czech music quarterly

Jan Mikušek

The Bartered Bride

Jazz of the 50s and 60s

2| 2010

12| 10| Tue 7.30 pm| Rudolfinum - Dvořák Hall

Ferenc Liszt
Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2
Fryderik Chopin | Piano Concerto No. 2
Béla Bartók
Dance Suite for orchestra
Maurice Ravel | La Valse

PRAGUE RADIO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
Tomáš Netopil | conductor
Alexander Ghindin | piano

Tickets prices
690, 490, 290, 90 CZK

13| 10| Wed 7.30 pm| Rudolfinum - Dvořák Hall

Bedřich Smetana
Šárka, symphonic poem
Witold Lutoslawski | Cello concerto
Zygmunt Noskowski
Eye of the Sea, symphonic poem
Leoš Janáček
Taras Bulba, rhapsody for orchestra

POLISH RADIO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA WARSAW
Łukasz Borowicz | conductor
Jiří Bárta | violoncello

Tickets prices
690, 490, 290, 90 CZK

15| 10| Fri 7.30 pm| Bethlehem Chapel

Concert of Laureates of Concertino Praga International Music Competition 2010

Antonín Rejcha | Overture in D Major
Antonio Vivaldi | Guitar concerto
Johann Sebastian Bach
Violin concerto in A minorr
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Piano Concerto No. 23
Joseph Haydn | Symphony No. 45 „Farewell"

COLLEGIUM OF PRAGUE RADIO SYMPHONY PLAYERS
Alfonso Scarano | conductor
Veronika Hrdová | guitar
Julie Svěcená | violins
Anastasia Vorotnaya | piano

Tickets prices
290, 190, 90 CZK

16| 10| Sat 7.00 pm| Rudolfinum - Dvořák Hall

Wojciech Kilar | Orawa for string orchestra
Ignacy Jan Paderewski
Piano Concerto in A Minor
Antonín Dvořák | Symphony No. 8 "English"

NATIONAL POLISH RADI SYMPHONY OCHESTRA KATOWICE
Tadeusz Strugała | conductor
Ian Fountain | piano

Tickets prices
690, 490, 290, 90 CZK

PRAGUE PREMIERS
Contemporary Music Showcase

14| 10| Thu 7.30 pm| Martinů Hall

Pavel Zemek (Novák)
Concerto (Consonance) for Cello and Chamber Orchestra
Wojciech Widłak | Shortly „on Line"
Aleksander Nowak
Dark Haired Girl in a Black Sports Car
Raminta Šerkšnytė
Fairy Tale about the Little Prince
Erkki-Sven Tüür | Symphony No. 8

CZECH CHAMBER PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA PARDUBICE
Marko Ivanovič | conductor

Tickets prices
150, 100 CZK

15| 10| Fri 7.00 pm| Martinů Hall

Wojciech Kilar
Ricordanza for string orcherstra
Anatolius Šenderovas
Stretched My Hands - Mirage
Arvo Pärt | Symphony No. 4 „Los Angeles"

TALICH CHAMBER ORCHESTRA
Petr Vronský | conductor

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Dear Readers,

The current issue features rather more historically orientated articles than usual. I think this is quite good material for relaxed summer reading. Apart from a continuation of our serial on the history of Czech jazz, you will find an article about a somewhat curious phenomenon – the Schwarzenberg Guard, whose musicians, by the way, were among the first in the Czech Lands to play music that could be called jazz (for more detail see CMQ 1/2010). The last in our threesome of historical articles is a portrait of the half-forgotten German musicologist and composer Heinrich Rietsch, who worked for many years at the German University in Prague. Especially for opera fans I can recommend the lengthy review of a new book by Timothy Cheek that offers a detailed guide on how to sing Smetana's The Bartered Bride in the original Czech, but also a great deal of other valuable and interesting information on the opera itself. Our regular leading interview spot is devoted in this issue to a remarkably versatile Czech musician, Jan Mikušek.

Wishing you a beautiful summer

P. Bakla

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PHOTO: KAREL ŠUSTER 2x

by Matěj Kratochvíl

JAN MIKUŠEK
A VOICE FROM A DIFFERENT WORLD

The counter-tenor Jan Mikušek, born in Valašské Meziříčí, specialises in performance of Renaissance and Baroque music, whether as a member of the Affetto vocal quartet or with other early music ensembles, but the wider public has got to know him in recent years mainly for his roles in two contemporary operas: in Martin Smolka's *Nagano* (2004) he sang the role of the hockey goalie Dominik Hašek, and in Aleš Březina's *Zítra se bude… [Tomorrow it will be…]* (2008), based on the political show trial of Milada Horáková, the part of the communist judge. The third corner of Mikušek's triangle of musical interests is the cimbalom, on which he plays both folk and classical music.

I assume that you started playing the cimbalom in folk bands. What inspired you to study cimbalom at the conservatory? Was the folk pigeonhole just too narrow?

It's true that I came to cimbalom from piano at thirteen via folk music, but my idea was that one day I would play mainly big beat on the cimbalom. My brilliant family background in music-making, together with the approach of my teacher R. Děcká who systematically brought me to understand new music, gradually led me to decide to pursue a professional career in music. So after high school I went to the Conservatory in Brno, where I chose not just cimbalom but conducting, which I also went on to study at the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague. As far as the pigeon-holing is concerned – I think every cimbalom player tries to present the instrument as the best of all. And as the number of us cimbalom players is on the rise, the spectrum of musical use for the instrument is expanding too. So for example in Slovakia the jazz trio PaCoRa includes the outstanding cimbalom

player Marcel Commendant, in Brno Dalibor Štrunchas has his folk group Cimbálclassic, while I have played with the folk rock band Čechomor or the Marcipán group, and I record film music... so you see the cimbalom is appearing even in genres where you wouldn't have found it before.

And what about Affetto – how and when was it formed?

Affetto was originally formed in 2001 as a trio of two tenors – Vladimír Richter, Marek Olbrzymek – and the bass Aleš Procházka. I was only added later. After experiences with various other ensembles I longed for a group that would work on both the professional and the human level. This is always very important with small groups. In my view Affetto fulfils these conditions brilliantly, and so while occasionally we have a heated argument at rehearsals, our personal relations don't suffer. Apart from "serious", singing we are also united by an active interest in the non-classical scene. Marek plays keyboards in a band, Aleš sings Pink Floyd songs in orchestral arrangements, I've conducted the musicals *Hair, Rusalka*, and *Juno and Avos,* and I shouldn't forget the organist Martia Jakubiček, who composes and arranges for all kinds of groups.

The Affetto programme mixes contemporary music with medieval and Baroque music. What's your key for working out how to combine them? Is one of the elements dominant?

We try to make the programmes balanced. It's true that the early music probably has the edge, but recently we've been trying to find a new approach to programming. The basic idea is that every kind of music has a range of sources of inspirations. In Medieval music you can hear influences from the Orient, for example, and classical music always had an admixture of folkmusic, and then later jazz. At our concerts we are trying to interpret even early music from today's perspective and at the same time to exploit the sources of inspiration that were live at the time the music was born. And so where we feel it's appropriate we try to link up very different elements into one whole. But we want the music to remain itself, and so if it is a liturgical composition, then we think it should be presented in its liturgical form even if some unusual instruments are used in it. That doesn't just go for Oriental elements, but could be Czech folk music for example. It's well-known that the monks often wrote new texts for songs that they heard somewhere in the pub, and so songs with a folk melody acquired sacred texts. In this case we might then use the cimbalom for accompaniment instead of the organ.

Can these connections be identified on the basis of historical sources?

That's possible to one extent or another. Sometimes a particular link is obvious, but at other times it's more a question of our impression of a particular piece. It's not always based on research – sometimes it can just be a momentary idea, one that we may even abandon after a time.

How do pieces by contemporary composers fit into this concept? Do you look for points of contact between contemporary and early music?

We link up these two worlds quite regularly, because several of the composers who write for us consciously start from these old models. Miloš Štědroň likes to find inspiration in Renaissance and Baroque forms, and Martin Jakubiček, whose piece *Ave Maris Stela* is part of our repertoire, draws on Gregorian chant. Michal Košut's *Requiem* exploits motifs from the compositions of Johannes Ockeghem, which are then layered on top of each other in various ways so that on a first listening you wouldn't identify the model – the result sounds very colourful. You can hear echoes of historical forms in pieces by Tomáš Hanzlík and Vít Zouhar. We're planning another inter-genre encounter in collaboration with the Telemark Duo, which is Pavel Hrubý on bass clarinet and Tomáš Reindl on drums and percussion. This will be a meeting between Renaissance music and jazz. But apart from that, Affetto will doing a purely Baroque opera, *Landenbork* in Haná dialect.

Contemporary composers often choose singers with experience in early music to perform their vocal works, preferring them to opera singers. Why do you think that is?

People who specialise in early music are in my view much more open to new ways of performing. Research into early music is making huge strides and performers try to use the new information in practice, even if it means they have to drop some of their ingrained habits. This suits contemporary composers very well. And another thing. Performance of early music requires a non-vibrato voice, because this means that if I have a well-tuned chord, certain harmonics are produced, and the resulting sound is enhanced. But if I were in some way to create ripples in this

PHOTO: FRANTIŠEK ORTMANN

In Martin Smolka´s opera Nagano

interplay of parts with vibrato, the harmonics would not emerge and the chord would sound less colourful and pure. In contemporary music there is a similar need for an even voice to enable different kinds of harmony to function properly.

What is the place of the countertenor in vocal music? Must someone have an inborn disposition for it?

Countertenor is a discipline that has been artificially created today; it never functioned before in this form. It is based on the historical ideal of a beautiful, unconstrained voice, which was originally influenced by different conditions of space and instruments – the voice did not have to be so big and powerful. Regular tenor singers would simply use falsetto in the higher registers – something that happens in some choirs to day, for example – partly to save on number of singers, but also to ensure that the colour of the parts would blend more smoothly. I believe that even in Mozart's time it was still quite common for tenors to use falsetto. But if a tenor started to sing falsetto today, it would sound very peculiar and somehow wrong. Everybody has a falsetto and it is just a matter of whether or not he develops it. Of course, if someone decides to be a countertenor he will never be a tenor of modern type. As soon as I start to use falsetto in higher registers, I lose the range of the chest register. To use both registers, you need to train the "transitional register", the four, five notes where the two registers can be combined. It's a basic decision that anyone who has a voice has to take. If I decide that I enjoy this style of singing and feel that my falsetto has a good colour, I can be a countertenor.

Is it possible to study countertenor singing at our music schools?

It's not taught at all here. The only teacher here was Professor Blumová, and she died two years ago. She trained a few counter tenors and as far as I know she was the one teacher in the field in this country. Otherwise you have to abroad. Countertenor is starting to be a normal part of the range of courses offered at academies in the West.

I get the impression that composers have been starting to exploit countertenor more often in recent years. Is it a kind of link with the past for them, or is it possible to use the voice without neo-historical stereotypes?

Certain clichés associated with this form of singing do play a role to some extent. Many composers are finding inspiration on the old Baroque tradition when the roles of gods and generals used to be written for castrati. Their voices had a kind of strange glamour, as if from another world. Today the countertenor strikes listeners as peculiar and distinctive in a similar way and that is probably the reason. When I started to sing falsetto and decided to sing at an educational concert, the surprised children looked at each other and giggled over whether I was normal.

Could Dominik Hašek (a living legend of Czech hockey), whom you played in Martin Smolka's opera Nagano be seen as a kind of character from another world?

Yes, a lot of contemporary composers are trying to express some kind of "otherness" when they write a countertenor part. The same is true of the role I've been singing in recent years in Aleš Březina's opera *Zítra se bude... [Tomorrow it will be...]* about the trial of Milada Horáková. There I represent worldly power, I am the embodiment of evil – not personified in one particular character, but evil universalised. Miloš Orson Štědroň also exploits the feeling of otherness associated with the counter-tenor in his new production *Lamento*, where I take the role of Mother Teresa. In the spoken parts I use my normal voice but when I am appearing in the sanctified position of mother superior of a church order, I sing falsetto. This is how I distinguish between the two levels of the role.

In the opera Zítra se bude... you have a lot of scope for acting as well as singing. Although your character has no concrete name, clearly he represents the communist prosecution. Was it difficult to get into a role like this?

I only studied singing privately, and so I never had any drama training at school. During rehearsals for *Zítra se bude...* I tried to find inspiration in various historical

The Affetto ensemble

figures – Hitler, Gottwald.... people who manipulated others, and to identify what they had in common in the way they acted. The original materials from the trial of Milada Horáková include a seven-hour documentary that I watched, but I couldn't find out much about the gestures or expressions of the prosecutors from that because they weren't very visible. They were sitting to the side and the camera was shooting them from behind. On the other hand, the documentary clearly shows the theatricality and above all the impassioned grandiose quality and pathos of the whole trial.

Apart from your solo appearances and work with Affetto you perform with many different ensembles.

It's actually impossible to be in just one early music ensemble. Every piece presented in modern premiere has a different combination of musicians. Sometimes it needs a large choir, sometimes just a few singers. And so none of us appear only with one group and we are all working with several ones. Here it's a very small world, of course, but actually the pattern is the same internationally in the big wide world. I have a circle of four or five ensembles I work with.

Apart from singing you also play the cimbalom. Are these two fields equally important for you?

The balance changes at different periods. At the moment the cimbalom has been sidelined a little, but there are some new projects coming up. In the autumn for example I will be playing a piece written directly for me with the Berg Chamber Orchestra.

In classical music the cimbalom is associated partly with transcriptions of earlier works, and partly with the romantic stereotype of "folklore decoration". What is the position of the cimbalom in contemporary music?

There's enough material for cimbalom, but only from the 20th-century starting roughly with Igor Stravinsky. Literature from earlier periods does not exist, or at least where it does it is for the small type of cimbalom. This is why we use transcriptions. For example, Bach's Sonatas and partitas for solo violin sound wonderful on the cimbalom. Bach himself might even be surprised, because some things sound even better on cimbalom. The cimbalom has a pedal, and so it is possible to emphasise the harmonic context.
More and more is being written for cimbalom, and one reason is that the instrument is not yet at the end of its evolution. The range probably won't be increased but there are still some notes that can't be damped with the pedal, for example. And so new ways of damping, or methods of damping just selected notes and so on, are being invented. Development is continuing and the composers themselves can take part in it. Lukáš Matoušek for example wrote a piece in which he required two pedals (which the performer has to get designed and made), with each pedal dampening a different half of the cimbalom. Or again, different methods of contact with the strings are being found. Normally I play with sticks, but I can play pizzicato, with my nails, with a bow, or I can scrape along the strings, or put paper between them...
Once every two years an International Cimbalom Festival is held in Valašské Meziříčí. While I was at the conservatory, the International Cimbalom Congress

PHOTO: HANA SMEJKALOVÁ

With Soňa Červená in Tomorrow it will...

was founded. I and a few other people thought it was fine, but we felt it lacked the main thing, which was for people to play with each other or next to each other, and to present material and their approaches to performance. And so we organised a zero year from which the cimbalom festival then crystallised. Its main element today is an international competition for performers and composers. It gives composers a chance to get to know the instrument as well as plenty of grateful players.

As a cimbalom player do you play folk as well as art music?

