gregorian chant is often involved with the spiritual life of the performers and so their whole personal identity, which makes the interpretation of the chant a more than usually "passionate affair".
Differences in performance also reflect differences in the national character of the performers. The Germans are very thorough and pay scrupulous attention to all the nuances in the neuma, while the French don't worry about all that so much, but on the other hand that gives them greater lightness of touch and so on…

The vocal technique of the singers is something frequently discussed. While the chant sounds absolutely simple, it is the result of perfect vocal technique. Is the unified sound of the Schola the result of long years of working together? Do you concentrate on working with the voice?
Certainly long-term experience of singing together and work with a stable group of singers is necessary if the sound of the ensemble is to be homogenous. At the same time you have to find a balance between technique and expression. You mustn't lose the sense of the profundity of the word by concentrating too much on technique, but on the other hand the experience of the text mustn't be at the expense of technical quality. The two factors need to be harmonised and each time you have to go after that harmony again.

Currently you teach early music (the history of Gregorian chant, the liturgical year) at the Institute of Musical Studies at the Philosophical Faculty and at other institutions. How stimulating do you find your teaching? What is the student attitude to this period? Certainly practical experience must play a certain role here…
I think that for every teacher teaching is an antidote to atrophy. You have to keep bringing your lectures up to date, and discussions with students often inspire you to new ways of presenting the material, to more effective comparisons and analogies. It sounds like a

banality to say that you learn most by teaching, but it's undoubtedly true.
As far as the student reaction is concerned, they should probably speak for themselves rather than have me speak for them. I try to ensure that the music I'm lecturing about doesn't come across as some archive exhibit, but as something alive and dynamic, that has its place in the world of today. This means that in my lectures – apart from playing samples from CDs, I "bother" students by getting us all to sing things from the repertoire. I believe this kind of practical experience, with people having to try out performance of the music first hand, is very important in helping them to understand it, and most students – thank God – react positively.

Your ensemble's repertoire is tightly linked to Bohemian traditions, and these always form some kind of thematic whole in your programmes. For a long time now you have been concerned with chants of the "offices", i.e. one of the principle rituals of the Christian liturgy performed at certain times over the course of the day. Does this repertoire have a rich tradition in our country? How many records do we actually have of this kind of chant here?
We could spend a long time talking about this theme. In the early Middle Ages our country took over the basic repertoire of liturgical chant that was usual in Western Europe. But apart from the universally accepted core, new layers of repertoire began to emerge that were typical of Central Europe and sometimes just of Bohemia. For example these include chants for the festivals of the Bohemian saints, chants with Marian themes and polyphonic Christmas readings. We were lucky that wars had rather less of a damaging effect on our traditions than in Lorraine, for example, and so we have enough manuscript sources in our archival collections.
In our ensemble we have often focused on a repertoire typical for Bohemian conditions. Often this is very remarkable music that is not very well known either here or abroad. It is also one way of convincing people abroad that our streets aren't full of bearded Eastern Orthodox priests, as most foreigners believe, but that our country is solidly anchored in the Latin tradition of Western Europe.

A knowledge of Latin must certainly be necessary for any understanding of Gregorian chant let alone any enlightened interpretation. How have you managed to cope with medieval Latin, with all its oddities?
Today I actually find medieval Latin easier than classical Ciceronian Latin. For that I have to thank Professor Zachová and her Medieval Latin seminar, which I attended regularly when I was a student. There we read almost all the Statures of the Chapter of St. Vitus of Arnošt of Pardubice, and extracts from the Chronicle of Cosmas, when Prince Břetislav was threatening to cut the German emperor's head off and put his face on his bottom.

In your repertoire you have not just una voce chant but medieval polyphonic works, and currently you are giving concerts with pieces by Petr Wilhelm de Grudencz or the four-part Messe de Nostre Dame by Guillaume de Machaut. When you are rehearsing such pieces, do you draw on the original records in original notation? For example, Machaut's mass is a perfectly rhythmically elaborated piece that makes great demands on performers.
For compositions like Machaut's Messe de Nostre Dame, there are excellent editions that are entirely reliable, and you can say the same about the editions of the music of Petro Wilhelmi de Grudencz. In fact in his case we even had what you might call an "in house" editor, i.e. Doc. Jaromír Černý from the Institute of Music Studies at the Charles University Philosophical Faculty. We had no trouble consulting on questions about the edition. When it comes to music from Bohemian medieval sources, however, the situation with editions is a great deal worse, and so with only a few exceptions I have to make a transcription from the sources myself.

In June last year Schola Gregoriana Pragensis took part in performing two pieces by the young Czech composers Miroslav Srnka and Michal Rataj. One interesting aspect was the huge concert venue – the Vítkov Monument, a mausolem associated in the Czech public mind with the communist regime. The distinctive features of the space were exploited for the performance of the pieces, especially in Rataj's Vítkov Oratorio, with the audience sitting among the performers, the Schola moving during the piece, and electronic treatment enhancing the spatial composition…
I have to admit that the day of the concert was the first time in my life I had ever entered the Vítkov Monument. My first impression of the place was contradictory – a kind of mixture of obscure mysticism and vacuous grandeur that sent shivers up my spine. But in the evening, when the space was in darkness and you could only see the evocative lighting of the podium, the environment acquired potency, and the Gregorian chant even managed to sound very authentic there, Michal Rataj's piece eventually worked very well with the spatial factor – including the long resonance. Altogether it was quite a powerful experience.

What is your attitude to the combination of Gregorian chant with contemporary music? The great wave of interest in this vocal tradition has led to its use in various other genres.
Gregorian chant has been a source of inspiration for composers in practically all stages of musical history, and so it doesn't strike me as in any way inappropriate when composers make use of it today. But it all depends on the way it is treated, and whether the combination really produces some authentic new value, or just parasites on the musical qualities of the chant and its spiritual dimension. Only time can give a clear answer to questions like this.

The range of your activities is of course much wider than Gregorian chant. At the conservatory you studied clarinet and your still play this instrument together with the saxophone. Your interest in jazz is well known. Do you have some experience with actually playing jazz?
I've been a great lover of jazz from my early youth. My childhood dream was to become a black saxophonist – although unfortunately I've never been quite able to fulfil it. But I always listen to this music with gusto, and as far as I can I try to play it as well, although so far more or less in private. It's always refreshing for me when after a tough day I put on a CD and play one of his jazz studies with Bob Mintzer.

You are active in the Eben Brothers group, which makes albums with other musicians, such as the highly distinctive singer Iva Bittová, the double bassist Jaromír Honzák and others. What is your attitude to improvisation?
Jazz improvisation is a great art that I would like to get close to. But the songs I play with my brothers are more arranged. We each think up our individual inputs or solos, and they then become a more or less stable part of the arrangements. Classic improvised "choruses" wouldn't really much fit there.

What are your future musical plans?
With the Schola I've recently started a cycle of eight concerts for the fifteenth anniversary of our concert life, and they will be running up to Christmas. This cycle is a kind of symbolic culmination of the development of the group until now and at the same time a chance to work with other performers. For example we are looking forward to the concert programme Ach, homo fragilis [Oh, Frail Man] in the Prague Church of St. Simon and St. Jude, where the singing will be interspersed with recitation of period texts by my brother Marek. Then in November we are planning to record a new CD devoted to the music of Petro Wilhelmi de Grudencz, whom you mentioned before.
And to complete a threesome – but from a completely different direction – I would mention the DVD that I and my brothers shot in the Ledeburk Gardens in August. The audio and video tapes have already been edited, and so there shouldn't be anything in the way of releasing it now.

FOK orchestra with Rudolf Pekárek (around 1940)

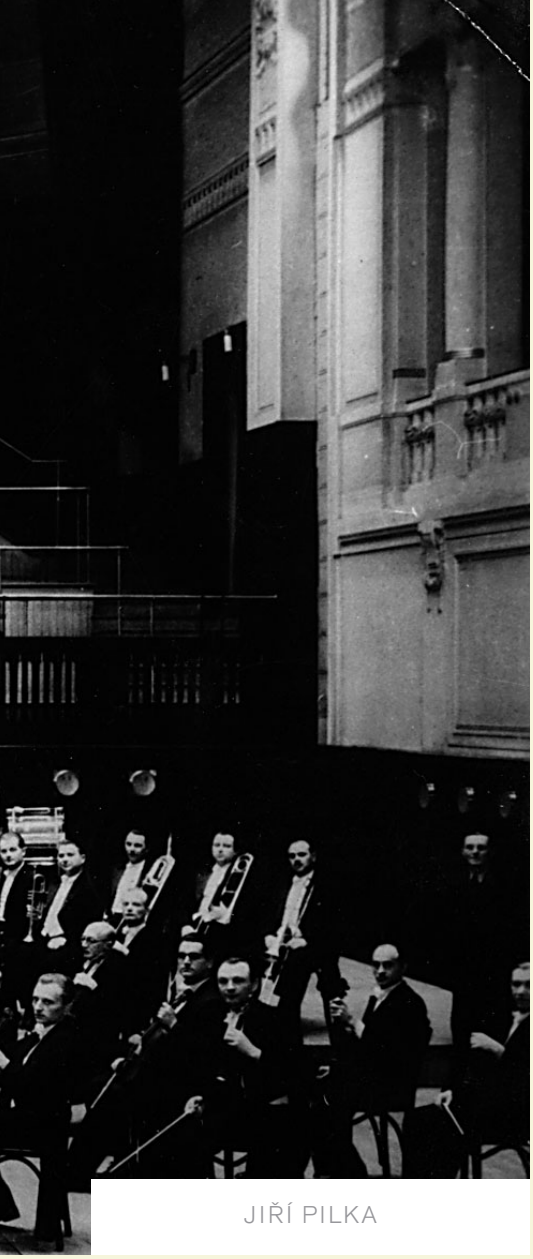
fok orchestra

The Struggle for Existence

Founding a new orchestra in Prague in the middle of the economic crisis was a very courageous act, and with it Rudolf Pekárek gave many unemployed musicians hope. On the other hand, the life that awaited them was full of uncertainty. The abbreviation FOK had already appeared in 1934 at the founding meeting in the Kmoch Restaurant in Vinohrady. The letters denoted the expected area of activity: film – opera – concert. Twenty-five musicians called themselves the FOK Orchestra or the FOK Salon Orchestra or sometimes Pekárek's Salon Orchestra. On the 29th of December 1934 they played on the radio for the first time.
At the beginning the ensemble did indeed make a living by intensive recording of music for films. In 1935 this was 18 films, and by 1943 when the Prague Film Orchestra was founded, the FOK had recorded music for 234 films.

