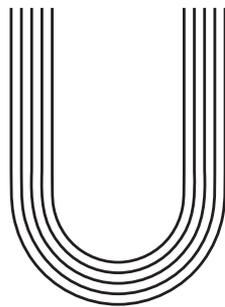
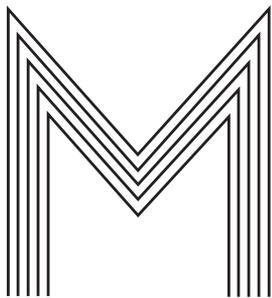


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**Schola Gregoriana  
Pragensis**

**Opera and Ostrava  
Janáček's Operas  
Glagolitic Mass**

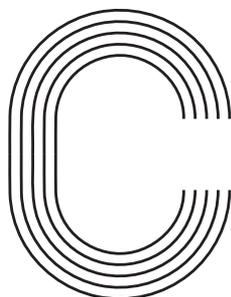


# The Year of Czech Music 2014 Is Coming...

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Dear readers,

This is not the first time our magazine is dealing with the phenomenon of Janáček's operas. On this occasion, however, our viewpoint is in a way practical, down-to-earth even: in crude terms, it is Janáček's operas that, alongside Dvořák's New World Symphony, represent the most significant export article Czech music has to offer. And this very aspect is the focus of the article written by Helena Havlíková, in which she juxtaposes the international fame of Janáček's operas with their not overly enthusiastic reception on the part of Czech audiences. Indeed, Janáček is by no means deemed an opera prophet in his own country. Although he is generally considered one of the greatest Czech composers, many an institution bears his name and many a contemporary composer reveres his work, there is none of the carefree warmth with which Czech audiences embrace, for instance, Dvořák. We could add that in point of fact this doesn't actually matter much; it would, after all, be far worse if Janáček's inspired music were adored in his own small country but remained unknown to the rest of the world. Fortunately, the times when Janáček was deemed an "obscure modernist" in the Czech lands and a "bizarre folklorist" in Western Europe have long gone.

Janáček is also the subject of another article in this issue: Jonáš Hájek's piece about the new critical edition of the Glagolitic Mass, one of Janáček's most beautiful compositions.

Thank you for the loyalty you have shown us over the past year. Wishing you a fruitful and peaceful 2012.

Petr Bakla

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# WE TRY TO SING BEAUTIFUL MUSIC

**After a year's interval, a new album featuring Schola Gregoriana Pragensis (SGP) has been released. Unlike the previous two discs, it returns to the plainchant repertoire of late-Medieval Bohemia, enriched with the later polyphony tradition.**

**I discussed the background of the project titled Adventus Domini with the ensemble's artistic director David Eben and the long-time SGP member Hasan El-Dunia, who conceived the album's dramaturgy. The first questions were answered by David Eben.**

*The Advent theme runs through SGP's discography, as well as your musicological focus. You dealt with the Advent liturgy at a Prague cathedral in your graduation thesis, while your doctoral thesis was dedicated to the Advent repertoire too. Can you describe why Advent, besides its spiritual aspect, is so interesting for a musicologist and performer?*

It's true that Advent does have a special place in my heart, yet I should add that its liturgical aspect is immensely intriguing. The Advent liturgy accentuates a dual focus. One level is, naturally, the preparation for the Nativity, while there's also the preparation for Christ's eschatological arrival at the end of time. This dual setting of Advent plays a relatively significant role in the liturgy and we can observe it in the liturgical texts of the individual Advent Sundays. Another thing connected with Advent – albeit one coming somewhat later – is the Marian reverence. Advent without the Marian element is virtually inconceivable and the Marian theme adds to this period a certain lyrical tone, which is not so marked in other periods. Advent is also the beginning of the



PHOTO: LUKÁŠ PELECH

liturgical year and it's interesting that it served as the beginning for the creators of the plainchant of the Proprium, as shown by the research carried out by the American musicologist James McKinnon. But we're in danger here of going off on a tangent... The specificity of the Advent liturgy lies in a certain lyricism and the dual emphasis of the arrival of Christ in the semblance of a child, as well as in the form of a judge at the end of time.