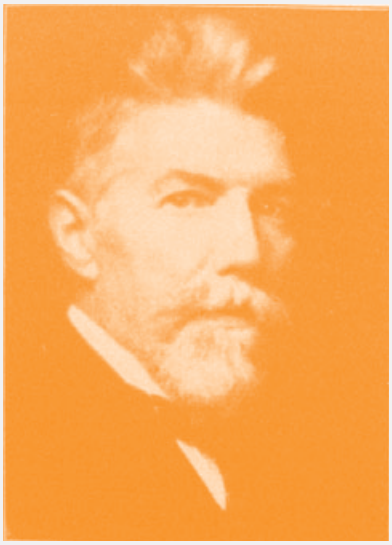
I have one stable ensemble but I don't play with it often, and apart from that I play in various ensembles in Prague on an occasional basis. I'm glad I manage to find time for it. It's a kind of hygiene. Folk music constantly keeps you alert because it involves improvisation. In my view every performer of classical music, whether early or contemporary, ought to play actively somewhere else, for example in a bar, because it makes completely different demands. In any case, one of the functions of music is also entertainment, and so it's a good thing when people can socialise with live music. There's not much of it about today. Earlier people played in every pub and on the street. Today if you want to play in the street in Prague you need a special license, which strikes me as entirely monstrous. After all there's nothing better than live music being played on the street. And it's also good for the humility of musicians, because on the street your ability to interest people really shows. After the revolution there was a Russian who used to play Bach sonatas and partitas absolutely brilliantly on Charles Bridge. It isn't easy to find anything like that today.

Jan Mikušek

was born in 1970 in Valašské Meziříčí. At the Conservatory in Brno he studied cimbalom and conducting, continuing at the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague. He has conducted the musicals Hair and Rusalka, and also arranged and conducted the rock opera Juno and Avos at the J. K. Tyl Theatre in Pilsen. Since 2000 he has been conductor of the chamber choir Vox Nymburgensis. He also specialises in performance of early music, primarily in the Capella Regia and Ritornello ensembles. With the Affetto ensemble he has been expanding his range into the field of contemporary music. He is a co-founder of the International Cimbalom Festival in Valašské Meziříčí and has premiered a series of new pieces for this instrument.

Viktor Velek

HEINRICH RIETSCH
KNOWN AND UNKNOWN – ON THE 150th ANNIVERSARY OF HIS BIRTH



The history and culture of the Bohemian Germans has in recent years become a fashionable theme for Czech scholars. In the 20th century it was a theme vulnerable to nationalist prejudices, which after 1948 rendered it almost taboo, but after 1989 challenge to those prejudices led to its rediscovery. It was accepted that the close co-existence of the two ethnic groups in a single state had often created shared values and that to consider them in isolation was nonsensical.


SUDETENDEUTSCHES MUSIKINSTITUT

The formulation "the music of Germans from the Bohemian Lands" in the Czechoslovak musical encyclopedia of 1997 testifies to the rectification of the approach to the theme. Nevertheless, despite its present popularity the theme retains a certain ambiguity of national and cultural context: it is Czech (Bohemian) in the territorial sense and German in the sense of its predominant orientation to development in the neighbouring German-speaking lands. The figure of the "traditionalist" Heinrich Rietsch is ideal as a basis for illuminating the musical culture of the Bohemian Germans at the turn of the 19th/20th centuries. He was an outstanding musicologist and teacher who despite his national German view on the world around him managed to attract Czech students to his lectures. At the same time he was an outstanding publicist, seeking to educate and enlighten, while his own work as a composer is less well-known. Although he was praised in his time as an expert, like many who after 1945 were labelled "Sudeten German" or Bohemian German he was marginalised and forgotten. Today, however, an exploration of his scholarly work is inspiring and valuable in many respects, and his German-national context is considered with historical detachment rather than aversion.

Heinrich Löwy Rietsch was born on the 22nd of September 1860 in Sokolov/Falkenau – a Western Bohemian town close to the border with Germany. Like the whole region the town was more German than Czech. In Falkenau Heinrich's father – Karl Leopold Löwy – was mayor for a time. Henrich, however, evidently out of fear of antisemitism, adopted the family name of his mother, who ensured he was taught to play piano and organ. From six years of age he played the violin, taking lessons from the archdeacon Michael Pelleter, the town chronicler. He himself reported that as a child he become aware of having perfect pitch. His continuing education led him about 30 kilometers from his native town to the larger town of Cheb/Eger. Here together with his elder brother Karel Friedrich he studied at the grammar school (gymnasium), completing his studies with distinction in 1878. During this time he played the organ at Sunday services for pupils in the school chapel, took singing lessons, wrote his first pieces and studied musical composition.

Given his birthplace we might have expected that he would be sent for further studies to one of the relatively close universities in Germany. But the choice fell on Vienna where he studied law from 1878 to 1883. While doing his law degree and subsequently in his first position as a lawyer in the Lower Austrian financial procurator's office (1883–1900) Rietsch worked hard to perfect his play on the piano, started to compose and studied philosophy and music at the university. This brought him into contact with important musicologists and musicians such as August Wilhelm Ambros (a native of Mýto near Rokycany), Guido Adler (a native of Ivančice), Eduard Hanslick (born in Prague), Franz Krenn, Eusebius Mandyczewski and Anton Bruckner. He soon managed to make a name for himself, for example for the first year of the magazine Vierteljahrsschrift für Musikwissenschaft (1885) he translated two French texts. At the same time, however, he managed to make enemies – the influential music historian and lexicographer Hugo Riemann paid him back for criticising his theories by relegating him to insignificance in his lexicon.

In 1895 Rietsch obtained his habilitation as a private docent of musicology at Vienna University. He became a regular professor at Vienna in 1898 succeeding Hanslick, and in the same year he married Josefina Marie Leopoldina Eberl, the daughter of an important printer. In his lectures he concentrated first on the theme of mensural music, and developed an interest in music publishing. In 1893 he became an active member of the society for the publication of the series Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Österreich. He edited volumes containing the music of the minesängers, Georg Muffat and Johann Joseph Fux.

It is unclear what led Rietsch to move from Vienna to Prague. In most cases it was the other way round, with Prague serving as a springboard for a career in the centre of the monarchy. Rietsch's move to Prague was certainly not a move up the ladder in a career that had been developing so promisingly in Vienna. In 1882 Charles University in Prague was divided into separate Czech and German universities as a result of nationalist disputes. Rietsch taught only at the German university, where in 1900 he replaced Guido Adler as external professor. Five years later Rietsch became a full professor. He set up the "Musikwissenschaftliches Institut" at the university and headed it until his death on the 12th of December 1927. The institute remained the centre of his professional life, with his periods as rector and faculty dean being merely episodes. On his initiative a library of reference works was set up at the Institute, and he educated a series of important musicologists such as the expert on the Bohemian Mozart cult Paul Nettl, the translator of Janáček's opera libretti Max Brod, Robert Maria Haas, Otto Chmel, Rudolf Quoika, Václav Štěpán, Theodor Veidl, Erich Steinhard, Ernst Rychnowsky and Anton Maria Michalitschke. Fragmentary reports of Rietsch as a teacher have survived from his students, for example in texts written for Rietch's birthday or in obituaries. His students included "deserters" and "visitors" from the ranks of the students at the Czech Prague University. Although Rietsch emphasised the music of the older masters, he was considered an expert even on the music of contemporaries – for example Arnold Schönberg, Igor Stravinsky, Anton Bruckner or Max Reger. He made substantial contributions to the methodology of research on folk song, and his interest in psychological-aesthetic questions was combined with a great fondness for arithmetic and statistics. The breadth of Rietsch's interests is suggested simply by the titles of the journals with which he collaborated, for example the Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum, Zeitschrift für deutsche Wortforschung, and the Zeitschrift des deutschen Sprachenvereins, Euphorion. Throughout his life he was committed to the value of codification of musical terminology and battled against what he considered pseudo-scientific views, as well as the way that entertainment music was pushing classical music to the sidelines.

Rietsch was quick to engage with the musical life of Prague Germans and soon became one of its leading figures. In 1911 after the death of the lawyer Alexander Baudiss he became president of the Prague "Deutscher Kammermusikverein". He also headed what was known as the Tonkunstabteilung at the "Gesellschaft zur Förderung deutsche Wissenschaft, Kunst und Literatur in Böhmen"[1], and was a member of the board of trustees of the „Prager deutsche Musikakademie" and the committee of the „Deutsche Musikgesellschaft"[2]. We encounter Rietsch as a influential participant in a project for collecting folksongs in Austria – his domain was German folksong in Bohemia.

[1] Since 1923 known as *Deutsche Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften und Künste für die Tschechoslowakische Repbulik*

[2] Deutsche Musikgesellschaft Prag – this name is a synonym for Deutsche Ortsgruppe Prag der Internationalen Musikgesellschaft, which was founded in 1919 to succeed the Internationale Musikgesellschaft based in Vienna.

[3] November 1927, p. 659.

[4] Leipzig, 1st edition 1899[1900], 2nd ed. 1906), originally a lecture entitled *Die Ars nova in der Musik seit 1830.*

In Prague a "Max Reger Society" was founded on his initiative.
Yet if we get the impression that all these activities took up Rietsch's lofe entirely, we would be mistaken. It is true that Rietsch never managed to make a name for himself as a composer, but in fact he never made much effort to sell himself. Clearly the reason was his strong sense of self-criticism. Moreover in the flood of music that surrounded him as a music theorist, it must certainly have been hard for him to find his own distinctive style and idiom. Another factor must have been the fact that Rietsch's pieces were not commercially attractive from the point of view of publishers. Generally, Rietsch as composer is as yet an unknown chapter. Casting some light on it is made difficult because of the fact that most of his pieces were never published. He wrote choral works, songs, pieces for keyboard instruments, for orchestra and for chamber ensembles (for example string quartets, a piano quintet). Under the impression of wartime events he wrote so-called "vaterländische Gebrauchsmusik", .i.e. music in a nationalist spirit. His work was sometimes viewed unsympathetically – one journal expressed disgust for a song from his collection Neun Lieder (op. 1, 1879-1885, pub. 1887): the choice of 5/4 time and the key of E flat minor struck the reviewer as excessively avant-garde! A complete list of Rietsch's works was printed in the monthly Hochschulwissen in 1927.[3]

The Clementinum, former seat of the Prague University

He showed practically no academic interest in purely Czech music. One exception can be found in his book Die Tonkunst in der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts: where the examples include the music of Antonín Dvořák.[4] Rietsch tried first to define the specific contribution of individual composers and from this to derive a history of the development of modern music, and he viewed musical technique as the medium of the artistic idea. His approach was similar in his book Die deutsche Liedweise. Ein Stück positiver Ästhetik der Tonkunst (Vienna 1904): using examples from the Middle Ages to his own day Rietsch tried to trace universal rules for the composition of songs. This is slightly reminiscent of the efforts of the current icon of pop music Moby, who has scanned hundreds of hits with the aim of discovering what makes a hit and then composed the songs for one of his albums on the basis of the derived "recipes". Study of the Rietsch's abundant activities as a publicist is more a job for a musical lexicographer. Among the themes of his writings we often find the different musical forms and techniques (e.g. atonality), folk song, the relationship between word and music, questions of musical style, and among composers, for example, Bruckner, Mozart and Bach, to whose music Rietsch was particularly attached at the end of his life. He was also a prolific reviewer, being among other things correspondent of the Prague German newspapers Bohemia and Prager Tagblatt. Rietsch's interest in original German music on Bohemian territory is best

reflected in his journalistic work for the Prague German journal Deutsche Arbeit (in the years 1905–1918 he headed the music section of this journal). Bohemian German themes are represented here primarily by pieces on individuals (e.g. the composers Václav Jindřich Veit, Anton Rückauf, or critic Eduard Hanslick), texts on the past and present of the music of the Germans in the Czech Lands and essays on regional themes.

In his thinking and national sensibility Rietsch was in fact a peculiar mix of different identities. He was most influenced by the spirit of the land (provincial) patriotism of the Bohemian (or Sudeten) Germans and the idea of the exceptional nature of German culture in European context. Czech and by extension Slav music was from the point of view of his identity as foreign as French or Italian music, for example. He demanded that German composers be represented at concerts organised for Bohemian Germans, or the so-called "utraquist" concerts (for a mixed Czech and German public), and this bordered on putting the national cause ahead of considerations of quality. His view of the new Czechoslovak Republic when it was established was negative – he feared that German musical life in the republic would become isolated and then gradually become extinct with the process of assimilation to Czech culture. It is no surprise that he was an opponent of the Czechisation of Czech names that had earlier been written in German form. One might say rather sarcastically that Rietsch was lucky to die when he did, because as a man with Jewish roots he would certainly not have escaped the disaster that was to overtake many of his Jewish pupils. Their lives too were often full of dedicated work glorifying German culture – an effort for which they were repaid by the Holocaust.
Considered from a cool, objective perspective, this article is about something completely insignificant. It concerns a band that was definitely not exceptional for its composition, repertoire or evidently its standards either, and what is more existed away from any busy cultural centre – in a remote region of South Bohemia. All the same, in its way it was a unique ensemble. This is because in Bohemia and its neighbouring areas we would find no other musical ensemble serving one particular aristocratic family for the whole period 1875–1939.

by Martin Voříšek

A JAZZBAND IN NOBLE SERVICE
THE SCHWARZENBERG GUARD BAND

Considered from a cool, objective perspective, this article is about something completely insignificant. It concerns a band that was definitely not exceptional for its composition, repertoire or evidently its standards either, and what is more existed away from any busy cultural centre – in a remote region of South Bohemia. All the same, in its way it was a unique ensemble. This is because in Bohemia and its neighbouring areas we would find no other musical ensemble serving one particular aristocratic family for the period 1875–1939.

The Schwarzenbergs and their Guard

If we want to understand the apparent paradox of a band that by its very existence contradicts all the usual schemes of the history textbooks, we need some basic information about the earlier history of the Schwarzenberg Guard. Clearly, this corps originally had an entirely non-musical purpose. It was founded as a personal guard of honour in 1703 on the initiative of Prince Adam Franz von Schwarzenberg, who at twenty-three had just taken over the administration of the family estates. Although the Schwarzenbergs had originally come from the territory of today's Bavaria, in the mid-17th century they were granted the right to settle permanently in Bohemia (unlike some other great families they did not profit directly from the confiscations of non-Catholic property after the Battle of the White Mountain in 1620). The South Bohemian Chateau of Hluboká, which Adam Franz renovated at great cost, became the seat of the Schwarzenberg Guard. The accession of the Empress Marie Theresa, however, brought wars over the royal succession that led in 1741 to Hluboká being occupied by foreign troops. The guard was therefore moved to the Chateau in Český Krumlov (which the Schwarzenbergs acquired by inheritance in 1719) and then stayed there for good.

The Schwarzenberg Forestry Adjuncts Band with its Bandmaster Eduard Anton, 1869.

Guardsmen with instruments inherited from Anton's Hunting Band in the 2nd Courtyard, evidently 1930.

Similar semi-military guards were a relatively common part of noble courts at the time. They were modeled on the real grenadier guard regiments that were considered an elite corps in the army. This was the model for their uniforms and the demand that only particularly tall and well-built men be accepted as guards. It was rare, however, for these personal guards to be deployed in battle. The Schwarzenberg grenadiers only fought in the wars of the time as individuals. Their real duty to the Schwarzenberg family was formal and ceremonial. On special occasions they would parade, set off fireworks, let off canon salvoes and act as guard of honour. At the same time they fulfilled the function of private security. Their day-to-day task was to stand guard at the entrance to the chateau or other parts of the complex as necessary. When members of the princely family were staying in Bohemia, they would also serve as real bodyguards.