The other opportunities were very various. On the 25th of March 1936 the orchestra gave its first public concert in the Mánes Hall, with Václav Smetáček conducting pieces by Fr. Bartoš, P. Bořkovec, J. Ježek, H. Krása, I. Krejčí and B. Martinů. On the 30th of April 1937 the orchestra gave a charity concert for the Opora domova [Home Support] society. Another public concert on the 6th of May 1937 was announced as the opening of a folk cycle, but no further instalments took place. In these years the FOK regularly played for the City Theatre in the suburb of Královské Vinohrady. In 1938 the orchestra gave three concerts for the Workers' Academy and appeared at the 10th Sokol National PE Association Meeting. The 19th of November 1939 saw the first of a cycle of Sunday matinee concerts in the Smetana Hall, with Otakar Jeremiáš conducting Smetana's Má vlast [My Country]. Václav Smetáček conducted the same piece on the 1st of January 1940 in Mělník at the first FOK concert outside Prague. A Folk Cycle of ten matinee concerts was also successfully launched in this year.

In 1942 the Gestapo arrested Pekárek (as a Jew) and on the 12th of May Dr. Václav Smetáček was elected as chief of the insti-



JIŘÍ PILKA

National Committee of the City of Prague and expanded to 82 musicians. The 18-years of struggle to achieve material security were over.

The Prague Symphonics

The official title of the orchestra was completely different: The Symphony Orchestra of the City of Prague FOK. The title still applies today, but for people abroad it is too complicated and unmemorable a name, and even here it became usual to call FOK the Prague Symphonics. For the sake of completeness I shall offer readers a little more information. In 1957 the FOK went abroad for the first time, to Poland, and in 1959 it took part in the first concert in the Motorlet factory and for the first time travelled to the West – to Austria. In 1952 a Concert Agency was established in association with the FOK and a number of chamber ensembles and soloists were successively affiliated to the orchestra. The Prague Symphonics became an important and indeed a massive institution, and the Concert Agency controlled most of concert life in Prague.

The orchestra also gradually acquired an international name, visiting dozens of European and non-European countries to great acclaim. In 1967 it toured in the German Republic and Great Britain for the first time, in 1969 it had its first tour of the USA, in 1972 it appeared for the first time in the USSR, and in 1986 for the first time in Japan. There is no point here in listing all its tours. There were a great many, and all were well received by audiences. FOK did a huge amount of work to promote Czech music culture and also awareness of the existence of a Czechoslovakia, a small state in the heart of Europe.

Václav Talich

tution. In August the orchestra received an order to play as the operetta ensemble in the German Theatre in Prague, and in 1944 the members of the orchestra were sent to the Ostmark–Werke factory in Kbely as forced labour.

On the 19th of May 1945 the orchestra played for the first time in liberated Czechoslovakia and announced a cycle of subscription concerts. Rudolf Pekárek returned from prison and became the leader of the Army Arts Ensemble and the second conductor of FOK. The leaders of the orchestra had fruitless negotiations with the Prague City Hall in an attempt to secure better material conditions, and there was even talk of moving the FOK to Karlovy Vary. In 1947 the orchestra appeared for the first time at the Prague Spring, but after February 1948 Rudolf Pekárek left the CSR for Australia.

On the 1st of January 1952 the FOK Orchestra was placed under the Central

Václav Smetáček and Sviatoslav Richter

A whole series of directors contributed to the developing the profile of the orchestra. The names are not so important in themselves, but I should like to recall at least a few. After the founder Rudolf Pekárek and Václav Smetáček (at the beginning both had to take care of both artistic and organisational aspects), there followed Karel Blahout, Jan Hrdlička, Karel Vodrážka, and Jiří Hlaváček. In 1968–1976 the Fok was led by Ivan Řezáč, and after him Ladislav Šíp. As excellent musicians both managed to gain and maintain general respect for the orchestra and keep up the highest musical standards. Several subsequent directors who did not bring any conspicuous change, but the most recent stage, represented by members of a younger generation, is worth special mention. In 1992, after the departure of Jiří Pilka, who held the post of director for only a short time, Roman Bělor took over the reins. In 2001 he left to become director of the Prague Spring and was replaced at the head of the FOK by Mgr. Petr Polívka. Both breathed a new dynamism into the work and expanded the domestic and international activities of the orchestra, even in what were often difficult economic circumstances.

Repertory directors have also had an influence on the life of the orchestra. More than once the music directors have themselves fulfilled this function, but in some cases the situation has been different. Petar Zapletal was an important and highly professional instance, and in the nineties Bohuslav Vítek. Both made major contributions to the work of the orchestra.

Major Figures

One absolutely key figure in the founding phase of the orchestra was Václav Smetáček, already mentioned above. He managed to work fast, oriented programmes to the basic symphonic repertoire, and even under totalitarian regimes was unafraid to present major oratorio and cantata works. He was always welcomed abroad (more than once as an opera conductor). He did a huge amount for Czech music and especially for our modern composers, whose work he presented systematically at home and abroad. He left a permanent mark on Czech musical life, and headed the FOK for a full 36 years (up to 1972).

A whole range of other Czech conductors have worked with the FOK. Some had short terms contracts, others longer. Let us recall names like Štěpán Koníček, Jindřich Rohan, Václav Neumann, Zdeněk Košler, Ladislav Slovák, Vladimír Válek, and Petr Altrichter, and in recent years Martin Turnovský.

The principal conductor Jiří Bělohlávek achieved his greatest musical successes with the orchestra, which he led from 1977 to 1989, i.e. a full 12 let. In this period there were high-profile foreign tours, a whole series of gramophone recordings, and the home concerts were at the highest possible standard. Bělohlávek worked with intensity and systematically; he was demanding, and carefully selected soloists. His successes were conditioned by the fact that he was able to devote a great deal of time to it.

In the Nineties, after the departure of Martin Turnovský, Gaetano Delogu from Italy worked with the FOK as principal conductor for a while, while several interesting Czech guests alternated with him on the stand (Libor Pešek, Zdeněk Mácal). The current principle conductor is the French conductor Serge Baudo. It would take a great deal of space to list all the visiting foreign conductors, but here I shall mention just enough to indicate the very high level on which the orchestra has been performing in the post-war years: Paul Hindemith, Dean Dixon, Zubin Mehta, Sir Charles Mackerras, Sir George Solti, Tadeusz Strugala, Kurt Masur, Krzystof Penderecki, Seiji Ozawa, Charles Munch. Many of them appeared with the FOK at the Prague Spring Festival.

Music for Prague

The FOK Concert Agency was founded in 1962 as a practical agency for Prague. Milan Zdražil, head of the agency, became an important and indeed legendary figure. Together with his colleagues he thought up such celebrated cycles as World Piano Music, the Spring and Autumn Organ Cycle, Pictures and Music, the Major Chamber Cycle and afternoon concerts for schoolchildren. Many of the cycles still exist today, and quite a number have been copied by other agencies.

Milan Zdražil filled the whole of Prague with music: the Basilica of St. George, galleries, the Bertramka Museum, the Cathedral of St. Vitus, the Basilica of St. James, the Church of St. Simon and St. Jude, the Riding School of the Prague Castle, the Mirror Hall at the Clementinum, the Steps of the National Museum, the Garden in Maltese Square…

FOK and its agency have brought myriad world virtuosos to Prague. I am thinking first of all of the guest artists that are the pride and joy of every programme. Only an outstanding orchestra can invite outstanding soloists. I shall recall a few names from the post-war period: Peter Schreier, Garrick Ohlsson, Henryk Szeryng, Anne–Sophie Mutter, David Oistrakh, Sviatoslav Richter, Isaac Stern, Arthur Rubinstein, Arturo Benedetti–Michelangeli, Mischa Maisky.

Among great Czech musicians that have worked with it, the orchestra can boast Rudolf Firkušný, Ivan Moravec, Zuzana Růžičková, Jan Panenka, Josef Páleníček, František Rauch, Boris Krajný, Josef Suk, Václav Snítil, Saša Večtomov, Josef Chuchro, Jiří Bárta, Marta Krásová, Marie Tauberová, Beno Blachut, Eduard Haken, Dagmar Pecková, Ivan Kusnjer and many others. For a certain period the orchestra has been a home haven for various ensembles and soloists. Those who have had FOK contracts include the violinists Václav Hudeček, Ivan Štraus and Ivan Ženatý, the pianists Mirka Pokorná and Emil Leichner, the cellist Stanislav Apolín, and the violist Lubomír Malý. The number of associated ensembles is highly unusual: the City of Prague Quartet, the Kocian Quartet, the Foerster Trio, Collegium musicum Pragense, the Prague Chamber Soloists, Corni di Praga, Musica da camera Praga, The Suk Chamber Orchestra, The Prague Male Choir, Linha Singers, Bambini di Praga, The Kühn Mixed Choir, Musica bohemica, the Prague branch of Music Youth.

The list of names has changed, musicians come and gone, but FOK has remained the biggest "home" music institution. A similar

model was applied in the Czech Philharmonic, but on a smaller scale. Since 1990 this gigantic musical institution has been progressively scaled down, and now only the Concert Agency remains with the FOK. Reduction has had many positive features: a simplification of the agenda, and entirely independent decision-making by each musician and collective. On the other hand, many of the groups involved have lost a certain minimal material security, each group has been burdened with administrative questions especially in relation to agency negotiation, promotion and budgeting. Only time will tell whether older model did not, in fact, have certain positive aspects to which it would be beneficial to return.

The Future

In the last decade, a number of people have here and there voiced the view that Prague has too many regularly publicly performing large symphony orchestras: the Czech Philharmonic, the Prague Symphonics (FOK), and the Czech Radio Symphony Orchestra. We have, however, watched with wonder as new bodies, such as the Czech National Symphony Orchestra, have come into being. Admittedly this is not a permanent group, and in practice consists of players from the three traditional orchestras, but it is interesting to see that it is finding a public, space for recordings and engagements abroad. We should also count the Prague Chamber Philharmonic, which has joined the ranks of existing chamber ensembles with great success and has its large and faithful public. Are there really too many orchestras?

I am convinced that the present state is viable and acceptable. Certainly some ensembles have problems attracting audiences, but the reason is not an oversupply of concerts, but the quality of the programmes and the price of tickets. The sold out concerts of the Czech Radio Orchestra and the Prague Chamber Orchestra demonstrate that it is the quality of an ensemble and its programmes that is crucial. This means that the key is finding a programme profile, and of course budgeting in a way that keeps the price of tickets at an acceptable level. Unfortunately not all ensembles know how to do this, but the FOK is an excellent example in this respect. The various bodies of the orchestra (the music board etc.) often forced the musical direction to make the programmes as attractive as possible, seen as a matter of including well-worn 19th-century works and excluding more modern or contemporary compositions. The case of the Prague Chamber Philharmonic shows that you can play contemporary music, engage young soloists and conductors, and not lose the public. The FOK is now in many respects doing the same thing.