*The new Advent album has been released. I'll be discussing the dramaturgy in detail with Hasan El-Dunia, the man behind it. David, can you tell me about the ensemble's schedule for the remainder of the year?*

We're about to go on an Advent tour which should present the specific tradition of Advent songs, as it is represented in Czech sources, including later polyphonic versions. I hope we'll be able to provide the audience with a deep insight into the Advent spirituality, as it was perceived by our ancestors at the turn of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.



PHOTO: LUKÁŠ PELECH

*And your plans for 2012? The two previous SGP discs are crossovers (Close Voices from Afar, Sony BMG 82876873042; Dialogues, Supraphon SU 4009), but on your latest album you give great scope to Renaissance polyphony. Will you continue in these repertoire “trips” or will you return to chant?*

A project that I have in mind, to which we dedicated a concert programme in the past, could ripen into the form of a recording. It concerns the *Ars antiqua* polyphonic period. This repertoire is closely bound to the Gregorian chant; it is virtually unthinkable without it.

*Why the *Ars antiqua* exactly?*

The *Ars antiqua* period of the late 13th century appears on recordings relatively rarely, whereas there are many superb albums covering the previous Notre Dame epoch. In our concert programme – called *Ars antiqua* – we focused on polyphonic versions of the Ordinary of the Mass, which is an interesting and not overly familiar repertoire. Our aim is to reconstruct medieval mass liturgies using these polyphonic chants. Of course, I also have other dramaturgical themes. I have again returned to the old Gregorian chant and ascertained that it is a really fascinating repertoire. The deeper you immerse yourself in it, the more you come to know its wealth. Therefore, I would like to dedicate to it either a concert or a recording project.

*Besides giving concerts and making recordings, you also intensively devote to research and teaching. Since 1993 you have been lecturing at the Institute of Musicology at the Faculty of Arts of Charles University in Prague and in 2008 you received an offer to teach at the university in Lucerne. As far as I know, there is no department of musicology at this university...*

I teach church music (Kirchenmusik) at the Faculty of Theology. In addition to those studying the subject, my lectures are attended out of interest by some theology students too.

### *Can you compare teaching in Lucerne and Prague?*

Compared to Prague, the students in Lucerne are a relatively heterogeneous group. The basis is, of course, formed by young people, but there are also those who have dedicated their professional career to another sphere but at the same time were interested in theology and later in life have enrolled at the Faculty of Theology. They attend lectures and many of them are excellent students. My seminar was attended, for example, by a classical philologist. Discussions can then be at a totally different level. Another thing that allured me in the case of the Lucerne engagement was the requirement to combine theory and practice – giving lectures, as well as conducting a schola and emphasis on the students’ practical activities.

### *How do you manage to combine your pedagogic activity in Switzerland with leading the SGP ensemble in Prague?*

The frequent travel between Prague and Lucerne is undoubtedly time-consuming. But there is the happy coincidence that one of the ensemble members is Hasan El-Dunia, who besides possessing abundant musical experience is also educated in theology. He understands the liturgical language, which is a very good starting point for him to participate in leading SGP. The current situation is such that if I cannot be present at some of the ensemble’s concerts, Hasan is able to stand in for me. And it was similar in the case of our new project, which you are about to discuss together. When Hasan came up with the project, I embraced it and was happy to entrust him with both its conception and preparation.

### *You have remained SPG’s artistic director, the ensemble’s focus hasn’t changed, and you and Hasan share certain conducting tasks?*

Yes, the ensemble’s focus has basically remained unchanged. Moreover, I think that the ensemble functions well and I don’t see any contradiction in sharing duties. Hasan can integrate in this respect very well and is able to continue in the same spirit. We are, in addition, continuously consulting each other about all matters. I have thus remained in the position I was previously. This step aimed to avoid inhibiting the ensemble when an offer for a concert appears and I am not around. The ensemble is thus able to present itself competently within my intentions.