Although these listed activities were the main reasons for the existence of the guard, they could not keep

twenty to thirty strong men fully occupied all year long. The assumption was always that the grenadiers would earn some extra money in some other way. At first the Schwarzenberg administration left these side earnings more or less to individuals depending on their craft skills, but as time went by they tried to arrange or provide work opportunities for the guards in a more systematic manner. The activities concerned were initially semi- military. Up to the mid-19th century, the local administration had widespread local government powers and the grenadiers would often fulfill functions we associate with modern police: they would escort arrested criminals and help catch them, and would collect various fines and feudal charges. At harvest time they would guard the corn from thieves, and in the spring they would protect the logs that were floated from the Šumava to the Danube on a specially built canal, and from there to Vienna.

The importance of these (and other) secondary activities gradually increased, while the formal ceremonial functions tended to decline as the Baroque fondness for ostentation gave way to a rationalist emphasis on plainness and efficiency. Here we come to the most distinctive but also the most paradoxical aspect of the story of the Schwarzenberg Guard. While other aristocratic personal guards were dissolved, mostly around the turn of the 18th/19th century, the Schwarzenbergs kept their guard right into the 20th century. The main reason was the exceptionally powerful position of the House of Schwarzenberg, based not only on ancient lineage but on consistent loyalty to the state and a highly successful economic management of their estates. By the mid-19th century the Schwarzenberg land holdings in Bohemia were enormous, and after far-reaching legal changes in 1848, the family managed to transform the former feudal estates into a functional system of large-scale farming and forestry enterprises. If in the field of economics and agriculture the Schwarzenbergs often exploited the most modern methods, we might see the retention of a uniformed personal guard as a kind of counterbalance to these progressive tendencies. The guard was clearly the most conspicuous external symbol of the maintenance of the old tradition, a kind of living testimony to the family's exclusive status and power as landowners.

The Schwarzenbergs and their Music Ensembles

Let us now take a quick look at the musical ensembles that played in the service of the Schwarzenbergs. The rather imprecise term, "noble capellas" is usually associated with the era of Baroque courts. At that time, however, the Schwarzenbergs permanently employed no more than two to three musicians, joined when the need arose most probably by other musicians from the local schools and churches (this practice was probably widespread among the other aristocratic families as well). In terms of numbers and evidently quality as well, music at the Schwarzenberg court reached its highest point in the last three decades of the 18th century, when the princely family employed an eight-member wind harmonia (made up of pairs of oboes, cors anglais, bassoons and horns).

It is perhaps unexpected to find that the Schwarzenbergs had larger orchestras at their disposal only later, in the 19th and 20th centuries, although these were orchestras with a very specific purpose. Their main task was the musical accompaniment of autumn hunts, which remained a favourite entertainment and major social event for the aristocracy of the time. The actual hunts were organised using signals given in advance, and it was for this practical purpose that Prince Josef von Schwarzenberg entrusted the horn player Andreas Anton, with training selected foresters to play the French horn. In this way, at the beginning of the 19th century an ensemble emerged that provided not only signals and ceremonial fanfares but also music for evening balls and concerts. The group usually consisted of between eight and twenty foresters and it was active over more than seven decades (in later years Anton's son Eduard took over the direction). We should stress, however, that it was not a permanent ensemble. The foresters did their normal work in various hunting grounds and did not see each other for most of the year. The band master was therefore compelled to travel round their various work places and train them in musical skills individually. The whole ensemble would only get together for the big annual hunts that took place at the end of October over a fortnight at Hluboká and in the surrounding area.

From the start of the 1870s musicians from the ranks of the Schwarzenberg Guard joined

The Guard Band in the Mask Hall of Český Krumlov Castle (photomontage), 1899. In the foreground the bandmaster Ondřej Grill.

the foresters' ensemble at the annual hunts. The presence of musicians among members of the personal guard may seem strange, but was in fact a logical consequence of the popularity of military orchestras in the period. At this time almost every garrison had a music band and it is no exaggeration to say that these orchestras were among the most important elements in the musical life of the Austrian empire. Alongside the operation of church choirs, this was one of the few areas of publicly performed music in which the state invested significant amounts of money. The army bands provided young musicians with a relatively secure existence and also the chance to acquire a wide range of skills: they almost automatically demanded mastery of one wind and one stringed instrument, and the repertoire ranged from military marches and fanfares to favourite dances of the period and to arrangements of operas or symphonic pieces.

Since the Schwarzenbergs nearly always recruited men with military service behind them for their guard, it was natural that military musicians started to appear in their ranks. At the beginning of the 1870s the Schwarzenberg administration evidently still had no intention of exploiting them for anything more than occasional assistance for the forestry ensemble. In 1875, however, they were already accepting guards with an eye to their musical skills and from this year we can speak of a separate band. At this time the grenadiers included seven musicians who could form a small wind or string ensemble. One of them was the first ensemble leader, the twenty-seven-year old violinist Josef Keist. The commanders of the guard probably had a special interest in him, because he was probably the first recruit to the guard not to have a military background. The guard band grew by another three musicians at the turn of the 1870s/80s, this time probably on the basis of a definite plan to dissolve the forestry ensemble and replacing it entirely with a guard orchestra. This move offered more than one organisational benefit for the Schwarzenberg administration: the guards, based in Krumlov for most of the year, could devote themselves much more systematically to music than the foresters scattered in different forestlands. Furthermore, the army musicians had received a good musical training even before

The Guard Band in the Mask Hall of Český Krumlov Castle (photomontage), 12th May 1912. In the foreground the bandmaster František Vrchota.

becoming Schwarzenberg employees. And finally we should note once again that especially from the mid-19th century the military and police functions of the guard declined sharply and so there was a need to find some new activity for them, while the forestry personnel could never have complained of being underworked. Thus in 1881 the forestry ensemble was dissolved and its instruments and tasks were taken over by the grenadier orchestra.

From the mid-1880s the number of members varied around fifteen musicians, who could be reinforced when necessary by one-off reinforcements. Josef Keist occupied the position of conductor until his early death in 1886. Of his successors, Ondřej Grill, undoubtedly one of the most gifted musicians in the whole guard ensemble, deserves particular mention. He played the violin, viola, double bass, bugle, eufonium and trumpet, produced instrumentations and wrote his own compositions. He led the grenadier orchestra in the years 1896–1903. He then emigrated to the United States were he made a living as a music teacher, composer of popular melodies and leader of his own ensemble (with which according to the Schwarzenberg staff bulletin *Tradice* [Tradition] of 1934 he made more than 300 gramophone recordings). It was after Grill's departure, however, that the numbers of the guard ensemble reached their high point.

Postcard showing Grenadier František Beer, 1900.

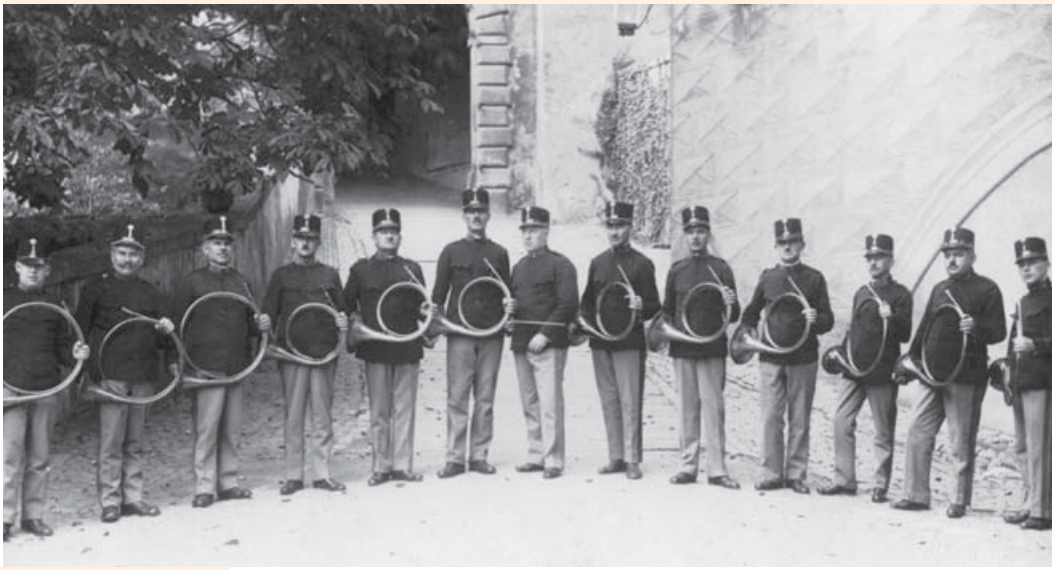
In 1909–1910 it was expanded into a twenty-member orchestra, with František Vrchota appointed as conductor. Vrchota like Keist was a versatile musician, but unlike Keist he remained faithful for most of his life to the Český Krumlov region, also earning a place in its musical history as a teacher and active member of the *Dalibor* Czech music society.

An Ensemble for Princes and for Townspeople

Let us now look a little closer at the uses and repertoire of the guard band. We have gathered already that from the point of view of the Schwarzenberg princes its main task was to provide music for the hunting festivities at Hluboká. Here of course the primary need was for hunting signals and fanfares, and for this purpose the members of the ensemble had to have at least a basic mastery of the natural horn. From the musical point of view, however, the guard musicians probably got more out of their role at the evening balls, where they appeared as a string orchestra. At balls of course they played favourite dances of the time, and even the music they played for concert listening was not particulary demanding. Those invited to the Schwarzenberg hunts were almost exclusively representatives of old aristocratic families; they had plenty of opportunities all year round to go to concerts in leading European capitals and definitely did not expect the guards to play ambitious symphonic music. This meant that at Hluboká the guards presented music corresponding to the ordinary repertoire of military bands: arrangements of operetta or opera melodies, concert arrangements of marches and dances, and sometimes concert pieces of the more charmingly kitschy variety.

Naturally the Schwarzenbergs also exploited their guard musicians for other occasions, first and foremost celebrations of the birthdays or namedays of leading members of the princely family or the ruler. The other duties of the ensemble included the fanfares from the tower of Krumlov castle,

The revived Guard Band in the barracks on the 2nd Courtyard of Český Krumlov Castle, evidently 1930. In the foreground the bandmaster Anton Wrba, far right with violin the former bandmaster František Vrchota.



The Guard Band with natural horns in the 2nd Courtyard of Český Krumlov Castle, around 1930.

provision of music for masses in the castle chapel, and when necessary at various other events (the parts of these celebrations open to the public included for example promenade concerts, at which the guard ensemble played as a wind orchestra). The Schwarzenbergs sometimes used the grenadier ensemble at their chateau in Červený Dvůr not far from Český Krumlov. The family and its guests usually made excursions or stayed here in the summer months and the task of the guard musicians was to provide some pleasant entertainment, clearly in the form of light repertoire.

Performing for the needs of the Schwarzenberg family was the formal reason for the existence of the grenadier ensemble and undoubtedly represented the most prestigious aspect of its musical activities, but in fact these occasions occupied the orchestra only for a few days of every year. The ensemble played much more often outside Schwarzenberg service, mostly in Český Krumlov and its near vicinity. Despite occasional objections the command of the guard took

a very tolerant attitude to these appearances. The most obvious reason for this tolerant view was not explicitly stated but must have been economic: the secondary motive for having the ensemble was to give members of the personal guard the chance for extra earnings to add to their very modest regular pay.

From the 1870s the guards played on this basis for local associations of marksmen, military veterans and voluntary firemen, whose music ensembles they helped out especially at celebrations and funerals, always donning the uniform of the association in question. But the Český Krumlov public heard the grenadier ensemble at many other occasions too. In civilian clothing the Schwarzenberg musicians provided musical accompaniment at all kinds of dances, concerts and theatre productions. In this period it is not surprising that with only a few exceptions the guards evidently played the same pieces for their fellow citizens that they played on other occasions for noble society.

Especially in the early stage of its existence, the band faced no real regional competition of the same standard and orientation. On the contrary, the activities of the grenadier ensemble (especially at funerals) became a thorn in the side of the directors of the choir of the Church of St. Vitus in Český Krumlov, who felt that their ancient rights were being threatened. This may, indeed, have been one of the reasons for the founding of a town ensemble, formed in 1890 with leadership entrusted to the regenschor of St. Vitus, Josef Hiebsch. The new ensemble probably had quite strong personal ties to leaders of local German cultural life, and this meant a rather rapid loss of previous opportunities for the guard ensemble. The Český Krumlov region was one of the regions in which the German population predominated and Czechs were a minority, and at the end of the 19th century nationalist (ethnic) disputes were intensifying here as elsewhere in the country. National (ethnic) considerations could easily have played a more important role in the selection of orchestra than purely musical qualities (although of course at this distance in time there is no way of objectively comparing these).

The Schwarzenbergs were opposed to ethnic nationalism and required their employees to take a nationally objective attitude. The Schwarzenberg Guard ensemble therefore played for Czech and German societies so long as the events concerned were not explicitly political in character or there were no fears of potential incidents. All the same, from the 1890s to the outbreak of the 1st World War, the guard ensemble played more frequently for the local Czech organisations, who were reluctant to turn to the town orchestra. A further factor may have been the fact that in this period all the band leaders were Czech (Ondřej Grill, František Beer and František Vrchota) and Czechs predominated among the ordinary musicians.

The Guard Ensemble between the World Wars

The events of the 1st World War naturally had a disruptive effect on lives of the Schwarzenberg grenadiers. Fifteen of the twenty-seven members of the guard were called up for army service

The Jazz line-up of the Guard Band on the terrace of the Růže Hotel in Český Krumlov in 1932.

and the ensemble suspended its activities. The orchestra was revived soon after the end of the war – all the Schwarzenberg guards returned safe and sound. Yet the postwar years would not be calm and carefree for them. The main problem was the radical land reform launched in the newly founded Czechoslovakia, which had a massive impact on the mechanisms of the Schwarzenberg economic system. The reform was based on the idea that to ensure the effective development of the agriculture of the new state it was necessary to support small farmers. It therefore involved wide-ranging redistribution of land, naturally with immense consequences for the Schwarzenbergs as the largest landowners in the country. The territory owned by the older branch of the family (to which the Schwarzenberg Guard belonged) was reduced without compensation from its pre-war 176,146 hectares to 52,500 hectares, with the confiscation affecting numerous agricultural production concerns as well as just land. Property transfers on such a scale could not be made on a short timescale. The debates on realisation of the reform started immediately following the establishment of the independent state, but the main phase relating to the Schwarzenberg holdings began in 1922 and ended at the beginning of 1930ęs (it was only completed by 1937).

In these years Schwarzenberg employees were naturally put in a position of great insecurity and anxiety, and the Guard were no exception. As a symbol of conspicuous luxury the Guard had always been an index of economic prosperity. Despite initial hesitation, the Guard was retained but in 1922 it was cut back substantially to twelve men who would otherwise have found it very difficult to make a living. Most were unskilled guardsmen of advanced age (by 1927 mortality had reduced their number to eight). The other grenadiers were either reassigned to other places in Schwarzenberg service or had to find other work for themselves. The ensemble's activities were halted, but Prince Johann von Schwarzenberg ordered that the instruments and sheet music be stored in a good state in hopes that the ensemble would eventually be revived.