For years the Prague FOK Symphony Orchestra was an orchestra that maintained a successful identity distinct from the programmes of the Czech Philharmonic. It had a broadly accessible repertoire. Thanks to the FOK it was from time to time possible to hear all Beethoven's symphonies, the main works of Smetana, Dvořák, Tchaikovsky, Debussy and hundred of other pieces. The presentation of the great oratorios was also a worthy project. As students this meant we could get to know Händel's Messiah, Bach's Mass in B Minor, Verdi's Requiem, Dvořák's Requiem and Stabat mater, Orff's Carmina Burana, but also the cantatas of Vycpálek, Novák and so on. At the same time FOK would regularly present contemporary Czech music, and composers like Luboš Fišer, Jan Klusák and dozens of others can thank the orchestra for their arrival on the music scene. One traditional bad habit in the Czech Republic is the "grading" of orchestras, and the way they are judged in terms of hierarchy. Only one can be first and best, and the others have to be second or third. This is not the case abroad, or at least not as a permanent feature for nearly a century. Who would stick his neck out to say which of London's five large symphony orchestras is the number one? Or whether the Birmingham was better under Simon Rattle? Different orchestras have their own history, rise, peak and fall, and that is certainly true in the Czech Republic as well, except that here the ranking tendency has settled in the minds of administrators and so some bodies have better economic (mainly salary) conditions than others. This in many cases limits the quality of the performers who can be engaged, invitations to soloists etc. In FOK they are very conscious of the problem and it is a mistake to keep on rating a body as the "Prague Number Two", for example. I leave aside the long-term underpayment of the players in all our orchestras, since that is a different problem.

The freedom we have today means that no one is restricted on ideological grounds and everyone is responsible for himself or herself. It is not an easy situation, but it is an opportunity for creative activity. And it is possible to be creative in organisational and agency work as well, and in programming. The FOK has plenty of potential for a successful future in its staff. Let us hope and trust that the springs of their ingenuity will not run dry, that they will continue to have unending ideas and inspiration, and that in the tough competition with the other Prague ensembles the orchestra will maintain its strong and still irreplaceable position. Looking back on what the FOK has done over seventy years for Czech music, in Prague, in the Republic and abroad – often in very difficult circumstances – we are full of admiration and gratitude.

With permission of magazine Harmonie
Photos: FOK archive

Jiří Bělohlávek with the Orchestra

czech music:
a life-long love story

HARRY HALBREICH

9th February born in Berlin. A Belgian musicologist, first a disciple of Arthur Honegger (1952–1953), then of Olivier Messaien at the Paris Conservatory (1955-58). Also worked as professor of musical analysis at the Royal Conservatory of Mons in Belgium between 1970–1976. Harry Halbreich has always been very creative in the field of radio broadcasting, recently working for Radio Suisse Romande. He is also Co-founder of and a main contributor of Belgian music periodical Crescendo. As an author of a large variety of papers, Harry Halbreich regularly presents his findings at international musicological conferences. He also teaches young composers.
Among Harry Halbreich's main interests belong Czech, English, Spanish, Finnish music and music of the 20th century.

Publications
Bohuslav Martinů. Werkverzeichnis, Dokumentation un Biographie (Atlantis, Zürich 1968)
Olivier Messaien (Fayard 1980, to be re-released in 2005)
Arthur Honegger. Biographie, Werkanalysen, Systematisches Werkverzeichnis (Fayard 1992, Champion-Slatkine 1994)
some works on Claude Debussy and Edgar VarŹse

Harry Halbreich contributed musical analysis to programme prospects of Fayard publishers (from Claudio Monteverdi to Iannis Xenakis). He also contributed opera analysis for L'Avant Scéne Opéra in Paris (beside others Bohuslav Martinů's Juliette or Janáček's From the Dead House)

With permission of Bohuslav Martinů Foundation

My relationship with Czech Music is a life long love story. It goes back to my childhood, many years before I first visited the country and the people from which it was born.
The music had prepared me for that visit and for an understanding of the Czech soul and people, which in turn deepened my knowledge of the music.
As a child, I had of course become acquainted with the popular masterpieces of Smetana and Dvořák. Then came a big shock. As a 17-year-old high school student, back in 1948, I attend a concert at the Brussels Palais des Beaux-Arts, conducted by the freshly exiled Rafael Kubelík, which began with Bohuslav Martinůęs Double Concerto. That powerful masterpiece completely overwhelmed me. The concert, during which Rudolf Firkušný played Brahms's d-minor Concerto, most likely ended with Roussel's Third Symphony, was another discovery and another shock. I have retained a deep affinity for the music of Roussel, which is almost forgotten today in France and Belgium, and is actually more frequently performed in Prague than in Paris… One year later, Kubelík was back in Brussel, this time with Martinů's Fourth Symphony, which to this day remains my favorite of the Six. In fact, I proudly own the original manuscript of the fourth symphony, given to me as a present from Charlotte Martinů to thank me for my work on her husband – but more about this later. At the time I was able to purchase the first 78 R. M. P. records (Ultraphon) of the Symphony, performed by Czech Philharmonic under Kubelik (a wonderful performance due for re-issue on CD in 2004), but my best friend, also a great admirer of Martinů, broke one of the brittle Shelloc disks accidentaly and I was unable to replace it. So the forth kept missing in my LP library until the wonderful performance under my friend Martin Turnovský came out in the mid-sixties. Except for a few standard pieces, Czech music was rarely played in France or in Belgium at the time, so I mainly relied upon Supraphon LPs to increase my knowledge, which soon grew to include the old masters and the few contemporary composers that Communist censorship allowed. In 1958 I completed my studies at the Paris Conservatoire with Olivier Messiaen as my most important teacher there. I chose pre-classical Czech-Symphonies as a graduation in music history, a difficult piece of work for lack of material (I didn't, and to my shame I still don't know Czech), except some very biased writing in German about the Manheim school, whole Czech roots were totally underrated. In autumn of the same year, I finally laid the first visit of my (at present) twenty-five visits to Prague. Since I could not afford the expenses of a tourist visit, and since political circumstances made travelling difficult, I sought and found employment with the French agents for Supraphon and thus was able to visit Prague twice a year as a guest of Artia. Martinů, of course, was my primary concern. I owned the first book by Miloš Šafránek published in the late forties, so he was the first person I tried to meet. The ban on Martinů performances in his home country had just been recently lifted, but the large works were still little played, allegedly for a lack of hard currency to pay for the rental fees of works published abroad. But when I was officially introduced by Artia to Václav Dobiáš, the "Czech Khrenikov" (although much more talented than Khrenikov himself) I asked him why the greatest living Czech composer and the greatest world-wide living symphonist was not performed in his own country. Dobiáš lifted his finger (about "the greatest symphonist") and exclaimed "Shostakovich", upon which I replied "Mr. Dobiáš, are you Czech or Russian?" Then followed a painful silence… But back to Šafránek. As soon as I mentioned my intention to write a book on Martinů, his friendly face froze and I soon realized that he considered Martinů as his private property. Martinů was still alive at the time, in fact, his fatal illness begun during that period, but when I asked Šafránek about him, he strongly dissuaded me from paying him a visit – depicting him as a shy and unsocial person. When I first met Charlotte after his death, she deeply regretted I hadn't come to see him then, and said he would have been so happy to meet me… I read about Martinů's death in a newspaper, after just coming down from my yearly mountains climbing in Switzerland, and still under shock, sought up contact with Charlotte. Our first meeting took place in late–1959 in Basle, where I also met Paul Sacher for the first time. My project about writing a book was met with Charlotte and Sacher's enthusiastic support and I also received the financial help I needed. I soon realised that my visits to Prague within my activities with Artia would not be sufficient, since I would need to stay also in Polička and Brno. I started my research work in the

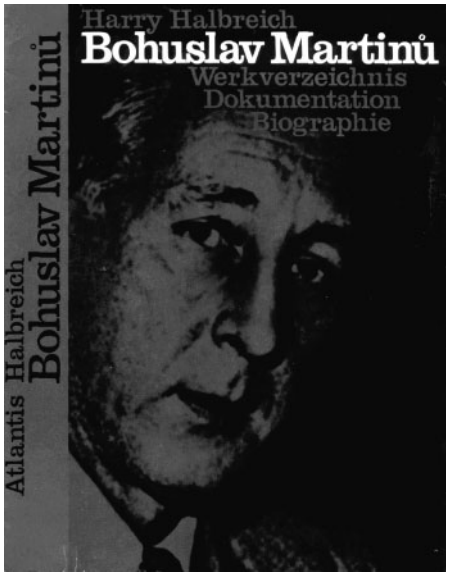
autumn of 1961 and I remember staying in Polička most of January 1962, experiencing the coldest temperature I ever lived through, -34 degrees. So I at once understood what the rough Vysočina ment! My major handicap was my lack of knowledge in Czech language, but I got help and support from many Martinů friends and above all from Zdenka Podhajská, one of Charlotte's close friends, who introduced me to many of manuscript owners, including some of Martinů still surviving youthful loves. On the other, I had clear advantages over Czech scholars by being able to travel freely through all Western Countries. By 1965 my research work was provisionally completed and the actual writing of the book (in German, according to Paul Sacher's commission and wish to hope it published by Atlantis in Zurich) was completed early in 1968. A few months later, I had the privilege to stay in Prague through the whole of Dubček's short-lived "Prague Spring". The riot in Paris even preventing me from returning back there, and the tragic events of August 1968 again happened during my yearly Alpine holidays, this time in Dolomites. I shed bitter tears and only went back to Prague in January 1969 (I remember the celebrated victory of the Czech ice-hockey team over the Soviet team). But during the protracted sinister winter of "normalisation", the only way to visit Martinů Symposium in Prague in 1981, at which I made it clear (to the audience's applause) that my presence amongst true Martinů friends and lovers did not mean my approval of the political circumstances. Then freedom arrived at last and I was present in the spring of 1990 during the first free elections, and since then I have been a regular visitor and eventually starting work on a second, revised and enlarged edition of any my book, with the support and friendship of the Bohuslav Martinů Foundation and Institute directed by my dear friend Aleš Březina. I completed my work one day before writing this article, and the book should be out in a few month.

Three days ago, I went through a shattering experience by seeing a reconstruction of Alfréd Radok's admirable realisation of Otevírání studánek for Laterna Magika. Again, I was moved to tears, so I suppose part of my heart must be Czech, although I have no Czech blood (but I had a Czech aunt and cousin).

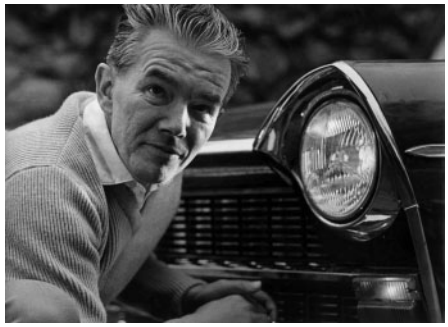
This long excursion into my Martinů endeavours has led my away (or has it really) from my main subject, my relation to Czech music. And here I think a kind of chronological survey should be in order.