At the end of the 1920s it was clear that the Schwarzenberg estate was managing to cope well with the consequences of the land reform, and so at the beginning of 1929 former grenadiers returned to the guard and new recruits were accepted. The

ensemble started rehearsing and performing again, if in rather more modest form that before. It numbered around eight to nine permanent musicians, joined when necessary by musicians from the ranks of former guards who were employed at the time in other positions by the Schwarzenbergs. Once again, the grenadiers could form a small wind or string orchestra. In fact the ensemble played only occasionally as a string ensemble, because it was comparatively under-strength in this form but also because trends in popular music did not favour string ensembles. It was obvious that if the grenadier ensemble wanted to make any headway against the increasing competition (and also meet the demands of the young generation of Schwarzenbergs), it had to follow these trends. In 1932, the guards formed a small "jazz" group, made up of a variable line-up of melodic instruments and a rhythm section. The then Prince Adolf von Schwarzenberg enthusiastically supported these efforts, and so in the course of the 1930s, a saxophone, accordion, guitar, vibraphone and cornet, for example, were added to the Guard band's official stock of instruments. What is more, in 1933 a Viennese musician Franz Dostal was hired to train the grenadiers in the performance of modern dance music, and it was with him that the command of the guard consulted on the purchase of new instruments and sheet music.

Obviously, we need to exercise some caution in defining this band as a "jazz" ensemble (the same is true for the great majority of similar ensembles in Central Europe at the time.) As conceived by Franz Dostal, the line-up and repertoire of the jazz band overlapped substantially with the model of the Viennese salon orchestra. As could be expected, the sheet music was purchased mainly from German and Austrian publishing and American popular melodies played only a very marginal role in it. In line with the prevailing ideas of the place and time, the Krumlov Guard musicians understood "jazz" as a term for a wide spectrum of fashionable dances, including tango or waltz as well as foxtrot or slowfox.

The post-war period saw a change not just in the composition of the Guard band but to a marked extent in the context of its music as well. The changes were the least striking in the productions for members of the Schwarzenberg family: even in the inter-war period this was still mainly a matter of musical accompaniment for the autumn hunts at Hluboká and private or public celebrations held in Český Krumlov and nearby. The basic character of these events remained the same, the fanfares and themes of the uniformed grenadiers linking the present with tradition. The entertainment repertoire was of course enlived by the "jazz numbers" mentioned above, to which the aristocracy too danced with gusto.

Change was more evident in the engagements outside Schwarzenberg service. In the years when the grenadier ensemble had ceased to perform, earlier contacts had been lost, and in the meantime these had been eagerly taken up by other bands. In these years too, the competition had grown strongly, partly as a result of new trends in entertainment music (large orchestras were giving way to small dance groups), and partly to increasing mobility (transporting musicians from elsewhere to events was already relatively fast). On the other hand the Schwarzenberg guard's unique character as a noble ensemble was a definite source of appeal. The local organisations often wanted the band to appear in their „historical" uniforms, even though the ordinary uniforms of the Krumlov grenadiers had never been essentially historical in design and even at this period the guards did not play for the public in their dress uniforms. It should be said that the newly appointed band leader Anton Wrba was well aware of the unique character of the ensemble and exploited this feature as far as he could. One of his most striking achievements was to secure several live broadcasts on Prague radio in 1932 and 1937 when the Krumlov grenadiers played a selection of their repertoire of hunting fanfares on natural horns.

While before the 1st World War the guards appeared mainly at the events of Czech clubs and associations, in the interwar period this aspect of their activities declined. Apart from the loss of continuity and so contacts in the 1920s when the band was "on ice", another reason may have been the different national (ethnic) composition of the guard, half of which was now German. What is more, the Czechs of Krumlov evidently reacted badly when František Vrchota was succeeded as band leader by Anton Wrba, who was unambiguous in his identification with the local German community and was probably one of the most active of the guards in this respect (in 1939 he became

The Guard Band on the Lazebnický Bridge in Český Krumlov at the head of a parade at the celebratins of the nameday of Johann von Schwarzenberg, 10th May 1931

head of the district branch of the Reich Music Chamber for Folk Music). Overall, however, he managed grenadier orchestra quite well. During Shrovetide the band performed eight to ten times a month, and in less festive times of year around two to five times a month.

Repeated appearances at Social Democratic Party celebrations were one rather surprising aspect of the band's activities. From 1934 the Schwarzenberg guards played at party balls, dances and funerals and even took part in the 1st of May celebrations. If we bear in mind the persecution of Social Democrats in Germany after 1933 and also the escalation of nation tensions in the Czech borderlands, these appearances might seem a sympathetic expression of solidarity with the antifascist sections of the public. On the other hand, it should be noted that the Social Democrats were not the only political group to engage the guards ensemble. From 1936 performances for the Sudeten German Party, if to a lesser extent, start to appear in the records. It would, however, be wrong to jump to exaggerated conclusions from the participation of the ensemble in these kinds of event. For most of the musicians these occasions were unlikely to have meant more than a chance of earning extra income.

The End of the Schwarzenberg Domain

The end of the Guard's band was directly related to the unhappy political developments in Central Europe at the end of the 1930s. In the autumn of 1938 as a result of the Munich Agreement Czechoslovakia was forced to cede its border areas to Germany, and these included the Český Krumlov area. The guards of Czech nationality therefore left Krumlov (the "Český" – Czech, being dropped from the town's name), or were pensioned off.

In March of the following year the German army occupied the rest of Czech territory, the anti-Nazi Prince Adolf von Schwarzenberg emigrated, and the Gestapo placed his property under forced administration. The remaining grenadiers left for other occupations if they were lucky, and for the front if unlucky (three of them never returned). Nonetheless, formally the guard continued to exist, even if in the circumstances it lost any kind of real rationale. In the course of the war years, it was exploited to provide places for invalids from the front usually numbered between four and six men.

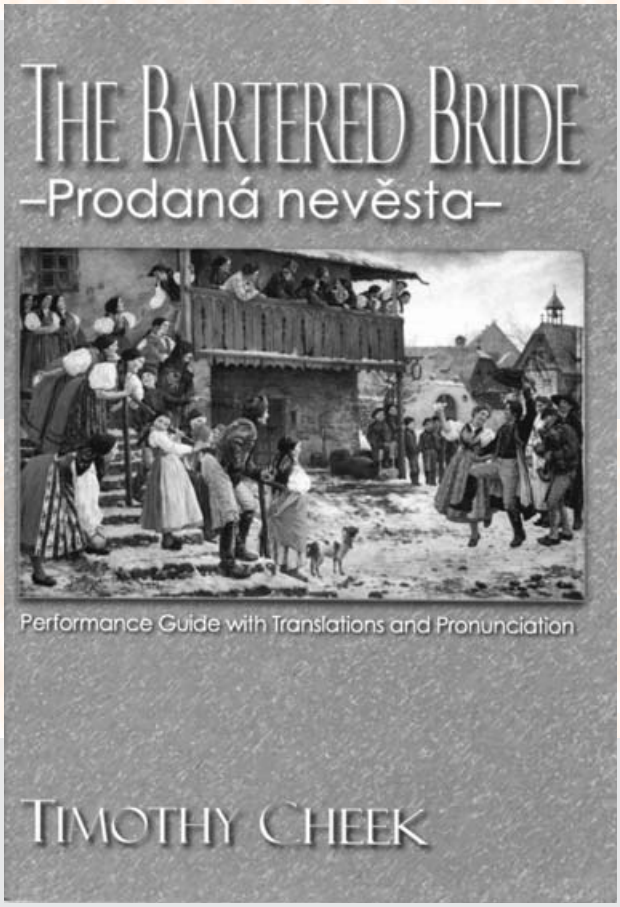
For a short period following the end of the war there was talk of reviving the band and the director of the Český Krumlov estate Karel Skalický even tried to put off the officially ordered dismissal of the German grenadiers by arguing that they were essential for the orchestra. But he could do little against the pitiless march of history and so the German Schwarzenberg employees were soon expelled like other Bohemian Germans from the liberated Czechoslovakia. What is more, long-drawn-out legal disputes over the Schwarzenberg property, which to some extent prefigured the wave of iniquitous nationalisations after the communist takeover in February 1948, began in the immediate post-war period. Since there was no existing law or decree under which the Schwarzenberg assets could be nationalised, in July 1947 parliament passed what was known as the *Lex Schwarzenberg*, i.e. a special law by which the property of the older branch of the family was transferred into the state ownership of the Bohemian Land. At that time all that remained of the guard was the commander and two grenadiers. In view of the circumstances in January 1948 the director Skalický proposed *„the temporary dissolution of the castle guard until such time as the financial state of the whole property should improve to the point at which the old tradition could be continued again.“*. The preference of the time, however, was for talking in terms of eternal rather than temporary solutions. After more than two hundred and forty years the guard was dissolved definitively and by a rather laconic motion of the Land National Committee of the 23rd of March 1948, which stated *„The Land National Committee in Prague has no objection to being relieved of the maintenance of the castle guard in Čes. Krumlov.“*

The photographs used are from the collection of the Třeboň Regional Archive, Český Krumlov branch.

Helena Havlíková

THE INFECTIOUS ATTRACTION OF THE BARTERED BRIDE

Timothy Cheek:
Prodaná nevěsta: Performance Guide with Translations and Pronunciations
Scarecrow Press, Inc., Lanham, Maryland – Toronto – Plymouth, UK, January 2010, 301 pp.



The North American Scarecrow Press is a university publishing house orientated to an educated and culturally aware readership. It publishes intellectually important works in a wide range of subjects from history to science, as well as textbooks and handbooks about music and film. This year in January it brought out a fourth book by Timothy Cheek, a specialist in the "singing of Czech" in operas and vocal music. This time he has focused on a key opera in Czech music history, Smetana's *The Bartered Bride*.

Thimothy Cheek

Like his earlier books, it shows how much Timothy Cheek loves Czech music. **Prodaná nevěsta – The Bartered Bride, Performance Guide with Translations and Pronunciation** is a logical continuation of his admirable, long-term and systematic commitment to opening up the world of Czech music to English speakers. The treatment of the theme has a broader angle than might be expected, making the book useful not just for the ever increasing number of non-Czech performers who are presenting The Bartered Bride in the original language, but for everyone who would like to know more about the opera from the linguistic but also the historical, political and cultural point of view. A painstakingly produced resource for performers who do not speak this beautiful resonant Slav language, it is also valuable for Czech readers because it summarises the facts and gives a fresh, outside view unencumbered by the local pieties and conventions associated with the most famous and most frequently staged opera in the Czech Lands.

In 2001 Cheek published a basic guide to Czech pronunciation in vocal music – his book **Singing in Czech. A Guide to Czech Lyric Diction and Vocal Repertoire** which used the IPA international universal pronunciation transcription, explained the principles of Czech pronunciation and offered audio samples on CD. In this first book Cheek encapsulated his experience with voice coaching to offer a guide for singers, accompanists, and also conductors of orchestras and choirs on how to learn correct pronunciation when rehearsing Czech vocal works in the original language. This book earned great praise from the American soprano Catherine Malfitano, whose repertoire includes Janáček's Emilia Marty from The Makropulos Case, and his Kostelnička from Jenůfa: *„At a time when the great Czech masterpieces are moving more and more into mainstream life, along comes an invaluable guide to singing authentically and expressively in this unfamiliar language. Timothy Cheek seems to have tapped into the singer's deepest needs and fears when first faced with these daunting sounds. He demystifies the difficulties and clearly shows the way to linking what we already know, from other more familiar languages, to what we can hope to achieve by assimilating the unique colors of this highly expressive language. I am grateful for his usage of the International Phonetic Alphabet to demonstrate many of these sounds. The recorded examples by the two Czech singers are also very welcome. This book will make the learning of sung Czech much more accessible and enjoyable to all singers."*

Cheek then embarked on a series of books on singing specific operas in the Czech original, first applying his system (including a word-for-word translation and ordinary translation, stage and musical notes), to the librettos of Janáček's operas. Scarecrow has now published **The Cunning Little Vixen, Translations and Pronunciation in 2003 and then Káťa Kabanová. Translations and Pronunciation** in 2004.

All these works pass on to a wider public Cheek's many years of practical experience as a pianist, accompanist, language coach and Associate Professor of Voice at the respected School of Music, Theatre & Dance at the University of Michigan, an institution with more than a century of tradition behind it in the field of performing arts. Cheek is also a keen promoter of the music of Vítězslava Kaprálová (Supraphon has released a recording of her songs performed by the soprano Dana Burešová with Timothy Cheek as pianist) and is a member of the Canadian Kaprálová Society.

The words of praise from the famous and experienced Catherine Malfitano can be applied without reservation to Cheek's most recent book on The Bartered Bride. This time Cheek has expanded his "guide" to singing the libretto in Czech to include a lengthy study of the genesis and staging of the opera. The immediate impetus behind the book was his work as Czech language coach for a production of The Bartered Bride at the University of Michigan in 2007 with a purely student cast, and also in Edmonton in Canada as part of Opera Nuova programme. At the time Cheek could draw on his knowledge of several productions of The Bartered Bride starting with the MET production in 1978 (Levine, Straras, Gedda)

PHOTO: HANA SMEJKALOVÁ

Recent staging of The Bartered Bride at the National Theater, Prague

and the Prague National Theatre productions from 1995.

Timothy Cheek's guides are a response to the worldwide trend towards singing operas in the original language, and the increasing demands on performers (evident, for example, from the broadcasts of operas at prestigious opera houses to cinemas throughout the world). Today the vocal and dramatic interpretation of roles demands a perfect knowledge of the text in terms of both content and pronunciation. Cheek is a firm supporter of the practice of singing operas in the language of the original, including comic operas, making an exception only perhaps for operas with spoken dialogue, such as The Magic Flute. In this context Cheek reminds us that in the English-speaking countries The Bartered Bride was sung in German right up to the 1940s. He rightly points out that today, with the introduction of stage supertitles, audiences can follow translations with ease, while the unique integration of words and music - the way in which the composer deliberately worked with the sound structure of the original language of the libretto, remains intact.

The book is divided into two parts. **In the first part** the author summarises the facts about The Bartered Bride from various perspectives including the social and political, and sets it in the immediate context of cultural events directly linked to the opera. He starts by presenting the Czech Republic as a country in which opera is the symbol of a proud people and their struggle for national identity, but although he explains the significance of the National Theatre in Prague and the circumstances in which it was built, he then concentrates purely on The Bartered Bride. In other words he does not set the opera in the wider contexts of Smetana's overall operatic output, or Czech or European music as a whole. Yet this is not a fault; his purpose is not to engage in ground-breaking historical scholarship or musicological analysis, but to produce a skillful, accessible and painstaking compilation of information on the basis of extensive study of the literature in Czech and English. Other scholars might well have mentioned other earlier studies of The Bartered Bride and in doing emphasised other aspects of the history and characteristics of this opera, but Cheek is still very successful in the difficult task of selecting the essential from all the materials to present a three-dimensional and comprehensible picture in no more than ninety pages. He does not aspire to construct a highly individual or innovative take on the opera but he still presents a clearcut and distinctive view. Drawing on the literature and his own experience he approaches The Bartered Bride as a comic folk opera with deeply human characters, i.e. definitely

not as caricature, parody or raw and gritty drama. Cheek compares the overall character of The Bartered Bride to Mozart, but also tries to identify what is specifically Czech about The Bartered Bride.

He looks first at the successive stages of the genesis of the opera: Smetana's first ideas in the discussions of young musicians of the Weimar circle in 1857, the competition organised by Count Harrach for the composition of a Czech historical and comic opera, and Smetana's rejection of the use of quotations from folksong in comic opera; then his first sketches, and the course of the composition up to the premiere, with profiles of the first performers. Cheek naturally includes a brief profile of the librettist Karel Sabina and an account of the genesis of the libretto. This is followed by an account of the successive versions of the opera up to the fourth version. Cheek unhesitatingly recommends this fourth version for staging, considering it to be the definitive result of the development of Smetana's ideas on the piece, from alternation of musical numbers with spoken prose to a fully arranged integrated score.

Cheek includes a detailed accurate synopsis of the opera (although this would have been improved if the opening lines of the arias had been inset in the appropriate parts of the synopsis). He then offers practical advice on possible cuts in the opera for school or amateur performance. He explains types of costumes and the form and meaning of folk costumes in the Czech Lands.

Another chapter is devoted to the history of the staging of The Bartered Bride. Unfortunately, as far as the Czech Lands are concerned, in each period he mentions only the National Theatre productions – probably partly because these have been so well documented in Jan Panenka and Taťána Součková's splendid publication, *The Bartered Bride on the Stages of the Provisional and National Theatre 1866 – 2004* (published by the National Theatre in 2004). On the other hand, what is unique in Cheek's book is the list of productions of The Bartered Bride in the USA, from the first staging in 1893 in Chicago to the various stagings at the Metropolitan Opera to school productions, and in other English-speaking countries: Canada, Great Britain, Australia and South Africa. Cheek does not deal with the long history of German productions of the Bartered Bride or the history of attempts to bring the opera into repertoire in France or productions in other countries.

Cheek presents profiles of some of the soloists who have appeared in The Bartered Bride. Rather debatable, in each voice category, he has restricted his selection (with some exceptions), to singers who made their debuts in roles in the Bartered Bride. Obviously this leaves him with some interesting performers (Patricia Craig, Risë Stevens and so on), but it means that he leaves out soloists whose debuts had not been in any role in the Bartered Bride but whose later roles in that opera were among the high points of their careers and strongly influenced musical and dramatic interpretations of the opera. Among Czech artists these include: as Mařenka – Marie Sittová, Anna Veselá, Kamila Ungrová, Ota Horáková up to Milada Šubrtová, Libuše Domanínská, and Gabriela Beňačková; as Jeník – Ludevít Lukes, Karel Veselý, Otakar Mařák up to Beno Blachut, and Ivo Žídek; as Kecal – Josef Paleček, Vilém Heš, Luděk Mandaus, Eduard Haken, and Richard Novák; as Vašek – Adolf Krössing. Cheek has made a similar choice of conductors and choreographers, but mentions no directors at all.

He devotes an unusual amount of space to dance in The Bartered Bride (which is understandable given that his partner in life is the Czech ballet dancer Bohuslava Jelínková, who has danced in three productions of The Bartered Bride at the National Theatre). He even supplements this with "sung dances", by which he means for example the quarrel between Jeník and Mařenka, which can be conceived as czardas, Esmeralda's cancan or Jeník's aria *Utiš se dívko [Calm down and trust me]* he compares to a *sousedská* (a type of dance), and Kecal's duet with Jeník to a *beseda* (another type of dance). He provides short portraits of selected choreographers (including the legendary Balanchin) and their conceptions of the dances in The Bartered Bride, sometimes citing reviews.

Cheek goes on to give brief profiles of the main characters in The Bartered Bride. Packing the etymology of the name, vocal characteristics

and vocal difficulties of a part into a few short lines is hard, and so Cheek is inevitably forced to oversimplify. For example in the case of Vašek he is right to stress that the stammering boy is not a "town idiot" or "fool" but "has a simple, warm, innocent humanity and a good-natured character", but is going a little too far when he deduces that Vašek's stutter has been caused by his dominating mother Háta, and when he suggests (on the basis of Max Ophül's German film version and the Boston production of 2009) that Vašek finally gets together with Esmeralda. Some may also take issue with his account of the comedians, who in his view should not seem too professional and who are laughable simply because they take themselves so seriously. Yet however much one can argue with some of Cheek's characterisations, they definitely contain thought-provoking insights.

The last part of the first section is devoted to aspects of language – the pronunciation of the Czech text, which Cheek transcribes phonetically sing the IPA international standard, including examples of the pronunciation of vowels and consonants in English, French, German and Italian. The nuances of vowel lengths and their influences, like the effect of accents (diacritics) is presented with an eye to practicality, using examples in which he compares the notation with the real sound. He also deals at length with problems of syllabic quantity and accent. Here too Cheek is extraordinarily painstaking and goes into the smallest details. One might, however, quibble over his recommendation that the initial letter "j" in the Czech forms of the verb "být" (to be) should be pronounced as [i], while it in fact has become silent in contemporary Czech usage (the correct pronunciation of "j" as [i] in words such as "jdeme" (let's go) is a different case that should have been treated separately).

The second part of the book gives the complete libretto of The Bartered Bride, and Cheek has rightly remembered to include the stage notes. The text has been treated in a very clear and lucid way: each word is transcribed phonetically using IPA with a mass of detailed guidance in the notes, and at the same time a word-for-word English translation is provided; this approach, with the Czech and English text placed side by side, will certainly be appreciated by singers, because it offers them an immediate understanding of the meaning of the text both from the point of view of content and the point of view of music or onomatopoeia. A standard English translation is provided as well, of course.

The book has appendices that summarise information on published piano excerpts and scores as well as practical information on where they may be ordered. There is a valuable section in which Cheek analyses the different English translations indicating who translated them and when, and for which productions they were used (in some cases he even quotes reviews). He also offers an overview of recordings of The Bartered Bride on LP, CD, DVD and in film. He does not list radio broadcasts or television productions.

The breadth and depth of Cheek's research on The Bartered Bride is astonishing. The book has an extensive note apparatus, and the sources for each chapter are precisely identified and documented to the standard of an academic study. The list of literature is respectable and even opens up some new avenues for Czech Smetana specialists, but the fact that it does not not contain some works that are fundamental or even "cult" publications from the Czech point of view must give us pause for thought. In particular, there is no mention of the most extensive (however controversially received) work on Smetana's operas – Jaroslav Jiránek: *Smetanova operní tvorba,* 2 vols. Editio Supraphon 1984 – in which 100 pages in the first volume are devoted to The Bartered Bride. And although the list of literature includes some articles by the doyen of Czech musicology, Otakar Hostinský, there is no mention of his book Smetanovy zpěvohry. Similarly, it is surprising that Cheek fails to refer to the major four-volume work on Smetana's operas by Přemysl Pražák. Nor in the list of literature do we find the name of Mirko Očadlík, even though he wrote a great deal on Smetana's operas. Also surprising is the fact that Cheek did not draw on the information-packed *The Opera of the National Theatre in the Time of Karel Kovařovic* by Jan Němeček

(2 vols.) and *in the Time of Otakar Ostrčil* by František Pala and Vilém Pospíšil (6 vols.). In the category of popularising literature, we do not find Hana Séquardtová: Bedřich Smetana, Editio Supraphon, Prague 1988 or Ladislav Šíp's guide *Czech Opera and its Creators*, Editio Supraphon, Prague 1983. It would also have certainly been worth mentioning the memoirs of the legendary interpreter of the role of Jeník, Ivo Žídek published in 1998 under a title that is suggestively a quotation from The Bartered Bride: *Jak možná věřit [How Can I Believe]*.

The index is very well done. Less successful are the illustrations; there are just 13 photographs of rather poor quality, even though Cheek is well aware of the importance of visual models for productions of The Bartered Bride, recommending that people interested in staging the orchestra should take a look at contemporary Czech folk music and dance ensembles.

Reading Cheek's useful book, I could not help comparing it with the experiences of Soňa Červená, the outstanding Czech singer and actor who did a lot of "coaching" singers in Czech on her travels as an exile through the world of opera and whose beautiful Czech is a renowned model (for an interview with Soňa Červená see Czech Music Quarterly 1/2008). She summed up her opinions on the role of "language coach" in opera as follows:

"In San Francisco I was responsible for getting the first ever Jenůfa sung in Czech off the ground there by offering not just to perform but to teach the whole cast Czech pronunciation. I really enjoyed using various methods with English, French and German-speaking singers. Our Czech Jenůfa was a great success and over the years I acted as Czech coach in many opera houses round the world.

I think these three rules are the crucial ones:

1. That the singer should understand the differences between the Czech alphabet and the alphabet of his native language; for example to get across the heavy consonants like ď, ť, ň I used the sound analogy of the pronunciation of the English words duty, Tuesday, new.

2. That the singer should always SEE the pronunciation written into his music part.

3. That the singer should have a word-for-word translation of the libretto in his native tongue, regardless of how clumsy the word order looks.

In my experience it is also essential for the language training to come before the rehearsals on stage – the singer has to have mastered his Czech part securely before he gets that far. Anyone who has an ear, a positive attitude and a capacity for a lot of hard work can learn sung Czech. Even our confounded beautiful "ř" can be taught – the best way to do it is to demonstrate by blocking your nose with two fingers and then "blow" the "ř" out between your teeth. Of course, it's essential that the coach knows Czech perfectly."

Timothy Cheek's book on The Bartered Bride has no equivalent in Czech conditions and he deserves our gratitude. It is a basic guide to the opera that draws on a very wide range of information, not just a translation and phonetic transcription of the Czech. The author's personal insights, notes, practical advice, and experience, and the various possible approaches that he presents, are all very valuable. Above all, he provides a highly practical and reliable guide and aid for anyone who wants to sing The Bartered Bride in the original but for whom Czech is an "exotic" language. With this book, like his others, Cheek is opening up the world of Czech culture and Czech opera to interested English-speakers, and does so with great expertise and infectious enthusiasm.

Sir Charles Mackerras, who is famous as promoter and expert on Czech opera (and especially Janáček), welcomed Cheek's book on The Cunning Little Vixen as *"an excellent beginning to a much needed series, it is extremely thorough and beautifully done. Anybody who reads this book will know virtually everything about how to perform Prihody lisky Bystrousky!"*

The same can be said without reservation about The Bartered Bride. Anyone who reads Cheek's The Bartered Bride will be excellently prepared – whether to sing in a stage performance or to enjoy himself as a member of the audience. And the fact that a "guide" like this to The Bartered Bride has been written by an American can fill us with pride at the way our culture is speaking to perceptive people everywhere in the world.

Vladimír Kouřil

CZECH JAZZ OF THE 1950s and 60s

The Jazz tsunami that swept from the Mississippi Delta across the Atlantic Ocean had to overcome two barriers on its way across the European continent. The first was culture shock: European musical sensibility, so carefully cultivated for centuries, was initially in some ways resistant to the arrival of a new, different musical aesthetic. The second, which faced the later jazz wave that washed through liberated Europe after the Second World War, was harder to break through: it was what came to be called the "iron curtain" with the bipolarisation of the world. Not merely physical but above all ideological, in culture its bricks were the demagogic ideas of the architects of the new socialist order and the Stalinist need to control every area of life. The communists aspired to create a managed form of entertainment for the *working people* in their leisure time (the people needed to be positively moulded for the needs of building the communist future), and also feared (rightly) that the official ideology could be undermined by the expressions of free culture, including jazz music.

Jazz and the Creeping Embrace of the Revolution

The ground for everything that was to follow the communist takeover in February 1948 was prepared earlier, starting immediately after the end of the war. The future development of jazz was to be greatly affected by President Edvard Beneš's decree of 1946 nationalising the gramophone industry. Here it should be explained that totalitarian-type states always strive to ensure that cultural or social activities have central-umbrella organisations with structures enabling the whole entity to be controlled ideologically, through censorship and political manipulation. By taking over the publishing industry communist power obtained a decisive voice in determining what was beneficial in music for the new society. Censorship was exercised by political cadres installed in the leading positions of every organisation. Sadly, among these cadres were also some pre-war leftist intellectuals, including musicians.

Jazz enthusiasts today have sometimes tended to take the optimistic view that towards the end of the 1950s Czechoslovak jazz was getting close to its American model in terms of quality. But it is enough to point out that at the end of the 1940s be bop – as the defining developmental stage of modern jazz –, had already come a long way in the US: Norman Granz was touring America with his travelling Jazz at Philharmonic festival and Miles

Czechoslovak Washboard Beaters

Birth of the Cool

Davis recording the first pieces later to be brought together under the title *Birth of the Cool,* and by the end of the 1950s, modern jazz had progressed right to the threshold of free jazz. Quite obviously, Czech jazz was in a completely different developmental phase – only just starting to find its bearings in modern jazz. While a number of local soloists had grown up into excellent instrumentalists, the almost complete lack of direct contact with overseas music had made it impossible for Czech jazz to gain the necessary experience to perfect style or achieve style shifts. The distinguished American jazz producer, writer and critic John Hammond visited Prague in 1947 and in an interview for Jazz magazine (no.2/1948) remarked: *"I heard the Karel Vlach orchestra – but it's a little inflexible for our American average."* He also said the orchestra needed to achieve more freedom in expression – it was excessively conducted. He praised Karel Krautgartner's clarinet solos – his was a name that would be heard ever more often.
Today the progressive appearance of re-editions of recordings of the time on shellac discs confirms the accuracy of his remarks. In some cases we can speak of very good music but the recordings show that with all the will in the world, the Czech jazz scene needed another few decades spent bringing it sound as close to American jazz as possible, picking up on and absorbing new influences promptly, and keeping up with new developmental trends. And for the moment modern jazz was primarily an alternative to other popular forms of music rather than a major genre in its own right. All this, of course, applied to jazz all over Europe – but after February 1948 the road forward for Czech jazz was to prove particularly hard.

I heard the Karel Vlach orchestra – but it's a little inflexible for our American average

It is the music

Bitter destinies in unhealthy times

The vanguard of Czech jazz was looking promising as the communist era started. A number of swing orchestras and bands had matured during the war years. Just as on the American scene they were the nurseries of musicians able to shift jazz forward. While across the ocean this was a matter of defining modern jazz, be bop, here it was primarily about raising the artistic ambitions of swing, which had mainly been the swing pop music known as dance music. According to a survey by the public opinion institute of the time on the popularity of music genres, in 1947 only sixteen percent of respondents stated jazz as a favourite (and what they usually meant by jazz was swing dance music). The models preferred were usually the Glen Miller and Stan Kenton orchestras, or in other words jazz closer to European tastes and perceptions.
In the period of the *nylon age* (a term coined by the writer Josef Škvorecký for the era of Czech jazz from the end of the war to the early fifties), no clear development emerged, for the years of postwar freedom before the communist takeover in February 1948 were all too brief. In April 1950 the General Secretary of the Union of Soviet Composers Tikhon Khrennikov advised the Union of Czechoslovak Composers (just founded by the communists), that *„It is the music of a class*

on the way out. This music cannot express the fullness of emotions and energy that is in the Czechoslovak people". Incidentally, his opinion differed little from that of Joseph Goebbels in 1939, who claimed that *„The only contribution of the USA to world cultural heritage is jazzed up negro music, which is in fact unworthy of any notice at all."* There were, however, many people at home who also felt the need to give jazz enthusiasts a hard time. For example, immediately after the February 1948 coup, a revolutionary so-called "action committee" under the leadership of Emanuel Uggé immediately dismissed the existing staff of Jazz magazine and Uggé demanded that young people should not copy American music. In fact he was one of those pre-war leftist intellectuals who soon saw through communism. From 1952 to the end of his life he devoted himself to the promotion of traditional jazz, its history and forms, but he never liked modern.