When I started to study Czech history, I was immediately fascinated by a nation which boasted the first university (before Germany!) and simultaneously the first polyphonic music in Central Europe, stimulated by the presence of Guillaume de Machaut in Prague. I deeply admire the home country of Jan Hus, of King Jiří z Poděbrad, who had a vision of what would one day become the United Nations, the whole purpose (also failed) of which would have been to solve conflict through negotiation of that towering visionary genius Comenius, condemned to exile after the exemplary coexistence of religious beliefs, at the time unique in Europe, had been shattered, just as so many Czech had to go into exile after the advanced democracy of Masaryk's First Republic had been shattered, first by Hitler and then by Stalin. Thus some of the greatest creative geniuses of Czech music also had to search for living conditions outside their native land, even though the steady presence of modest Kantors maintained a high level of musical education in the smallest villages at a time when Prague was dominated by German or Germanized (musically also Italianized) aristocracy. In the mid 1960's, I had the shock of another major discovery, the music of Jan Dismas Zelenka, which I at once singled out from the host of "petit maitres." I still rate him as the greatest Czech-born musical genius before the era of Smetana and Dvořák, and amongst the contemporaries of Johann Sebastian Bach, whose music sometimes equals his own: I know only two – not Han-

Harry Halbreich



Bohuslav Martinů



Jan Novák

Stage Design for Martinů's Julietta by František Muzika (right)

del, not Vivaldi, but Rameau… and Zelenka. I have a project (for 2004 or more likely 2005) to write a book on Zelenka, not an extended musicological study project, there are a number of such university – level studies in Czech, German or English, but a practical book for the average music lover, which I shall write in French, and which I hope shall also be translated in Czech, in which no such practical book exists to this day. Of course, I also know and love other great figures of older Czech music, from Harant z Polžic and Michna z Otradovic to Vejvanovský and Černohorský.

Pre-classicism and high-classicism have produced and impressive amount of great, sometimes really excellent Czech composers, most of whom had to live abroad. The best symphonies by Rösler-Rosetti, Vaňhal or Leopold Koželuh are sometimes almost the level of Haydn's greatest, and I cannot be expected to cite all the other worthwhile names within this all-too-short survey. Nearer to us in time we have the really excellent Kramář, not only his concerts or wind band pieces, but some remarkable large symphonies, sometimes close to the quality of Beethoven's first two. Then come three major figures. Amongst my first discoveries back in the 1950's, there were the late large scale Sonatas by Jan Ladislav Dusík (especially Les Adieux op. 44, Elegie harmonique op. 61, Le retour à Paris op. 64/70 and the ultimate Invocation op. 77). The finest of their day just after Beethoven, but looking forward even to Chopin. Then the wonderful (and alas only) symphony by Voříšek, which I immediately rated close to Schubert and which has remained a favorite of mine to this day. I also love the great violin sonata, which makes me think of Beethoven's Kreutzer, especially its recitative introduction and its fiery Finale, and of course, the wonderful piano music, the dramatic and concise Sonata and the Impromptus, so close to Schubert. If Voříšek had lived longer, he would have become one of the nineteenth century's giants. Third in my list is Antonín Rejcha, his amazingly bold and experimental piano fugues and l'Art de Varies, of course his many Wind Quintets, but also his outstanding piano trios and his great choral works, including his powerful Te Deum. Conway to the "nation classics" I love Smetana, of course, his unique blending of Mozartean elegance, wit and concisism and of Berliozian and Lisztian boldness. I think his late Polkas and Czech Dances are equal of Chopin's Polonaises and Mazurkas. I love all his operas, and in Libuše I appreciate a broad-minded and peace-loving counterpart to Wagnerian "Helden" cult. Libuše doesn't marry a pseudo-heroic warmonger, but a peaceful peasant, a solid husbandman whose purpose is not to submit the world to any "Gross Böhmen" imperialism. And Smetana's ultimate Second quartet is a visionary work looking far into the next century, in my opinion the greatest Czech quartet with Janáček's Second and Martinů's Fifth.

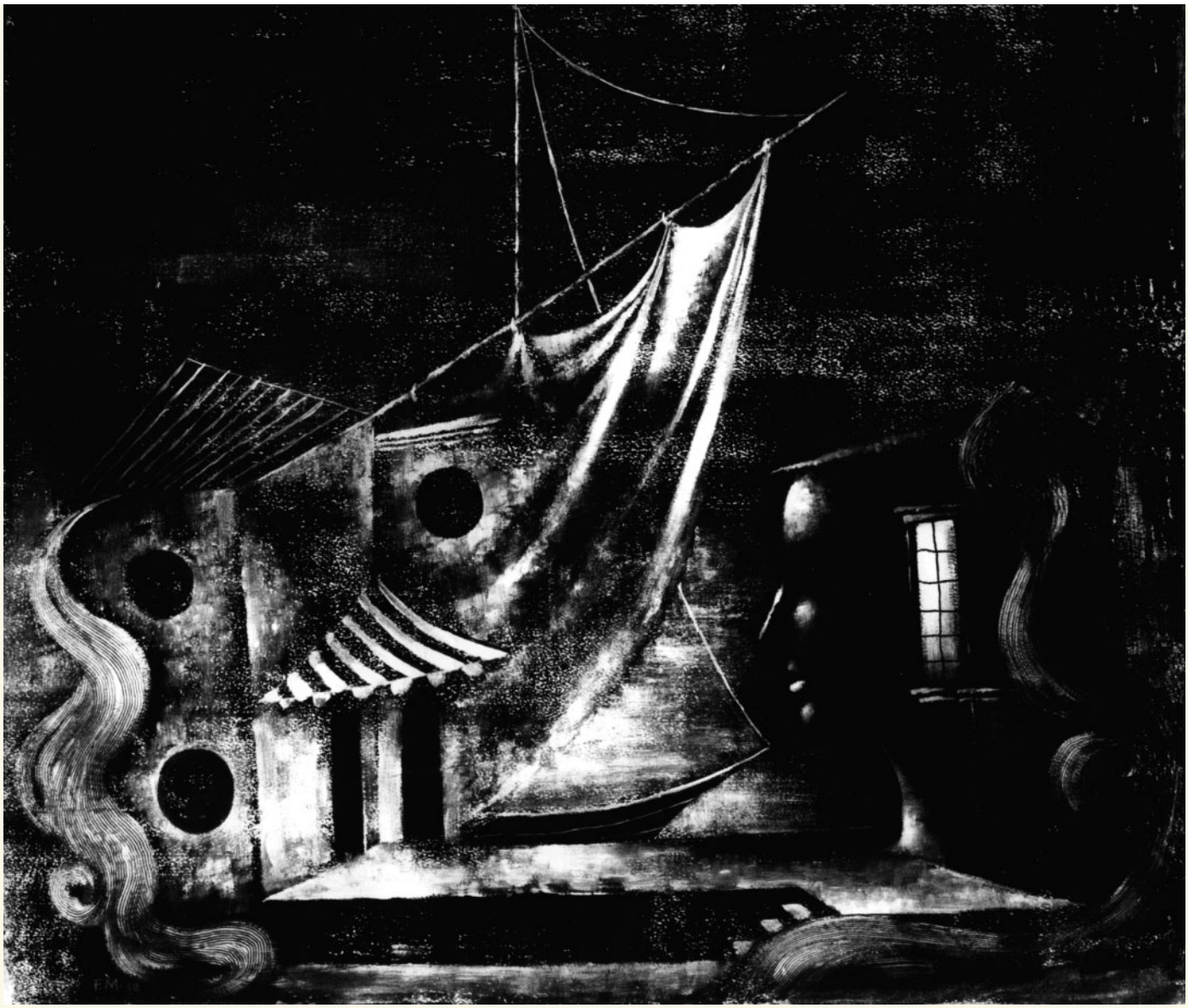
Dvořák is another of my favorite composer anywhere. Among the symphonies I love, most belong the sixth and the eight. As a program adviser at the Brussels Philharmonic Society, I introduced a lot of Dvořák hardly ever performed there, including Scherzo capriccio, Symphonic variations, the cycle of three Overtures, and the complete cycle (in the same season) of the four wonderful late Erben tone poems, incidentally, I lost my pocket score of Holoubek in a tram, and I am unable to find it in any music shop – I would be so happy if some reader could find me a copy, even a second hand). Almost the Dvořák's works still unperformed in Brussels, I plan the early third symphony (Eb), and the d-minor string quartet (op. 34), but I love all of Dvořák's immense production. Amongst his operas – Rusalka of course, but Čert a Káča and Jakobín are seconds, and I rate the Requiem even higher than Stabat Mater. The international rating of Dvořák brings me to a moot point: German or German-oriented musicology is always imbrued with a truly imperialistic superiority complex. These Zelenka's scores are being published in Germany in a series called "Deutsche Musik aus dem Orten", this being applied to a pure Czech born in an old family of kantors from Lounice pod Blaníkem, in the heart of Bohemia! As to Dvořák, he is rated as a pleasant, folk-like peripheral figure (Randfigur). What about re-writing a history of music, in which Dvořák would appear as a central figure of international significance…and Brahms as an interesting local composer from Northern Germany? And are the Operas of Weber or Wagner not "folkloristic" German like Smetana's Dvořák's are "folkloristic" Czech? In fact, both are universal, and Germany is not the only center of the world!

Not to Dvořák, we have Fibich, for me a minor composer (although his Šárka is a great work), and Foerster, whom I find rather boring. Vítězslav Novák, some whose pieces I quite like, such as the Balladic two Pan, The Big Storm, Cantata. Josef Suk, a far greater composer as far as I am concerned. Zrání is a towering masterpiece that should be played in the whole world, the second quartet a great but sadly underrated work. I love the piano cycles, and there is the unfortunately half forgotten Ostrčil, whose Suite in c-minor, a smaller counterpart of Mahler's Seventh Symphony and above all the highly dramatic Křížová cesta belongs to the treasures of Czech music.

This brings me to Janáček, whose music I love and admire as much as Martinů's, but about whom I don't feel the need to write a book, since it has been done many times in many languages (though some years ago I did write an extended analysis of Z mrtvého domu for the French series "L'avant Scène Opéra". In my opinion, Janáček is a more modern and advanced composer than Bartók, who was a whole generation younger. Bartók's reputation as an avant-gardist stems from a time where the rate of dissonance determined the degree of modernity. Since music has begun to include micro-intervals and since the minor second is no more the smallest interval available, the whole concept of dissonance has been revised intervals from Bartók's music. His forms and structures, his musical fabric, appear far more traditional than Janáček, whose freedom in this aspect is amazing, as amazing as Debussy's. Moreover, Janáček moves me far more than Bartók, whose music I always found angry, aggressive and bitter. Janáček's operas are for me amongst