In 1947 an ad in the daily paper of the communist youth could still read: *„If you want to listen to BE-BOP, you don't have to go off to Sweden where Dizzy Gillespie is now performing. The orchestra Rytmus 47 too plays you the latest pieces in the new BE-BOP style!"* Where? In the Prague dancehall known as the Pygmalion, where **Vjačeslav „Václav" Irmanov** sang and played guitar with the band. The group **Rytmus** had existed during the war but only in the years 1946-1948 did it mature into a vanguard band in modern jazz in this country. Yet its promising development was cut short precisely by the rise of the communists to power. The pianist **Ladislav Horčík**, the trumpet player **Lumír „Dunca" Brož**, the vibraphonist **Jan Hammer** (father of the world famous keyboard player Jan Hammer of the jazz-rock era) and his wife the singer **Vlasta Průchová**, as well as the Irmanov already mentioned – all young people around twenty-five, had seemed to have a brilliant future in front of them. They were enchanted not just with Gillespie's bop, but also with the emerging cool jazz. But the new political order scattered the group. Three members emigrated to the west, including the irreplaceable Brož, Horčík went over to the Karel Vlach Orchestra where he met other supporters of modern jazz in the circle around the saxophonist and clarinettist **Karel Krautgartner**. The subsequent fate of the talented trumpettist Brož

Vlasta Průchová

of a class on the way out. This music cannot express the fullness of emotions and energy that is in the Czechoslovak people"

If you want to listen to BE-BOP, you don't have to go off to Sweden where Dizzy Gillespie is now performing. The orchestra Rytmus 47 too plays you the latest pieces in the new BE-BOP style!

Reedition of K. Krautgartner's recording on a CD

is entirely unknown – he is alleged to have died in the 1950s somewhere in South America. The prominent swing bandmaster, composer and accordionist **Kamil Běhounek** (1916–1983) played with his orchestra in the American-occupied zone of Germany after the war. After returning home in 1947 he reduced the orchestra to a sextet. The next year he left the republic and lived in West Germany for the rest of his life. He had been one of the central figures of the Czech jazz swing era. The communist regime had a more tragic fate in store for the swing singer and composer but above all founder and owner of a music publishing house **Rudolf Antonín Dvorský** (1899–1966). A year after "victorious February" 1948, his publishing house was nationalised and all his property automatically confiscated. As one of the *former people* (as the communists branded people closely associated with Masaryk's inter-war First Republic), he was from the outset attacked as a member of the bourgeoisie. He was not, however, allowed to go abroad. In the summer of 1950 he and some others tried to cross the frontier illegally, but the escape failed for technical reasons and the people around Dvorský came under surveillance by state security. In 1953 he himself was arrested and charged with treason and attempting to leave the republic. After the thaw following revelations of the cult of personality of Stalin he was released conditionally. This star of the Czech swing heaven lived out his life in poverty and obscurity. Another important exile was the swing composer and pianist **Jiří Traxler**, court arranger to the postwar Karel Vlach Orchestra. At the time of writing he is ninety-eight years old. In 1949 he went to Germany where he went on making music, but for most of his life he has lived in Canada where he has published his fascinating memoirs with the Toronto Sixty-Eight Publishers firm (owned by another Czech emigrant – the writer Josef Škvorecký). The forty years following the communist coup were to see many talented people leave with no hope of return, often meaning the end of a jazz career. Naturally, this also meant the continual crippling and deformation of the development of jazz inside the country.

music of the fat

The Revival of Swing and the Road to the Modern

After the liberation from the Nazi occupation, the orchestra of the tenor-saxophonist **Karel Vlach** (1911–1986) represented itself in a completely rejuvenated line-up. It played dance music in Prague cafes, and recorded for radio and records, and managed to solve its economic problems by a permanent theatre engagement. In 1948, for example, the Vlach Orchestra played in the Prague production of Burton Lane's musical *Finian's Rainbow* – its European premiere fourteen months after the American premiere. This apparently useful engagement had its down side, however, since it involved an obligation to adjust the orchestra's repertoire to the musicals and classical operettas staged by the Music Theatre in Prague's Karlín district. The burden naturally affected the orchestra's free work. The aversion to jazz as *„music of the fat"* (Maxim Gorky), or *„music of spiritual poverty"* (Viktor M. Gorodinsky) taken over from the cultural ideologues of the Soviet Union and cultivated by the new regime meant that this important orchestra in Czech jazz history made not a single record in the years 1949–1951. In the years 1953–1954 it was placed under the organisation of Czechoslovak circuses and only after it moved again to the more progressive Prague Theatre of Satire did it slowly start to get to the recording studios. Even so, swing recordings of dance music predominated. In 1949 the Vlach Orchestra in 1949 contained three musicians who were to become important big band leaders; they were the saxophonist and clarinettist **Karel Krautgartner**, the trumpet player **Vlastimil Hála** and the saxophonist **Kamil Lochman**.

The Czech jazz scene to this day identifies with the legacy of composer and pianist **Jaroslav Ježek** (1906–1942) and the orchestra of the pre-war Liberated Theatre. He was among the composers of 20th-century music to have been enchanted by jazz. The repertoire of the orchestra was influenced by bands of the

Don Byas and Luděk Hulan

music of spiritual poverty

American Paul Whiteman or Englishman Jack Hylton's type, and later also by Duke Ellington or Benny Goodman. At the same time Ježek wrote his own songs and instrumental pieces influenced by the Czech musical tradition. The music that had been played at the Liberated Theatre (a leftwing theatre in its time), was to be taken up, supported and sponsored by the promoters of jazz against state ideologues right up to the 1980s. Every orchestra had some of Ježek's music in its repertoire. To this day jazz performers and arrangers continue to demonstrate that his music is truly timeless. In 1951 there was an attempt to form a new **Jaroslav Ježek Orchestra**. The always ailing composer had died in exile during the war and so the setting up of the new orchestra was entrusted to the composer **Alexej Fried**, who in the war years – before he was even twenty – had led his own student band in which he played the trumpet. Later he became a leading author of the third stream of Czech jazz. Unfortunately, the formation of the orchestra

had a purely ideological background as was evident from the repertoire: alongside pieces by Jaroslav Ježek and the bandmaster Fried it included popularised versions of music by Isaak Dunayevsky and Aram Khachaturian and authors of Soviet pop music. This concept of jazz suited neither the taste of the swing public nor the musicians, and the orchestra lasted less than a year. The notion of creating ideologically correct jazz while misusing the name of the brilliant Ježek was quite absurd.

In the Moravian metropolis, Brno, the orchestra of the singer, clarinetist and violinist **Gustav Brom** (1921–1995) had been performing since the start of the German occupation. In 1951 Brom had to reduce his originally fifteen-member swing big band for economic reasons. It then survived for the whole decade in the artistic limbo in which it was confined like the Vlach Orchestra by the cultural situation of the period. On the one hand it contributed to the development of a dance swing song at what was often an inconsistent standard, but on the other hand it assisted in the birth of a more modern conception of jazz through young musicians, including such co-creators of Czech modern jazz as the double bass player **Luděk Hulan**, the drummer **Ivan Dominák** or the future lifelong trumpet player of the Brom Orchestra **Jaromír Hnilička**. Brom's new band, also, however, played in purely dixieland form. In the fifties this meant an expansion of the public's knowledge of jazz styles. In 1955 at an appearance in Leipzig in East Germany Brom's dixieland encountered the English singer Gery Scott and over the years 1957–1962 it recorded more than thirty singles with her, mostly of standards. At the end of the fifties the orchestra was reinforced by other distinguished musicians and composers, for example the pianist **Oldřich Blaha**, the saxophonist **Josef Audes** or the guitarist **Antonín Julina**. Through their continuity of personnel with the successful swing bigbands of the thirties and forties, the Gustav Brom and Karel Vlach orchestras created the belief that quality jazz orchestras would continue to be the basis for further development.


BOPTIME

The Boptime samizdat, 1951

Gustav Brom & Gery Scott (CD reedition)

look carefully at the figure of the jazz trumpet-player: he is not a bad man, he is not an enemy by his class origin – but it is precisely his fondness for jazz that is drawing him into the position of class enemy – something he recognises only when it is too late…"

The Amateur Hotbed of Traditional Jazz

The appearance by the Australian traditionalist Gream Bell and his band in 1947 at an international Prague congress of leftwing youth was a sensation and set off a wave of enthusiasm in Czechoslovakia for primitive jazz styles that continued to inspire the Amateur jazz scene for several decades. The influence of Gream Bell was behind the formation of what would be the well respected **Czechoslovak Dixieland Jazz Band**. It was dissolved shortly before the arrival of the new regime. Only in the mid-fifties did it find a worthy successor in the form of the group **Pražský dixieland**. Revivalist bands were also formed in small towns after the war. The jazz publicists, including the Emanuel Uggé, or the most prominent figure in Czech jazz life for the next half century, **Lubomír Dorůžka**, exploited the revivalist bands to create literary-musical shows presenting the history of jazz. Among those who worked on scripts for the shows were the writer Josef Škvorecký and the Prague Dixieland guitarist **Luděk Šváb**. One interesting feature of the dixieland music movement was that several of the young musicians who grew up in it went on to become pioneers of Czech rockęnęroll, thus unwittingly confirming the direct link between new forms of popular music and jazz. For the young Czech public at the end of the 1950s, the revival of traditional jazz forms, modern swing, the emergent modern jazz and rock'n'roll represented a complex of new sound antagonistic to the ideologically deformed popular music. Communist ideology preferred optimistic songs about building a new society, or a deformed version of folklore.

The revivalist era of Czech jazz of the fifties culminated in the formation of a new group by clarinetist and composer **Pavel Smetáček**. The history of the group "officially" started in 1959, but its cradle was a Prague high school, three years before. This was a time that also saw the birth of the Prague Circle of Friends of Jazz and Modern Popular Music at the Gramophone Works. It was formed to try to break through the isolation of Czech jazz by promotion and education. Of course, its activities had no mass impact in a censored culture. Smetáček's band joined this community in 1958 and the next year adopted the masking name **Traditional Jazz Study Group**. Later, when they started to get invitations to dixieland festivals throughout Europe, this was changed to the more easily understandable **Traditional Jazz Studio**. It was orientated to the earliest period of New Orleans jazz but as time went by its members started to write their own music with more modern elements. Last year – in fine fettle – it celebrated its fiftieth anniversary.

The credo of the so-called dictatorship of the proletariat after February 1948 in relation to jazz (and to all artistic trends coming from the West) was encapsulated by the comment of an author in the magazine Estrádní orchestr [Variety Orchestra] in 1954 on the very politically slanted 1953 Czech film *Únos* [Kidnap] by the directors Ján Kadár and Elmar Klos (who would go on to make the Oscar Winning Shop of the Green [Obchod na korze]): *„Look carefully at the figure of the jazz trumpet-player: he is not a bad man, he is not an enemy by his class origin – but it is precisely his fondness for jazz that is drawing him into the position of class enemy – something he recognises only when it is too late…"*

The Boom in Modern Jazz

The position of jazz in Czechoslovakia taught musicians and listeners alike to rely on their own power and organisational abilities. The Circle of Friends of Jazz and Modern Popular Music brought together those involved

in Prague jazz life and from 1956 put out a cyclostyled bulletin and organised lectures and concerts. All its activities, however, had no more than a semi-official character. It provided a stimulus for the establishment of similar organisations in other towns. When the Circle produced a publication entitled Jazz ę58, the copies were immediately confiscated. 1964 saw the founding of the Czechoslovak Jazz Federation as a co-ordinating body, but it did not have legal subject status. One of the leading musicians of the rising Modern, the great expert on be-bop, double bass player and scat singer **Luděk Hulan** (1929–1979) was a moving force in Prague Jazz life from the beginning of the 1950s. Depending on the possibilities he organised jam sessions for the new generation in various venues. He remained a great promoter of jazz to the end of his life. Naturally, however, the communist regime's cultural controllers viewed efforts to bring the jazz community together and spontaneous organisation with great suspicion.
From the later fifties the time was ripening for the emancipation of those swing orchestra players who wanted to develop the trends of modern jazz systematically in smaller line-ups. In this context, an important role was played by the saxophonist and clarinettist **Karel Krautgartner**. In 1956 he left the Karel Vlach Orchestra and founded a quintet in which **Karel Velebný** (1931–1989), another important figure in Czech jazz history, played saxophone and vibraphone. Originally this was a coffeehouse jazz band intended for dance, but soon it grew into a septet with the addition of other important soloists of the future – the trumpet and bass trumpet player **Václav Hollitzer** and the saxophonist and flautist **Jan Konopásek**. The bandleader conceived the band's appearance as jazz concert education and put together the repertoire from various different styles in jazz history. In the years 1957–1958 the Krautgartner group was influenced by the music of Miles Davis and his Capitol Orchestra, as well as the Modern Jazz Quartet. In the new nonet the influences of cool jazz interacted with those of West coast jazz. Among those musicians considered founders of Czech modern jazz, the bassist **Luděk Hulan**, the drummer **Ivan Dominák**, the trombonist **Zdeněk Pulec** and the pianist **Míša Polák** all played with Krautgartner.

Karel Velebný

In addition to jazz, the nonet also accompanied popular music singers – this double existence was usually economically necessary. After the Krautgartner band was dissolved in 1958, Studio 5 was formed with the aim of reflecting the development of contemporary American jazz in a more up-to-the-minute way. Its first members were the vibraphonist **Karel Velebný**, the baritone-saxophonist **Jan Konopásek**, the guitarist **Vladimír Tomek**, the bassist **Luděk Hulan** and drummer **Ivan Dominák**.
In 1958 Karel Krautgartner was entrusted with putting together a Czechoslovak **All Stars Band** for the popular music festival of the international radio and television organisation OIRT. The whole **Studio 5** line-up and Krautgartner's co-players performed in it. This west-coast orientated orchestra and its members formed the basis of the future **Dance Orchestra of Czechoslovak Radio (TOČR)**, which had its premiere in March 1960. It was orientated to swing dance music and jazz orchestral pieces. After three years the orchestra divided, creating the **Jazz Orchestra of Czechoslovak Radio (JOČR)** alongside TOČR. Although the instrumental line-up was similar, the repertoire of these two orchestras differed. The leadership of JOČR was entrusted to **Kamil Hála**, while Karel Krautgartner remained artistic director

and conductor. The repertoire was based on unconventional arrangements of pieces by its own members and existing pieces from the swing themes of Count Basie or Neal Heft as far as Gil Evans. It also contained the orchestra's own third stream work or classics interpreted in this spirit, for example Igor Stravinsky's *Ebony Concerto*, Debussy's *Rhapsody for Soprano Saxophone* or Glazunov's *Concerto in E flat major for alto saxophone*. Among Czech composers outside the orchestra who wrote major third stream pieces we find **Pavel Blatný**, **Alexej Fried** and **Miloš Štědroň**. The main authors of original jazz pieces who came from the orchestra's own ranks were Kamil Hála, Karel Krautgartner, Karel Velebný, Luděk Hulan and the young pianist **Karel Růžička**. (although the latter only joined the orchestra in 1966). The life of Czech jazz began to focus around the musicians in this orchestra. Although the real jazz ferment was taking place mostly in Prague where musicians came not just to gain experience but also to study at the Prague Conservatory (mainly composition, jazz was not taught), amateur jazz bands formed in the smaller towns, and not only Brno, Ostrava or Olomouc. One significant band was formed in 1959 in the North Bohemian town of Ústí nad Labem – the **Jazz Combo Ústí**. The band was the cradle of two important musicians who later achieved fame abroad – the baritone saxophonist **Jaroslav Jakubovič** and the trombonist **Svatopluk Košvanec**.