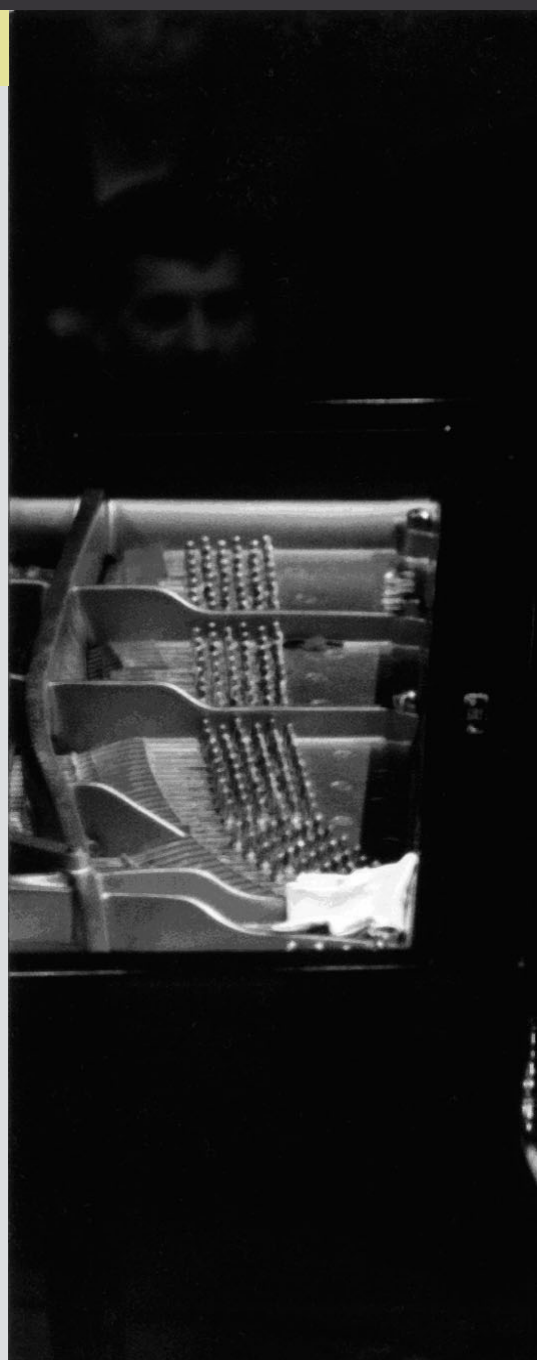
the greater ever written, and I really cannot choose between Káťa Kabanová, The Cunning Little Vixen, and Z mrtvého domu, the boldest of all, with orchestral bits like the end of Act I sounds like VarŹse. But the place that always moves me to tears is the final scene of the Bystrouška. I rate his quartets (what a pitty he wrote only two) higher than Bartók's and, with the exception of Martinů's Fifth and Berg's Lyrics Suit, higher than any written in the twentieth century. And of course I especially enthuse for the Glagolic Mass, for the Diary of the one Who Disappeared, for Taras Bulba, for the Sinfonietta, for the three great Bezruč choruses. During my twenty-five years as a teacher of musical analysis at the Conservatory in Mons (Belgium), I was the only teacher in the country to analyze Janáček every year. But of course, it is of paramount importance that this music should be performed as he wrote it, and the authentic critical edition, still in the making, appears far too slowly, so I had to analyze some places in the Mass and in From the House of the Dead by ear! Martinů's my life-long love, I shall add little more except to say that he is one of the "giants" of Czech music and to the celebrated Smetana, Dvořák and Janáček I would add Martinů without hesitation. Why is he so dear to me? Because while being Czech to the core, he also embodies the ideal synthetics of Czech and French culture, as exemplified in Juliette, one of the very few operas I would take to my "desert island". Because he is always positive, never aggressive or depressive, but full of joy and vitality. Because he treated music not as a frozen architecture, but as a tonal biology. My very highest choices, apart from Juliette, would still be my first discoveries, the Double Concerto and the Fourth Symphony, to which I would join the First and the Third, the Parables, Toccata e due canzoni, the Fifth String Quartet, the Second Piano Quartet, the Third Violin Sonata and Gilgamesh. Since Martinů, Czech music has produced no composer of comparable greatness, although during even the communist years there have been some excellent ones. I would cite Pavel Bořkovec, Jaroslav Řídky for his Seventh Symphony, Jaroslav Doubrava for his Violin sonata, Klement Slavický for his piano and chamber works. Also Otmar Mácha, whose Noc a naděje I consider a masterpiece, Marek Kopelent, Ilja Hurnik (I am fond of many of his pieces, especially of his Concerto for oboe, piano and strings), Petr Eben for his organ music and his sacred compositions, Josef Berg for his strikingly personal Nonet, and especially my dear late friend Jan Novak, Martinů's beloved disciple, whose big Cantata Dido is a shattering and great work. Jan Novák with whom I used to speak Latin in his house outside Brno and whom I saw again in Riva del Garda, Italy, after his emigration… I am sure I forgot to mention other names. Whereas I really cannot warm up to the current trends of minimalism or neo-tonality which has submerged this country like most others, my greatest hope today lies with an outstanding new talent who is just going to be thirty: Kryštof Mařatka, who has followed Martinů's footsteps by settling down in Paris and marrying a French girl. And now, what next…?

Prague, December II., 2003



ivo kahánek:

JINDŘICH BAJGAR



This year saw the 56th year of the Prague Spring International Music Competition. It is an event that makes the Prague Spring Festival not "just" a star-studded event, but also a welcome chance for young musicians at the start of their careers to display their talents, and if they get to the final to play with a symphony orchestra. This year it was the turn of young trombonists and young pianists. The contests in the different instruments do not take place at regular intervals and the piano competition was being held for only the ninth time (the preceding years were 1948, 51, 57, 63, 73, 88, 93, and 98). Among Czech competitors, in the past Zdeněk Hnát (1957), and Martin Kasík (1998) won first prize, and this year it was another Czech, Ivo Kahánek, who – like his older colleague six years ago – carried off the laurels with ease despite the strong international competition (46 pianists from 13 states). The second prize went to the Korean Dong Min Lim, and the third place was shared by the Japanese Takashi Jamamoto and the Slovak Matej Arendárik. Let us hope that as in the past, so for this years winners success in this prestigious competition will be a springboard for a successful international career.

In the last decade one undoubted benefit of the PS International Competition has been its role in the systematic propagation of Czech contemporary music. New pieces by Czech composers have become a regular part of the obligatory competition repertoire. This year the competition committee for piano turned to Petr Eben (just celebrating a jubilee 75 years), who composed a liturgical piece for the piano "Universi". New pieces are premiered in the second round, and so they are obligatory for semi-finalists. The notes were promptly printed by Editio Bärenreiter Praha, and so candidates received them with their notifications of acceptance into the competition and had two months to practice them. Naturally they were also supplied to the members of the international jury, which was this time made up of the following: Ivan Klánský – Chairman (Czech Republic), Marian Lapšanský (Slovakia), Piotr Paleczny (Poland), Daniel Pollack (USA), Peter Rösel (Germany), Peter Toperczer (Czech Republic), Jan Wijn (Netherlands).

The pianist Ivo Kahánek, born on the 23rd of May 1979 in Frýdek-Místek, had already made a name for himself in a series of national and international competitions. He obtained the foundations of a musical education at the local music school (1983 – 1993; Květa Rázlová), but the decisive turning-point came with his studies under Prof. Marta Toaderová at the Janáček Conservatory in Ostrava (1993 – 1999). Later he was admitted to the Prague Music Faculty of the Academy of Performing arts to the class of Prof. Ivan Klánský (1999 – 2005). His first major success was the 2nd Prize in the 1994 Concertino Praga International Competition for Young Musicians, which was followed by 3rd Prize in the Piano Competition of the Bohuslav Martinů Foundation in Prague (1996), victory in the 4th year of the Frederic Chopin International Piano Competition in Mariánské Lázně (1997), a special prize at the 46th year of the Marie Canals International Music Competition in Barcelona (2000), 1st Prize in the G. Mahler

“i tend to be the universal type of pianist”

International Piano Competition in Jihlava (2001), and 1st Prize in the Venedome Prize Middle Europe in Vienna (2003). He has already given concerts in many European cultural centres and music festivals (Prague, Paris, Stockholm, Warsaw, Zurich, Cologne, Santander etc.)
Victory in the PS Competion has brought Ivo Kahánek the right to honorary appearances with Czech orchestras (The Karlovy Vary Symphony Orchestra, the West Bohemian Mariánské Lázně Symphony Orchestra, the North Bohemian Teplice Orchestra, the Bohuslav Martinů Philharmonic in Zlín) and also honorary appearance at the International Meeting of Young Musicians Ticino Musica (Switzerland).

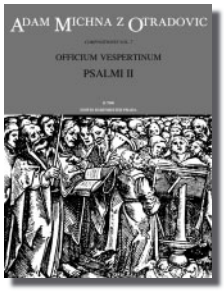
Do you think that the fact that the chairman of the jury was also your teacher may have had some effect on your placing?
It could have been a certain disadvantage that the winner of the last competition (1998), my colleague Martin Kasík, was also a pupil of Prof. Klánský. And so if I hadn't been so far ahead of the others on points, the 1st Prize might not have been awarded at all. Of course I would be lying if I said that it was more of a disadvantage than a plus to have my teacher on the jury. It must definitely be a good thing in the sense that the other jury members wouldn't be tempted to try and give you artificially few points. Because that person is there, you have a good chance of being judged as you truly deserve.

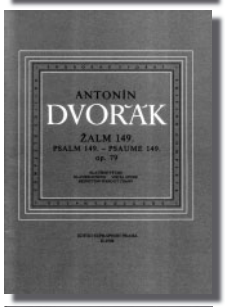
You are the second successive Czech pianist to defeat strong international competition so easily at the Prague Spring Competition. You will be following in your predecessor's footsteps and trying your luck at one of the most prestigious competitions – the Young Concert Artists Competition in New York. What does taking part in competitions and winning them mean for you?
Winning a competition in the higher international category, such as the Prague Spring Competition has been important for me because it opens doors onto the world, international agencies have started to be interested in me, especially those that help the young most talented musicians to "take off" in their careers. One of these is the "Young Concert Artists Competition" agency, for example, which also organises the important international competition every year. To be a winner at this competition then opens the way to leading American concert podiums. If a pianist does well there, it is generally quite easy for him or her to move over to other famous music agencies in the long term.

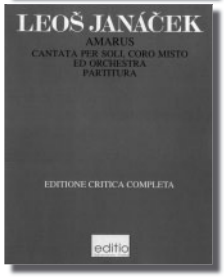
At the Music Faculty [HAMU] in Prague you have been studying with Prof. Ivan Klánský. What most motivates your studies with him?
While I was still studying at the Ostrava Conservatory I wanted to get into his class at the Prague Academy. I got my wish after he heard me play at the Chopin Piano Competition in Mariánské Lázně. Now I'm already in my sixth year of studies with him, since I extended my regular five-year piano studies so that I would be able to finish them at the same time as I finished my doctoral thesis, which will be on the piano music of the Jewish composers who lost their lives in Terezín during the 2nd World War. What I most appreciate with Prof. Klánský is his sensitive approach, his ability subtly to stimulate students to search for their own interpretation. You never hear him say anything like "it's just not done to play it like that!", he tolerates an individual approach, so long as the pianist isn't entirely "off-target", of course.