The Hopes of the 1960s

At the turn of the fifties/sixties the communist regime found a new enemy in the field of music when rock'n'roll, that derivate of jazz out of blues, rhythm&blues, boogie-woogie, swing and country&western music, reached Czechoslovakia. Jazz ceased to be the main perceived threat and was "graciously" recognised as a musical genre, although the activities of people around jazz continued to be watched simply because admiration for anything American and "western" was always was ideologically suspect in itself. The fact that jazz activities were not directly persecuted did not of course mean that state culture became favourable to jazz. Jazz periodicals were printed by non-typeset methods and brought out in samizdat, amateur form by private individuals or by the non-Prague jazz clubs, always just for a small circle of readers. The brief exception was **Jazz Bulletin** published in the years 1966–1968 by the Czechoslovak Jazz Federation. Additionally, thanks to the fact that the prominent jazz activist Lubomír Dorůžka became editor of the official national monthly for popular music **Melodie** (founded in 1963), jazz was a consistent element in its contents. Finally, in 1964, came the **International Jazz Festival Prague**, which with state financial support provided a chance for the Czech public to hear stars of American and European jazz juxtaposed with the best domestic bands. But even here the choice of programme had to be cautious initially. In the first year American jazz was represented only by musicians working in Europe at the time: the only real star was the saxophonist Leo Wright from the singer Dave Douglas's band. As a result the range of jazz from the Soviet block countries featured at the festival emerged as all the more interesting: the brothers Joachim and Rolf Khün from East Germany, Aladár Pege from Hungary and the Poles Zbigniew Namyslowski and Krzystof Komeda. The European "West" was represented by Acker Bilk from England and the German trombonist Albert Mangelsdorf's band, which presented the most contemporary avant-garde jazz trends. Political balance had to be taken into account in the prize giving. The performance of Mangelsdorf from West Germany was clearly the best, but this meant that the prize had to be split with the East German musicians – the Kühn brothers, who were on the threshold of brilliant careers but still far from musically mature.

At the end of the 1950s it was **Studio 5** that was of decisive importance for Czech modern jazz. The censors failed to understand the music and Lubomír Dorůžka had to expend a lot of effort defending it. At the end of the band's short career, however, its music became stuck in a rut and the members fell out in their views on future direction. After three years together, Studio 5 collapsed in 1961 and two new influential groups were formed. The vibraphonist and tenor saxophonist **Karel Velebný** together with the saxophonist and flautist **Jan Konopásek** formed the **S+H Q** ensemble, later to be better known as **SHQ**.

Studio 5

It is no exaggeration to say that over the three decades up to the death of the bandleader in 1989, all musicians of all generations of Czech jazz went through this band. The other important protagonist of the dissolved Studio 5, the double bassist **Luděk Hulan**, formed the **Jazz Studio** in the framework of the Radio Orchestra where he was joined by the drummer Ivan Dominák. The difference of style was clear. Velebný's SHQ was orientated to the intellectual currents of modern jazz, while Hulan's Jazz Studio played more animal music close to hard bop and soul jazz. The activities of the Jazz Studio ended in practice with Luděk Hulan's departure for Switzerland in 1968, where he lived for several months without playing much music. After his return he used to play on an occasional basis with different bands. It was an essential feature of both SHQ and Jazz Studio that they developed and played their own original music alongside the American repertoire they took up. This meant that the protagonists of Czech modern jazz were in fact carrying on the tradition of the creators of the swing era in Czechoslovakia, who had always engaged in composition of their own.

The year 1961, when Studio 5 broke up, saw a particularly remarkable event in Czech jazz. The **Jan Hammer Jr**., a thirteen-year-old pianist influenced by the lyricism of Bill Evans, founded his own **Junior Trio** with the the **Vitouš brothers**, the fourteen-year-old bass player **Miroslav** and the drummer **Alan**, a year older. During just two years the talented teenagers made a name for themselves on the domestic scene and from the mid-60s in neighbouring countries as well. In 1965 the famous German jazz critic and producer Joachim Ernst Berendt made a TV documentary called Jazz in der Tschechoslowakei with them.
In 1961 the Slovak trumpet player **Laco Déczi** came to Prague to do his two years obligatory military service. During his service he took part in jam sessions with leading Prague jazzmen, and afterwards he decided to stay permanently in Prague, where he later became a member of Velebný's SHQ. In the summer of 1965 he toured a whole range of countries including Germany, Austria, Poland and Egypt with the Reduta Quintet. Joachim Kühn also guested with them for a short time on piano. In 1966 the quintet changed its line-up, Déczi

became leader and it is worth mentioning that alongside himself and his friend from Slovakia the drummer **Laco Troppa** he engaged two very young future stars of world jazz – the pianist Jan Hammer Jr. and the double bassist Miroslav Vitouš, whose Junior Trio had fallen apart with the departure of Alan Vitouš. In 1967 Laco Déczi formed his own band, which was to be an important part of the history of Czech jazz over the next twenty years: the hard bop quintet **Jazz Cellula**. Musicians who went through it in its first phase included for example Luděk Hulan and Ivan Dominák, but also the next first guitarist of Czech modern jazz **Rudolf Dašek**. As models they looked to the repertoire of Freddie Hubbard, Lee Morgan and Wayne Shorter, with Déczi and Dašek adding their own original works. Another current of Czech jazz was represented by the group **Jazz Q** orientated to the music of Thelonious Monk and Ornette Coleman. It was founded in 1964 by the saxophonist and flautist **Jiří Stivín** and keyboards player **Martin Kratochvíl**. Towards the end of the sixties Jazz Q was moving towards free jazz and jazz-rock synthesis.

The Interrupted Dream

The sixties in Czechoslovakia were marked by a relaxation of controls on cultural life. This happened both because of the pressure on politicians caused by economic problems and cyclically deteriorating relations between the communist East and capitalist West, and as a result of the increasingly vigorous activities of the unofficial and semi-official cultural scene, to which jazz belonged. Jazz musicians were gradually getting to go abroad, where they were usually sent to various festivals not only in the east but also the west, beyond the machine guns, minefields and barbed wire of the carefully guarded iron curtain. Such opportunities even started to be extended to amateur groups, which had several festivals in Europe. The 1966 saw the launch of a **Czechoslovak Amateur Jazz Festival** with international participation. Czech amateurs were now going to similar festivals, for example in San Sebastian in Portugal or in Vienna. In 1967 the festival that was to have the longest uninterrupted tradition of any of its kind in Czechoslovakia (it exists to this day) was founded in a small town close to Prague – the **Slaný Jazz Days**. The jazz grassroots seemed to be flourishing and Czech jazz gradually acquiring a reputation on the European scene. The Prague Spring of 1968 aroused great hope of change in the political system. For some time the cultural sphere had been seeing the rise of a generation bolder in expressing its ideas: the first happenings were organised, the new wave in film, and books that had been banned for years were coming out. Czech jazz was catching up fast in getting to know avant garde trends. This more liberal decade was also marked by the continuing emigration of jazzmen. The bassist **Milan Pilar** failed to return from an SHQ concert in Sweden in 1963. In the summer of 1965 the saxophonist **Jan Konopásek** left the republic. The leader of the Reduta Quintet, bassist **Jan Arnet** left at the beginning of 1966. Just before midnight on the 20th of August 1968 the armies of the Warsaw Pact marched into Czechoslovakia under Soviet leadership in order to put an end to the Prague Spring and keep the post-Stalinist politicians in power. **Miroslav Vitouš** left to study in Boston the same month and stayed in the USA. At the beginning of September the saxophonist **Jaroslav Jakubovič** from the successful Jazz Combo Ústí emigrated as well. In the autumn of 1968 **Jan Hammer Jr**. and the bassist **Jiří "George" Mráz** went to Munich for an engagement at the Club Domicile. When it was over they both went on scholarships to the Berklee School of Music in Boston and stayed in the USA. After the occupation the conductor, clarinetist and saxophonist **Karel Krautgartner** left the radio orchestra. He went to Vienna where he soon became chief conductor of the Big Band ÖRF. Czech jazz waited for a resurrection. Towards the end of 1969 a few jazz enthusiasts submitted an application to the authorities for approval for a new organisation – the future Jazz Section. It would not be permitted and established for another two years.

reviews

Joseph Umstatt

Concerti

Solamente Naturali Bratislava, Rita Papp – harpsichord, Juraj Kováč – cello, Miloš Valent – violin.
Production: Bernhard Trebuch. Text: Eng., Ger., Slovak. Recorded: Jan. 2004, Sept. 2005, Bratislava Castle, Bratislava. Released: 2006. TT: 67:56. DDD. 1 CD ORF Edition Alte Musik ORF CD 436.

Although the 18th century was the golden age of noble capellas, very little music has survived from this milieu at least in Central Europe and the earlier half of the century. One of the few musicians who worked in a whole series of the capellas here and in whose case we also have the chance to hear at least some of his compositions was Joseph Umstatt (1711–1762). Like many other composers of the time this native Viennese gained his education with the Jesuits, at the Gymnasium in Trnava where he already showed himself to be an able musician and composer. In the 1730s he was a member of the capella of the Archbishop-primate Imre Esterházy in Bratislava, after which he was capellmeister for the Countess of Dietrichstein in Brno, then capellmeister of the Saxon-Polish minister Count Brühl in Dresden, and finally episcopal court composer and capellmeister in Bamberg. His surviving pieces include works for keyboard instruments, a few church compositions and above all symphonies and the concertos that also appear on this CD. They include six violin concertos from a remarkable source – an autograph calligraphically worked score clearly of 1738, which was preserved in Vienna. Possibly the young composer unsuccessfully applied for a place in the court capella with these pieces, but at all events he not only devoted a lot of care to their external appearance, but assembled truly outstanding compositions. His concertos are based on the Vivaldian model of the solo concerto, but at the same time are already imbued with the gallant style and above all overflow with fresh and original inventiveness. The programme of the recording is augmented by a cello and harpsichord concerto from the composer's period in Brno and Dresden; the later Harpsichord concerto in particular, already composed entirely in the spirit of early classicism, is a masterpiece fully exploiting the possibilities of the solo instrument and once again showing not only the perfect craftsmanship but also the unusual inventiveness of the composer. The credo of the ensemble **Solamente naturali** is carved directly in its name – to play "only naturally" is of course easy to say or write (as Nicola Vicentino did in the mid-16th century), but hard to live up to in practice. Nonetheless, the violinist **Miloš Valent** and his ensemble play with an unobtrusive lightness that brings out the exceptional quality of Umstatt's concertos and at the same time entirely fulfils the ensemble's motto: they truly make it sound as if it were easy to play the virtuoso parts of the violin concertos in C major or F major, and the harpsichordist **Rita Papp** and cellist **Juraj Kováč** are entirely Valent's equals in this respect in the concertos entrusted to them. Finally, naturalness includes symmetry and equilibrium, and this CD achieves both by the (elsewhere far from automatic) balance of the musicians' input and the contribution of the musicologist Ladislav Kačic, who took care of the academic side of the whole project and also a long and informative preface for the booklet. We have before us a profile CD of an excellent ensemble, but also an entirely pioneering recording of the grand works of a brilliant composer.

Václav Kapsa

Leoš Janáček

Piano Works (I)

Slávka Pěchočová – piano.
Production: not stated. Text: Eng., Fr., Ger. Recorded: 2009. Released: 2010. TT 77:33. DDD 1 DSD Praga Digitals PRD/DSD 250266 (distribution Classics)

This recording of Janáček's piano works has all the features we ought to expect from any new recording of well-known music: a distinctive interpretation based on the most precise possible preparation. It is a pity that so often the reality is different today: everyone wants to record and so many recordings are just less successful clones of a few benchmark versions. From her teacher Ivan Moravec **Slávka Pěchočová** takes not just a rare feeling for the quality of touch, but also an aversion to publicity and marketing activities. She relies on honesty and content. And once again we find Praga Digitals providing an opportunity for a performer who suffers from an unjustified lack of care and attention at home.
The CD contains all Janáček's main works for solo piano: *Sonata, On an Overgrown Path and In the Mists*. And the performance is remarkable. Ever piece here has its story, its clear climax, its point, and its precisely and logically chosen range of touch. Thanks to this logic we hear many details for the first time, or we rediscover them. This effect is assisted by the tempos, which are mainly slow, sometimes even extremely and audaciously slow. Interpreted in this way, Janáček actually emerges as having much more in common with, say, Prokofiev: masculinity, energy, and a feeling for abbreviation. In other words, this is the Janáček of the operas, to whom the Janáček of the piano works has always been considered a complete contrast. Here we have a greater sense of the presence of the operatic Janáček. With this approach, it is the parts of On an Overgrown Path that are most interesting in terms of structure, for example the Madonna of Frýdek, that sound the best – completely magical in fact.
It is well known that the cycle In the Mists has nothing in common with mists of the impressionistic type, but few performers have embarked on their interpretation with such a feeling for structure and detail, and so the four-movement cycle becomes almost a small sonata. At the same time, the performance errs neither on the side of dry rationalism nor external dramatic effect. Here we have a mature ability to capture a delicate and ardent inner world.
Pěchočová conception of these works may well provoke polemical questions (as every new recording should!), and one would be whether there is not too much dramatic seriousness and whether she is not going too far along the road to turning Janáček into Beethoven. In any case, it is my impression that one can go no further in this direction without over-loading these works. But it is the strong distinctiveness of interpretation that makes it more interesting to go back to older and classical performances – and to this new album too.

Jindřich Bálek

Antonín Dvořák

Symfonic Poems on texts by Erben

Czech Philharmonic, Sir Charles Mackerras.
Production: Matouš Vlčinský.
Text: Cz., Eng., Ger., Fr. Recorded: live, November and December 2008 and in the studio, June 2001, Oct. 2009 .
Released: 2010. TT: 79:46. DDD. 1 CD Supraphon SU 4012-2.

The response to Antonín Dvořák's Symphonic poems on the texts of Erben's collection *Bouquet* has always been peculiar and often ambiguous. There is no doubt at all that since the time when they were created they have been part of the basic repertoire of Czech national music. They have sometimes been regarded as a sort of antithesis to Smetana's *My Country*. Like My Country, this is a cycle of symphonic poems, but while the parts have the same purely Erbenesque atmosphere, they are still very different and contrasting in theme and musical treatment. To play the whole cycle takes roughly the same time as with My Country – one full concert programme, yet conductors and organisers do not have the courage to present them in this format. Václav Talich was a moving and perhaps essential force behind their increasing popularity and in the fifties he was also was the first to record them on disks, in a model interpretation with the Czech Philharmonic. Yet not even Talich ever presented them altogether at one concert – he would perform three at most, complementing them with a symphony. Today people are even more averse to a concert consisting only of programmatic music, even if it immensely beautiful and appealing to listeners.
The situation is entirely different with recordings, where their release as a complete set on one CD, or earlier two CDs, seems entirely natural and attractive. A great deal has been written on the dramatic power and problems of the individual parts. Despite various controversies, their artistic value remains unchallengeable and the individual scores are a constant challenge for performers – especially those who have an affinity for programmatic music. All the conductors who have recorded Dvořák's Erben cycle up to now (outside the CR these include Rafael Kubelík with the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, or recently Sir Simon Rattle with the Berlin Philharmonic), have had strong ties with opera, and so a feeling for dramatic action. My focus here, however, is the history of Czech Philharmonic recordings of the cycle. Talich's recording (of 1949 and 1951) was still mono, and the Water Goblin was not even recorded on tape. The stereophonic complete set by Zdeněk Chalabala of 1961 (his legendary Rusalka was recorded in the same year) was the first technically perfect and above all ravishing recording of the whole tetralogy. In 1977 the principal conductor Václav Neumann added another complete set to the series – a grand example of the conductor's art at the peak of his career. The first digital recording of the work was made ten years later by Bohumil Gregor. Artistically it did not surpass the existing recordings but it was valuable as part of a much larger Dvořákian orchestral project. After this there was no further recording of the set for more than twenty years and – to be frank – this was no great loss because there was little sign in concert performance that there was any great artistic achievement in the making with this repertoire. The lack of a recording is a pity only because it means the absence of a document of the period. Now, however, Supraphon has come up with its fifth recording of a complete set and there are several factors in its favour. Its conductor Sir Charles Mackerras once studied privately with Václav Talich and has identified with him in many respects in his attitude to Czech repertoire. To put it more concretely: for several years Sir Charles has been the most active conductor of Czech national music on CD, and even in the whole history of sound recordings! Another crucial factor for the choice of Mackerras is his close association with opera, and so sensitive attitude to programmatic music. There are other positive considerations, but these two are in themselves convincing. We may call this a recording that first and foremost documents the Czech Philharmonic of the 21st century, and all the more welcome for the fact that we are in a period when the recording activities for domestic publishers are almost nil, for well-known reasons. The orchestra has a different sound than twenty or more years ago. Its technical perfection and sound culture, even if it is now no longer so distinctive, is a brilliant medium for colourful and evocative interpretation of all four of Dvořák's scores. The two different environments in which the recordings were made constitute a certain handicap. *The Water Goblin* and the Noon Witch are live concert recordings from 2008, while the *Golden Spinning-Wheel* and the Dove were recorded in the studio, at a long time interval (2001, 2009). With the first two the sound is slightly muffled, individual instruments occasionally sink into inaudibility and the climactic passages are not as colourful and full of contrast as they could be in a studio recording. With the second two, however, the listener is rewarded by potent impressions and sparkling, dynamically perfectly elaborated details in the Spinning-Wheel and perhaps the most beautiful Dove among all the recordings mentioned. It contains ravishing lyrical passages and one of the most acoustically colourful wedding dances I have ever heard! Mackerras's Dvořák is musically rich, and very individual in small details, even if overall it does not and could not surpass some of the earlier recordings. In conclusion, we can say that the series Talich – Chalabala – Neumann – Gregor – Mackerras, as complete sets all currently available on the market, gives us a remarkable, representative and very necessary overview (and not only just in terms of Dvořák performance) of the standard and quality of the Czech Philharmonic from the beginnings of quality sound recording up to the present.