In play and appearance you resemble the romantic piano virtuoso, and one might say with only a small pinch of salt that on the podium you seem like a reincarnation of Ferencz Liszt himself. In the second round of this year's Prague Spring Competition you were particularly impressive in your performance of works by R. Schumann (Symphonic etudes, op. 13) and F. Chopin (Ballade in G Minor, op. 23). But even your Prokofiev (Sonata no. 3 in A Minor op. 28) was unusually effective, even if tackled in a more emotional way than is usual with this composer. Would your agree that you feel most at home in the romantic piano repertoire?
Romanticism appeals to me, but that doesn't mean I wouldn't enjoy playing good music from other period. The situation is more that a pianist at my age, just building

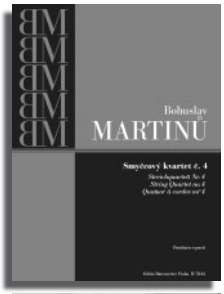
Music Publishing House EDITIO BÄRENREITER PRAHA
a branch of the prominent German Music Publisher Bärenreiter-Verlag Kassel

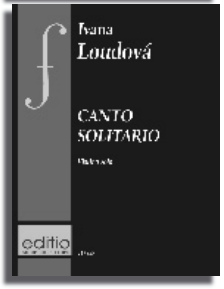






- **specializes in the publishing of musical material such as expert treatises, thematic catalogues and music by Czech authors in the following series and editions:**
  - **MUSICA ANTIQUA BOHEMICA** (Czech music of the 17th and 18th century)
  - **ADAM MICHNA Z OTRADOVIC COMPOSITIONES**
  - **CZECH ROMANTIC MUSIC** (Dvořák, Fibich, Smetana and others)
  - **CZECH AND SLOVAK MUSIC OF THE 20TH AND 21ST CENTURY** (Eben, Feld, Hanuš, Ilja Hurník, Lukáš Hurník, Janáček, Kalabis, Kaprálová, Kopelent, Loudová, Martinů, Jan Novák, Vítězslav Novák, Simon, Klement Slavický, Milan Slavický, Suchoň, Suk, Šesták, Teml and others)
  - **CRITICAL EDITIONS OF WORKS BY ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK, LEOŠ JANÁČEK AND MILOSLAV KABELÁČ**
  - **EDUCATIONAL LITERATURE**
  - **TRADITIONAL BOHEMIAN AND MORAVIAN MUSIC FOR SMALL WIND BAND, CONCERT BAND MUSIC**
- **imports titles by foreign publishers:**
  - **CLASSICAL MUSIC:** Alphonse Leduc, Bärenreiter-Verlag Kassel, Breitkopf & Härtel, Editio Musica Budapest, Edition Peters, Editions Henry Lemoine, Gérard Billaudot, G. Henle Verlag, Gustav Bosse Verlag, Hudobný fond Bratislava, Oxford University Press, Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, Ricordi, Universal Edition and others
  - **ROCK, POP, JAZZ:** Advance Music, Hal Leonard Corporation, International Music Publications, Warner Chappell Music and others
- **distributes titles from the production of other Czech publishers:** Edizione Festa Olomouc, H&H Vyšehradská, Montanex, Panton International Praha and others
- **provides rental of music by Czech and Slovak authors for concert performances and arranges loans of music and theatre material from foreign publishers:** Alkor-Edition Kassel, Bote & Bock, Breitkopf & Härtel, Casa Musicale Sonzogno, Chester Music, DSCH Publishers, Editions Henry Lemoine, Hans Sikorsi, Polskie Wydawnictwo Muzyczne, Ricordi and others





editio Bärenreiter Praha
Editio Bärenreiter Praha, spol. s r. o., Běchovická 26, CZ-100 00 PRAHA 10
Tel: (+420) 274 001 911, Fax: (+420) 274 001 927, E-mail: musicpbl@ebp.cz
www.sheetmusic.cz, www.editio-baerenreiter.com

a career, has to succeed in competitions, and what juries are looking for is above all how well the pianist copes with the historically tried and tested repertoire. It is in the great classical-romantic works that all a pianist's good and weak features are most evident. I'm sure that once I have got to grips with all the main pillars of the standard piano repertoire, I shall have a chance to devote myself to contemporary music as well. I think I tend to be the universal type of pianist, which is probably an advantage, because it offers more areas in which to be rated and in which to work.

Do you intend to take part in the famous Chopin Piano Competition in Warsaw next year?
That's a rather complicated question. On the one hand I would like to take part in the competition, if only for the sake of Chopin, whom I love. On the other hand there are a series of negative points. Various backstage interests play an important role, and there is a minimum entrance quota (just one pianist) that applies to the Czech Republic. If I wanted to go in for a competition like this, it would mean devoting almost the entire year exclusively to Chopin. That seems too much of a sacrifice to me, since at my age I want to develop further and in different directions. So instead of Warsaw I'm preparing for two other important competitions – for example in Santander in Spain –, which have a more diverse repertoire and in which I can make a virtue of my versatility. In the summer I quickly worked up the "Suite Espagnole" by I. Albéniz for my performance in Santander, where I was also delighted to play Vítězslav Novák's Clarinet Quintet in A Minor op. 12 with my foreign colleagues; it's a piece that is almost never played here and for the public and critics over there it was a welcome diversification of repertoire.

What is your attitude to Czech music? In the first round of the PS competition there were obligatory pieces by Smetana (a selection from Bohemian Dances) and Janáček (the cycles "Along an Overgrown Path" or "In the Mists"). You chose the nostalgic and virtuoso Smetana Polka in A Minor and the cycle "Along an Overgrown Path". Do you play any more modern Czech music as well?
In Czech music I particularly like playing Janáček; after all I come from Palkovice which is about 4 km as the crow flies from Hukvaldy, which is the Leoš Janáček's birthplace. But as yet I haven't had a chance to study his work in a more systematic way. I shall be playing Janáček's Sonata „1. X. 1905" at the beginning of October at the Beethovenfest International Festival in Bonn, and the inner drama of his music very much appeals to me. As far as more recent music is concerned I've been successful in competitions with Luboš Fišer's Eighth Piano Sonata, which is ravishing, dramatic music. Two years ago at the Young Podium Festival in Karlovy Vary there was a very good public response when I played Jaroslav Ježek's Piano Concerto, which is only rarely played, even though it remains modern-sounding music. Here there were certain problems with the orchestra, which was used to accompanying straight from the printed parts, but in this case the piece was far from a usual repertoire number and most of the players were seeing the parts for the first time. Among the Czech Jewish composers, I have been particularly impressed by Gideon Klein, whose Sonata I would like to record on a CD together with several other pieces by composers who perished during the Second World War in Terezín.

Dear readers,
we apologize for mistakes that were in last issue of Czech Music.
The author of article Rafael Kubelík – Homeland and World Art is Jindřich Bálek.
There were also missing text for photographs: p. 7 above – Kubelík with his first wife, Ludmila Bertlová; p. 7 middle – Rafael Kubelík with his father Jan Kubelík; p. 8 Kubelík at Prague Spring festival; p. 9 – Kubelík with Caludio Arrau; p. 11 – Kubelík and Pierre Fournier.

Matěj Kratochvíl

the levers, pistons and wheels of my blood

PETR FERENC

“Dáša Andrtová is the only musician who has managed to lift herself out of the ignominious category of Czech Folk music and into the music of the world”.
This comment by Oldřich Janota is the shortest of the many expressions of praise printed in the booklet accompanying Andrtová’s retrospective double-album, but at the same time the most telling.

While the common denominator of most Czech folk singers is an emphasis on the text and the consignment of the musical side to the role of accompaniment of a simple vocal line, Dagmar Andrtová-Voňková more than restores the balance with her compositional idiom and original guitar technique. This means that her songs can be enjoyed without a knowledge of Czech, like the music of African peoples, for example. I don’t know whether Oldřich Janota deliberately avoided the English expression “world music”, but I don’t think he had any real reason to do so.

Up to the mid-Eighties Dagmar Andrtová-Voňková was more or less known only to folk initiates. This was partly because of the state of culture under the hardline “normalising” regime, and the problematic status of the singer association Šafrán (Saffron), which was neither banned nor permitted. Although Voňková’s work did not involve the critical social comment characteristic of some of her colleagues (most notably Jaroslav Hutka and Vladimír Merta), from the point of the authorities she still moved in bad company. After her debut single Holoubek / Chlapci na tom horním konci [Dove / Lads on that Upper End] (1976) her recording career was for a long time at a standstill – with the emigration of the three Charter 77 signatories (J. Hutka, Vlastimil Třešňák, Jiří Pallas), the association disintegrated and the planned compilation album was scrapped.

On the other hand, the second reason for Voňková’s low profile is to be found in her character. She often escaped from Prague to the countryside (Krkonoše mountains, now she lives in Pyšely) and often nothing was heard of her for long periods. To this day she only has four LP albums to her name, the most recent seven years old. Like an inconspicuous fixed star, she comes out only now and again, and then vanishes again into her mysteriously ordinary corner of the universe.

PAGAN FESTIVAL

What then makes Voňková so extraordinary? At first sight it is her virtuoso and in Bohemia entirely unique style of guitar play (a certain likeness to the style of Stanley Jordan was something she heard about only retrospectively). If we try to describe it in terms of its external features, we might for example mention the way she plays two chords “against each other” on the fingerboard by employing the technique known as hammering, and her use of one or more bows (involving “body play” in which the bow is hung on the E string and the sound produced by rhythmic swinging of the hips) or the use of the distinctive colour of the electronic hall effect, dramatic changes of tempo and dynamics, the evocation of the heavy sound of bells or the scatter? of tiny percussions. This virtuosity cannot, however, be considered apart from the other elements of the songs – the voice and texts.
On Voňková’s voice and vocal technique, we need only perhaps say that it abounds in the same sureness, expressiveness and spectrum of moods as her guitar play – from bell-like fragile lines to dramatic whispers to deep anthemic full-throatedness.

The texts are inspired by folk culture, whether the archetypal potency of pagan rituals, the epic tragedy of bal-

lads or visions of a nature without people – the world of animals and the eternal cycles of fertile forces. Although she has a complete master of the folk-text style and has made it her own, we could never accuse her of plagiarism, since her literary idiom is as distinct and recognisable as her play.

I shall try to sum up. In the songs of Dagmar Andrtová-Voňková we feel the chilling contrast between the great universal themes (betrayal, death) and downbeat "Slavonic" pithiness, the playfulness of folk rhyming and the "smell of clay, decaying leaves and blood" that was a distinctive element for part of the Czech alternative scene and finds a counterpart at a similar level of intensity in the crowning album of the underground DG 307 Dar stínum [Gift to the Shadows] (1979 – first published as an LP by the exiled Šafrán in Sweden).

At the end of this section I should add that Dagmar Andrtová-Voňková has also written (especially in earlier years) a series of songs on topical themes (a memory of Šafrán Desatero noh [A Decalogue of Legs] and humorous songs (Kudlanka [Mantis]), but they do not exhibit her distinctive strengths

the levers, pistons and wheels of my blood

as author and performer. Nor shall we find many of them on the present Double CD Milí moji [My Loves] (Indies records), compiled by Voňková and Jaroslav Riedel. MILÍ MOJI [MY LOVES]

The aim of the double album Milí moji is to put the singer's first two albums (Dagmar Andrtová-Voňková – 1986 and Živá voda [Living Water] – 1988, both from Panton) on CD for the first time. With both collections listeners will also discover a variegated choice of bonuses in the form of singles and previously unreleased tracks. It is a worthy project, especially when we consider that these older albums show Voňková in her purest form. By contrast the CD Dagmar Andrtová (1996 Bonton) is made up largely of concert recordings while her most recent CD Voliéra [Aviary] (1997, Indies records), made with Radim Hladík sometimes suffers from the cliches of an old jazz-rocker's entrenched style.