Bohuslav Vítek

Sviatoslav Richter

Tchaikovsky: Piano Concerto no.1 in B minor, Prokofiev: Piano Concerto in D flat major, Bach: Piano Concerto in D minor

Sviatoslav Richter - piano, Czech Philharmonic, Prague Symphony Orchestra, Karel Ančerl (Tchaikovsky, Prokofiev), Václav Talich (Bach).
Production: Matouš Vlčinský.
Text: Eng., Ger., Fr., Cz. Recorded: 1954.
Released: compilation 2010. TT: 71:31. AAD Mono. 1 CD Supraphon SU 4014-2.

The three recordings, made in association with the Prague Spring Festival in 1954, are among the greatest gems in our gramophone archives. This is no discovery, since all three have already been published more than once, most recently in the Talich and Ančerl series. But it is a good thing that they have now appeared in another re-edition on one CD, because in a way they belong together. These are recordings exceptional even in the context of the recorded output of **Sviatoslav Richter.** All the well-known and obscure labels have been publishing every possible recording by the pianist of genius, again and again, often in pirated versions, often with unappealing jackets and often the technical quality is debatable, and so it is a good thing that with this re-edition Supraphon has not skimped on the technical or visual side. Richter recorded Tchaikovsky's *Piano Concerto in B minor* three times, first with Marvinsky in the Soviet Union, then this time in Prague and then once with Herbert von Karajan in Vienna. And there are grounds for considering this recording the most interesting, particularly because of the youthful energy that alternates naturally here with fresh lyrical passages where there is no shadow of sentimentality. Let us remember that Tchaikovsky was very young when he wrote this concerto, and there is no reason to turn it into a heavily momentous epic work as happens on the Karajan recording. Prokofiev's energetic *Concerto in D flat major* is performed here with such sovereign mastery that it takes one's breath away. And the listener appreciates the rhythmic precision of Karel Ančerl's conducting all the more. The balance between modernity and lyrical romanticism is ideally judged here. Bach's Concerto in D minor with Václav Talich conducting is not just a historical document of the romantic approach, as is sometimes said. Both soloist and conductor show a model respect for the spirit of the score, and today we can still admire the way the individual parts are brought out, the lucid polyphony, the discipline of tempo and rhythm and at the same time the extraordinary musical vibrancy of the interpretation. The charisma of this recording arises from a deeply humble attitude to Bach's music and its understanding, compared to which even some recordings on period instruments pale.

Jindřich Bálek

Antonín Dvořák

Symphony nos. 7 and 8, Symphonic Variations, Prague Waltzes, Polka

Musica Florea, Marek Štryncl.
Production: not stated. Text: Cz., Eng.
Recorded: 2004 (CD 1) and 2005 (CD 2) in the ČNSO studio . Released: 2009.
TT: 99:99 (CD 1), 99:99 (CD 2) DDD. 2 CD
Arta F 10180 (distribution).

This beautifully presented recording of Dvořák's music conducted by Marek Štryncl with his ensemble Musica Florea is the very creditable follow-up to a concert project. A few years ago audiences at two different concerts were given the chance to find out how Dvořák sounds on instruments just a little more than a century old with gut strings. I personally found the concerts more a bold and adventurous experiment than a musical treat. And I experienced something of the same impression when listening to the recording. Yet this is a challenge, a quite radically different view, with which performers of Dvořák's music ought to come to terms. For some time it has been common on the international scene, for experts on Baroque music and specialised ensembles to play Romantic music as well, bringing to it their own perspective and new authentic experience with early music. But when Nikolaus Harnoncourt decided to present Brahms symphonies, he recorded them with the Berlin Philharmonic. And he recorded the last three Dvořák symphonies with the Concertgebouw Amsterdam Orchestra. He brought his own conceptions to these recordings – but did not manage entirely to abandon the sound of a modern orchestra. In this country the situation is different and I could not even imagine the Czech Philharmonic inviting Marek Štryncl and allowing him to realise his own idea of Dvořák, deliberately contrary to traditional customs and pious conventions. In the Czech Republic traditional institutions are much more rigidly conserved and protected – a fact that allows or even impels musicians in the field of early music to even greater courage. To tackle Dvořák in this way they have to proceed almost like the old national revivalists of the composer's day, because in his time there was no permanent Czech orchestra with enough members to perform new Dvořák works satisfactorily... And just because the performances had to be put on in this one-off project spirit, they were such big events for everyone concerned – even if at some point I have to ask provocatively what is pioneering purpose and what is simply inadequate rehearsal time. What is more, the play without vibrato combines with the dry studio acoustics. I would suggest that the listener starts with the Eighth Symphony and the brilliant prelude to Vanda which have more transparent structures allowing us to follow the intentions of the performers with greater ease. What is always pleasantly surprising is that the fortes nowhere engulf the listener. The slightly lower tuning sounds very fine in the middle registers, even if in the higher registers it grates somewhat. The Seventh makes more demands on the conductor and audience and the very sophisticated Symphonic Variations is also a great discovery in the chosen tempo and sound quality. Anyone seriously interested in Dvořák's musical world should not miss this recording.

Jindřich Bálek

Sergei Prokofiev

String Quartet nos. 1 and 2. Sonata for Two Violins

Pavel Haas Quartet
Production: Matouš Vlčinský, Text. Eng., Ger., Fr. Cz. Recorded: June 2009.
Released: 2009. TT: 60:42. DDD. 1 CD.
Supraphon SU 3957-2

This new recording from the **Pavel Haas Quartet** will definitely not disappoint expectations – even though it is a musical piece for more sophisticated listeners. Yet anyone who loves the musical style of Sergei Prokofiev will find everything that is characteristic of this composer: a certain classical order, typical rhythm, earthiness and an unsentimental lyricism in the slow movements. The CD offers both Prokofiev's string quartets (the *B minor* of 1931 and

the *F major* of 1942) and the *Sonata for Two Violins in C major* (1932). The first quartet is already interesting in having three movements with the final movement (Andante) being slow in contrast to the scherzo middle movement. In the Haas Quartet's interpretation the latter has an airy lightness and virtuoso glitter, while the third movement is meditative but the true climax of the whole piece in terms of expressive intensity. In the second quartet subtitled *On Kabardinian Themes*, the folkloric inspiration is the most immediately appealing aspect, and the Haas Quartet is not afraid to play it with tremendous verve. The third title on the Supraphon CD is performed with the third Pavel Haas Quartet second violin – Eva Karová – and it is to be hoped that this change is already permanent. Prokofiev is a composer who does not speculate about music, and this is something that is almost a rarity in the 20th century – a certain immediate joy in music is part of his style and it is a good thing that this is precisely how the performers approach his work. As the members of the quartet said in a recent interview, they have made the CD not because the composer is not yet as well represented on the market as Beethoven or Dvořák, but because they genuinely love playing this music. By coincidence, however, there are not many benchmark recordings of the Prokofiev quartets and this could easily become one. The technical quality of the sound, the accompanying text and the design are also excellent. Given the sixty-minute length of the CD, the listener might wonder whether it might not have been a good idea to complement the string quartets not with the sonata but with the neoclassical composer's favourite classic, Joseph Haydn. The dramaturgical tightness of the CD is both an advantage and a disadvantage. This is because while Prokofiev is one of the few 20th-century composers to have an absolutely unmistakable idiom, he quite often steals from himself, and so the pieces presented do not differ from each other strikingly enough for the listener always to want to listen to the CD from beginning to end. On the other hand, the performance is truly captivating.

Jindřich Bálek

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Divertimenti for Strings & Two French Horns

The Stamic Quartet (Bohuslav Matoušek, Josef Kekula, Jan Pěruška, Vladimír Leixner), Zdeněk and Bedřich Tylšar – French horn.
Production: Matouš Vlčinský.
Text: Cz., Eng., Ger., Fr. Recorded: 1991, Studio Domovina, Prague. Released: 2009.
TT: 68:10, 76:05. DDD. 2 CD Supraphon Music a.s. SU 3979-2.

Supraphon has now been able to re-release Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *Divertimenti*, recorded in 1991 by the Stamic Quartet led by **Bohuslav Matoušek** and in collaboration with the **Tylšar brothers**, for its unique charm and purity of interpretation. The happy combination of a top quartet with two master horn players made it possible for a high-quality recording to be made that to this day remains an acknowledged masterpiece of performance that often also serves as important study material. The three divertimenti for string quartet and two French horns were written in the years 1777–79 when Mozart was still working in Salzburg and are based compositionally not on a quartet but a trio concept. Here the first violin takes the solo, very difficult role, and so we are confronted with a truly distinctive and unusual form in the composer's musical development. Matoušek's performance and the disciplined but not merely accompanying role of the other players makes this interpretation by the Stamic Quartet and the Tylšar brothers an admirable example of Mozartian tenderness and grace. The French horns, different in sound and expressive, always take over their melody in a way that is disciplined if entirely equal in value. In the accompanying parts they then meld perfectly with the strings. The final Rondo of the third Divertimento K 334 is the real crown of the whole recording. It is here that the integrated parts of the four stringed and two wind instruments most conspicuously evoke the sense that we are listening to a much bigger ensemble, and the smooth interplay is truly unique. Both when it first appeared and today, one can say "hat's off!" to this recording without reservation. The double CD re-edition is also well-presented and equipped, both in terms of the content of the booklet and the retrained and tasteful graphic design.

Marta Tužilová

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A new issue of Czech Music Qua

is just out. Among others it brings and
in the Czech Republic, articles on Kar

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Offer of promotion CDs with Czech co

Ivan Poledňak, Musicologist an

We regret to announce that Monday,
musicologist, publicist and teacher Iva
music psychology, aesthetics, theory ar
the Department of Musicology FF UP, Olomouc, and Charles University in Prague a.o.); he also contributed significantly to the several volumes of the Encyclopedia of Jazz and Modern Popular Music. In 2004 he published a comprehensive biography on Czech contemporary composer Jan Klusak. Last farewell to be held on Wednesday 14 October 2009 (11.00) in the great ceremonial hall of the crematorium in Prague-Strašnice.

Bohuslav Martinů Revisited 2009

International anniversary project under the auspices of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic Mr. Karel Schwarzenberg. Honorary Board: Gabriela Beňačková, Zuzana Růžičková, Josef Suk. Further information here

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Lípa Musica

International Music Festival

September 17th – October 23rd 2010

OPENING CONCERT
September 17th, 7 pm
Basilica of All Saints, Česká Lípa

Prague Philharmonia
Roman Patočka – violin
Ondřej Kukal – conductor
Ludwig van Beethoven:
Violin Concerto in D major, Op. 61
Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy:
Symphony No. 4 in A major, Op. 9 „Italian"

September 18th, 8 pm
St. Barbara's Church, Zahrádky

Stadler's Clarinet Quartet
Tradional music by candlelight
(Albinoni, Bach, Franck, Farkas, Pavlorek)

September 19th, 5 pm
The Church of the Holy Cross, Nový Oldřichov

Pavel Steidl – guitar
Guitar Legends of the 19th and 20th centuries
(Legnani, Paganini, Sor, Tedesco, Torroba, Domeniconi, Obrovska, Steidl)

September 24th, 7 pm
Church of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, Česká Lípa

Kateryna Kolcová – vocal, piano (Ukraine)
"Rusyns – folk songs of the East Slavic ethnic group"

September 25th, 7 pm
The Church of the Birth of the Virgin Mary, Kravaře v Čechách

Musica Aeterna (Slovakia)
Peter Zajíček – artistic leader
„Fidicinium Sacro-Profanum"
(Biber, Schmelzer, Vejvanovsky, Muffat, Forchheim)

September 28th, 7 pm
St. Lawrence, Church, Jezvé

The Czech Philharmonic Low Brass
Marie Červová – organ
Concert in honour of St. Wenceslas
(Bach, Scheidt, Debussy, Ravel)

October 1st, 9.30 and 11.00 am
Jirásek's Theater, Česká Lípa

DRAK Theater
Doremifa As Dear as Salt
(a musical fairy tale for children of 6 to 12)

October 2nd, 7 pm
Basilica of All Saints, Česká Lípa

István Mátyás (Hungary)
Organ recital
(Bach, Liszt, Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, Schmidt, Antalffy-Zsiross)

October 5th, 7 pm
Biber's chapel, Česká Lípa

Wojciech Waleczek – piano (Poland)
„The Pianist Poet" – concert celebrating bicentenary of Chopin
(Chopin, Liszt)

October 8th, 7 pm
St. James the Greater, Church, Železný Brod
October 9th, 7 pm
Temple of Peace, Hrádek nad Nisou

Schola Gregoriana Pragensis
Jiří Bárta – cello
David Eben – artistic leader
Kateřina Englichová – harp
David Řehoř – vibes
"Dialogue of human voice and chords"

October 10th, 5 pm
Basilica of St. Zdislava of Lemberk, Jablonné v Podještědí

Prague Philharmonic Children´s Choir
prof. Jiří Chvála – artistic leader and choirmaster
(Poulenc, Fauré, Dvořák, Smetana, Pärt, Eben, Kodály, Bernstein)

October 14th, 7 pm
City Theater, Jablonec nad Nisou

Hana Hegerová and Petr Malásek's band
"Chanson"

October 15th, 7 pm
Jirásek's Theater, Česká Lípa

DOT 504 Dance Company
Holdin' fast – Dreamy ballade of sexual addiction

CLOSING CONCERT
October 23rd, 7 pm
City Theater, Nový Bor

Baborák Ensemble
Radek Baborák – French horn, artistic leader
(Mozart, Glazunov, Bok, Turner, Sinigaglia)

Tickets for the festival can be ordered online at www.lipamusica.cz