If we compare these two first albums, the debut emerges as more traditional in character. In the texts and melodies we find more folk motifs, the guitar is not yet worked up with effects and resonated with a bow, and despite occasionally melancholy words the melody of the songs tends to the joyful and cheering, and the overall impression is more spirited. One particularly noteworthy track is Pohanský svátek [Pagan Festival], interlaced with stirring passages, about the ritual driving out of death in the Spring. Best of all is the monumental Chlapci na tom horním konci [Lads on that Upper End] – a passionate monologue of self-defence by the widow who betrayed the Slovak bandit Juraj Jánošík by scattering peas under his feat. The austere timeless song Skála [Rock] presages the next collection in its use of bow and in its text.

With the album Živá voda [Living Water] Voňková reached her creative peak in guitar technique and the ratio of folk inspiration and original sound, with the latter prevailing. We are immediately amazed by the very first, title track, in which Voňková has taken an eight-verse text about a river of blood from paraffin and added a monotonously picked accompaniment that changes into a violently cut off crescendo of noise, an interlude that almost tangibly evokes a thick, hot and organic element. The next track Břicho [Belly] is musically more conventional: the guitar has a more or less accompanying role and leaves the listener to concentrate on the long text, which is unparalleled elsewhere in her work. Here she contrasts the experience of giving birth, so unambiguous and inevitable, with the almost horrifyingly absurd and complicated work of civilisation and its bizarrely purchased requisites. It ends with the unforgettable line, "Life flowed out to me between my legs / For the first time, not between my hands". The second part of the album contains two long songs with short, folk-influenced texts and plenty of space for instrumental charms, as well as the "counterpart to Skála" – the lively Zpěv [Chant] – a reminder of the singer's idiom from the preceding album.

Today, when more and more second-rate collections are being published in the Czech Republic archival editions just because their authors were once on "the black list", Indies records should be congratulated for paying a debt that genuinely needed to be paid and filling a gap that was truly painful.

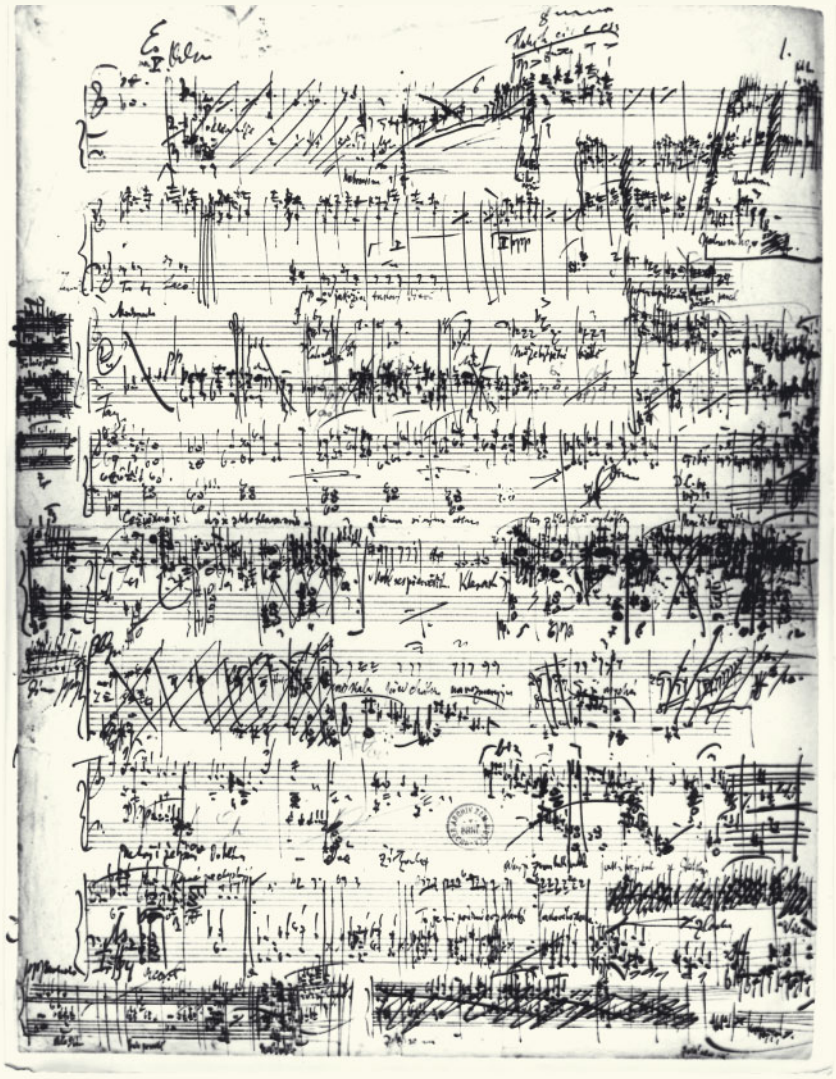
The Czech Music Fund

Music Materials Hire Library

A wide range of scores and parts of music by Czech composers, both contemporary authors and classical masters.

VISIT THE ELEC-TRONIC CATALOGUE ON THE WEB

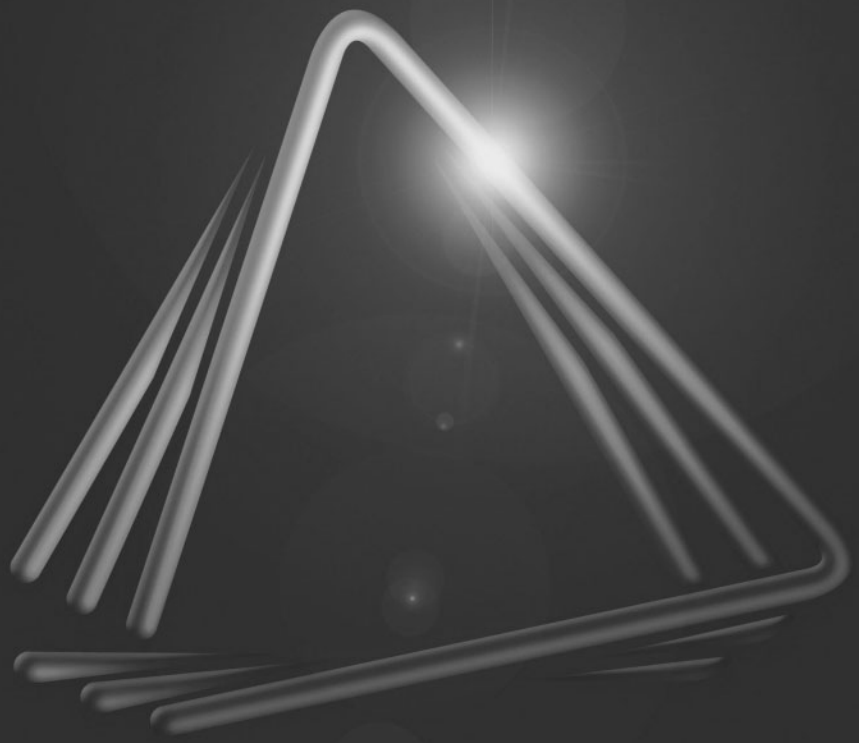
WWW.MUSICBASE.CZ

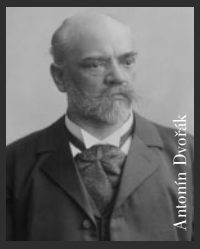


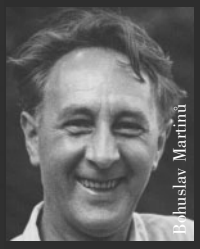
Contact address:

Radlická 99
150 00 Prague 5
Czech Republic

Tel.: +420-251 556 642 or 251 550 609
Fax: +420-251 553 982
e-mail: chf-phm@cbox.cz
internet: www.musicbase.cz







czech music | 2004

An integral part of European culture

A Czech Ministry of Culture project that aims to support important music anniversaries in 2004, with a special focus on presentation of the Czech Republic during the year of its accession to the European Union

Under the auspice of president of the Czech Republic, Mr. Václav Klaus, and Mrs. Viviane Reding, an European Commission member responsible for education and culture

Patrons:
Gabriela Beňačková – *soprano*
Petr Eben – *composer*
Sir Charles Mackerras – *conductor, GB*
Jiří Stivín – *flautist*
Josef Suk – *violinist*
Miloš Štědroň – *composer, musicologist*

INFORMATION CENTRE
Theatre Institute, Celetná 17, 110 00 Prague 1
Phone: + 420 224 809 195, Fax: + 420 224 811 452
Internet: http://www.czechmusic.org

In 2004, the Czech Republic celebrates more than sixty anniversaries of outstanding Czech composers, some renowned performers as well as several music organisations. Traditionally, the musical public immediately recognize that years ending in the numeral four are considered to be a "years of Czech music".

SELECTIVE VIEW OF ANNIVERSARIES

František Václav MÍČA (1694 - 1744)
Bedřich SMETANA (1824 – 1884)
Leoš JANÁČEK (1854 – 1928)
Antonín DVOŘÁK (1841-1904)
Bohuslav MARTINŮ (1890 - 1959)
Rafael KUBELÍK (1914 - 1996)
Milada ŠUBRTOVÁ (1924)
Eva OLMEROVÁ (1934 - 1993)
Prague Symphonic Orchestra FOK (1934)
Janáček Philharmonic Orchestra (1954)

Main partner:

ČESKÁ TELEVIZE

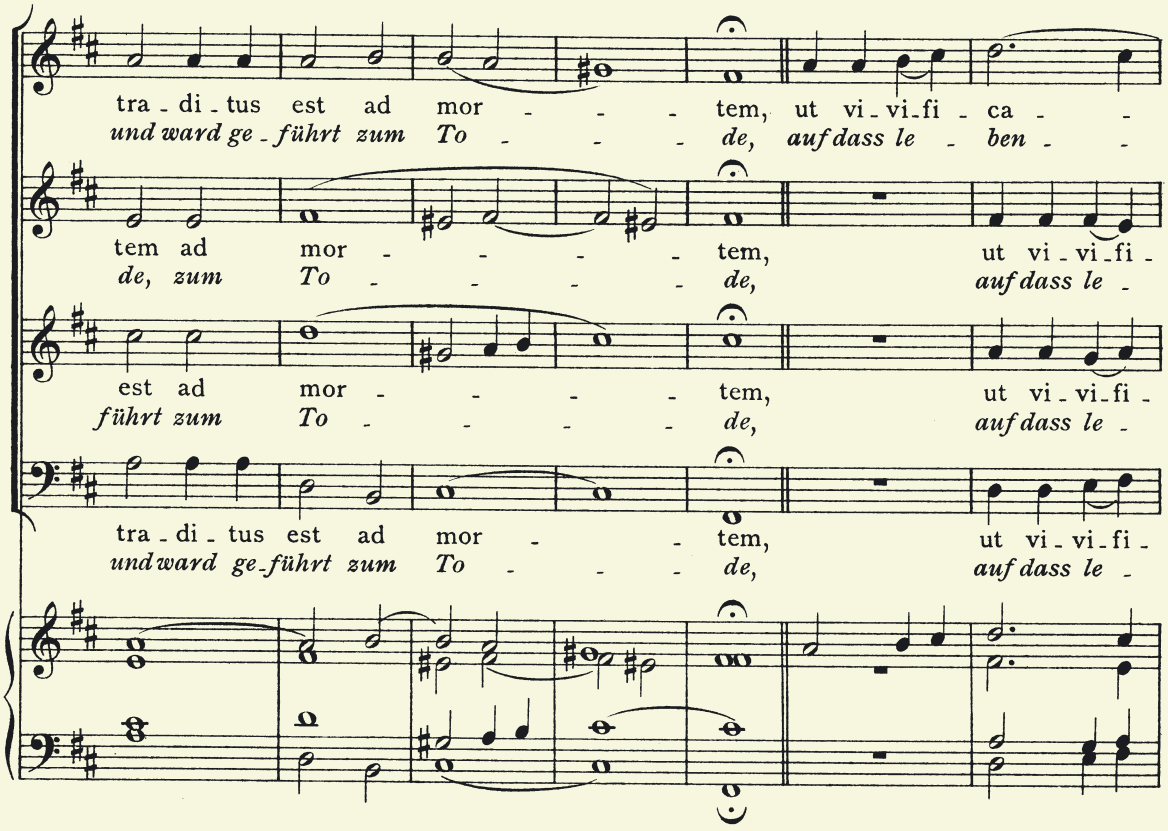
Medial partners:

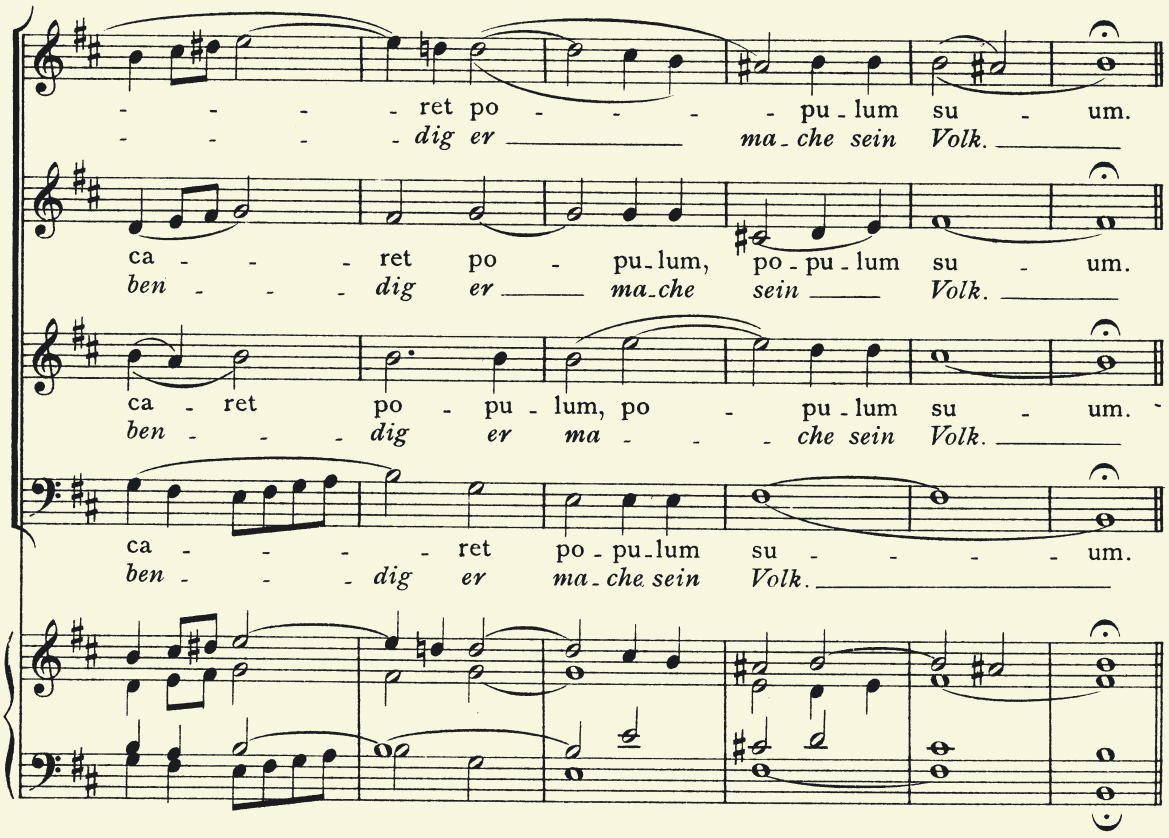
ČESKÝ ROZHLAS · MEZZO · Zlaté stránky MEDIATEL · UPC · THE PRAGUE POST · Prager Zeitung · RESPEKT · Xantypa · HARMONIE · un učitelské noviny · czech music · TIME IN · CzechTourism · PRAGUE EVENTS

Partners:

JCDecaux · české sny · místní kultura · ČESKÁ KULTURA · ČESKÁ CENTRA · sat+ · rencar · AVENIR

No. 5 from T ma•s Passiongesänge für Chor und Orgel; edit. (Breitkopf & Härtel)


tra - di - tus est ad mor - - - tem, ut vi - vi - fi - ca - -
und ward ge - führt zum To - - - de, auf dass le - ben - -
tem ad mor - - - - tem, ut vi - vi - fi -
de, zum To - - - - de, auf dass le -
est ad mor - - - - tem, ut vi - vi - fi -
führt zum To - - - - de, auf dass le -
tra - di - tus est ad mor - - tem, ut vi - vi - fi -
und ward ge - führt zum To - - - de, auf dass le -


- - - - ret po - - - - pu - lum su - um.
- - - - dig er ma - che sein Volk.
ca - - - ret po - pu - lum, po - pu - lum su - um.
ben - - - dig er ma - che sein Volk.
ca - ret po - pu - lum, po - pu - lum su - um.
ben - - - dig er ma - - - che sein Volk.
ca - - - - ret po - pu - lum su - - - - um.
ben - - - dig er ma - che sein Volk.

V. A. 1821.

empress was forced to take responsibility for declaring another war, in which the Prussians found a new ally in the emergent colonial and industrial great power England. The war later became famous as the Seven Years War, cost hundreds of thousands of lives and spread as far as the overseas colonies. During a devastating siege of Prague (1757) the Prussian artillery set Prague Castle on fire and the Cathedral was set ablaze including its admired Renaissance organ. If F. I. Tůma had won the competition for the post of organist there all those years before, he might have been the last to play on it.

Thanks to his residence in Vienna and his material good fortune the former cappelmeister now had time to compose. He was reportedly a sought-after teacher of composition and player on the gamba and theorba. It is said that he was also popular as an educated companion and "man of refined, select behaviour". In 1768 he took a step that was in no way exceptional for the time. He separated from (but did not divorce) his wife Maria Elizabeth and decided to take monastic vows.

At the age of 62 he thus became a member of the Premonstratensian House in Geras. In old Czech literature this little town, just a few kilometres from the South Moravian border, is always known as Jeruš, and the surrounding villages also have originally Slavonic names. This, however, was definitely not the main reason that drew Tůma to solitude in the forested landscape of Lower Austria. From its founding the Premonstratensian Order had devoted great attention to the worthy celebration of liturgy. The last works of the composer, rightly acclaimed for his extraordinary sensitivity for the sung word, probably ripened here, in daily contact with chant and the biblical texts. Tůma returned to Vienna from Geras only much later and as a patient with the then incurable condition of pneumonia. It was in Vienna that he died on the 30th of January 1774 in the hospital of the Brothers of Mercy.

F. I. Tůma was still a member of a generation dominated by the strictly logical but at the same time emotionally rich Late Baroque style and unwilling to relinquish it – even though to a certain extent he was ready to employ the expressive possibilities of the "gallant" style and early Classicism. He was known for keeping throughout his life to the tried and tested craft that he had learnt from his teacher J. J. Fux, and that he developed to the point of real mastery – both in terms of polyphonic technique and in refined treatment of the word. Nonetheless, in his music we find a signifiant range of style – from the strict canonical movements in the "Roman" or "Palestrinian" style with choral quotations, to complicated Baroque counterpoint enlivened by rhetorical figures, to "modern" sonatas and symphonies in the style of his younger contemporaries. Tůma's church compositions in particularly were demonstrably known to all the important pioneers of classicism, who would hardly have achieved what they did without a mastery of the art of counterpoint in the "Viennese tradition"…

It was indeed Tůma's compositions in strict vocally polyphonic style that remained in the consciousness of the musical public for longest, enduring in musical tradition up to the point when they were appreciated anew by the aesthetics of the 19th century. At that time Tůma acquired a good name among composers of early music primarily because he avoided schematism in his music and the influence of theatre music (in his day so important), the expressive vocabulary of which the 19th century already considered antiquated and decadent. As the choir master and musical journalist J. L. Zvonař (magazine Dalibor, 1859), commented as early as the mid-century Tůma *"is not a dry-as-dust master of counterpoint, i.e. a mere solver of as it were computational problems, nor is he that kind of effeminate namby-pamby so much in evidence from the time that opera music started to have an influence on church music."* At the same time he offers us evidence that in his. time *"Tůma's works are played the most in Prague and in Vienna. In Prague they can be heard in the churches at the Crusader Knights, in the Týn, and at St. Steven's, but most often in Lenten time."* The Cecilian reform of church music just underway at the time in any case drew on the same ideals of vocal polyphony that J. J. Fux has passed down to his pupils. Tůma's counterpoint works corresponded to the ideas of this movement with their formal perfection. J. L. Zvonař ends his commentary on Tůma's church music with the words: *"We simply wanted to draw some attention to them, because the time is coming when the question of which is church music and what is not will be decided".* He mentions F. I. Tůma among the composers whose works *"are still played in our churches, and have retained their value uninterrupted. They rightly deserve that they should still long continue to call believers to greater piety, and stimulate our young musicians to study."* Despite all the expressed sympathy, however, there was no large-scale publication of Tůma's works. At the beginning of the 20th century the music historian Otto Schmid tried to promote Tůma as "a German through-and-through" as parts of his efforts to gain recognition of the concept of an "Old Bohemian Organ School". Schmid's comments here reflect contemporary political issues rather than genuine history, but he was nonetheless responsible for the practical publication of a series of samples of Tůma's music. Since then a century has gone by. Most of Tůma's music, in many respects so exceptionally authentic and interesting, is still waiting for its moment to come. Several first editions and recordings promise that the return of this music to the light of day is desirable, and perhaps will bring us more than one pleasant surprise.

TOMÁŠ SLAVICKÝ