### *After the relatively long period of six years, your ensemble has returned to a recording project devoted purely to early music. David Eben and I have already talked about the fact that the Advent theme has appeared relatively often on your albums. Hasan, can you tell me how this new project actually came about and why you decided to focus on the Advent period in particular?*

This project is not the first Advent programme within SGP’s concert activity. Naturally, there are a number of Schola Advent dramaturgies. These include the programmes Hle, přijde Pán (Behold, the Lord Will Come), Rosu dejte nebesa (Drop down dew, ye heavens) and *Vox evangelica*, divided by the four Advent Sundays, which David has prepared over the past few years. I personally



PHOTO: SGP 2x

have been allured for years by the repertoire many listeners have asked about; that is, the tradition of Czech rorate songs. Hence, two years ago I began putting together a dramaturgical conception which ultimately took the form of a concert programme. This January, my colleagues asked me whether we could make a recording of this programme, which already had its concert version. It was clear to me that it would be necessary to elaborate and improve the dramaturgy for the recording. I initially approached it quite radically and wanted to compile the CD solely from Czech rorate songs. Then, however, I realised that we would be committing too large a reduction and that it would not even be appropriate for listeners. That's why I decided to present this repertoire of the Advent Marian Mass in light of its development from the 14th to the end of the 16th centuries. Czech rorate songs come at its end and if the project were only to comprise Czech rorate songs we wouldn't see what preceded them and what is, after all, continuously present in them, namely, Latin rorate songs.

*Where did you have to seek out the suitable repertoire?*

Naturally, there is the Latin chant, as handed down from the Czech 14th-century sources. It is the cornerstone in the case of rorate songs too. Then there is the polyphony from Czech 15th-century manuscripts. The Codex Speciálník, for example, contains an Advent mass for three voices by an anonymous composer from which we chose two parts, both of them quoting the aforementioned chant. In addition, typical of the Czech region in the 16th century is religious diversification, which is also reflected in this music. Although the Catholics predominantly applied Latin masses, we know that the so-called rorate song books, hymn books intended for these Advent masses, were also used in Catholic churches. On the other hand, the Utraquists, who distanced themselves from Catholicism, sang polyphonic songs by Catholic – for instance, Franco-Flemish – authors. This repertoire is thus treated in Advent pieces intended for rorate divine services. And then there is, of course, a copious

amount of largely monophonic hymn books and graduals in which Czech rorate songs have been preserved. It is a Czechicised and melodically adapted chant in which Czech songs are inserted. The singularity and originality of the Czech rorate songs lies in this very form. Back at the time, the common people used to sing monophonic songs during masses in some places, thus alternating with the men of letters singing chants or polyphony. What I find quite interesting about this recording is that it will be interactive to a certain extent, since the listener will perhaps know these songs from masses. Some of them are still sung in churches today.

*In the 16th century, many monophonic rorate songs were arranged into polyphonic versions, which also feature on your disc. Which sources did you select this polyphonic repertoire from?*

One of the facets of this recording is the Czech Reformation of the 15th and 16th centuries. Connected with this are various manuscripts that I decided to use for this dramaturgy. One such is the Benešov Hymn Book, which contains polyphonic arrangements of songs according to the course of the liturgical year, including beautiful arrangements of Advent songs or, better said, songs that were performed during rorate masses. We included some of them in the liturgical course of the chant and monophonic songs as a sort of harmonic embellishment. Then there is the aforementioned Codex Speciálník, formerly in the possession of one of Prague's Utraquist literary fraternities, which did not conceal an aesthetic sentiment akin to that of the Church of Rome. This source abounds in beautiful Franco-Flemish polyphonic music from which we used several pieces - the introit *Rorate* and *Kyrie*, with both parts quoting melodies of an ancient Gregorian chant. From the Codex Speciálník we used for the end of the disc two magnificent polyphonic songs, *Sicut cedrus* and *Imperatrix gloriosa*, which we assigned to the structure of the rorate mass that we retain in the recording's dramaturgy. The text of *Sicut cedrus* is an antiphon drawing from the Song of Songs. Owing to their spiritual love poetics, the texts of this Old Testament Book were frequently used during the Advent period, and this extract is splendidly set to music in the Speciálník.

*Your ensemble is made up of singers who have copious experience with music spanning the period from the Middle Ages to the present day. Nevertheless, I would like to ask about the interpretational demands placed on Schola by a project of this type? Does it markedly differ from those you have done previously?*

The dramaturgy of this project has several layers. It comprises the Latin chant, the Czechicised chant, monophonic songs and songs in polyphonic arrangements. When it comes to the Latin chant, this recording is in the same spirit as that of the previous projects. May I say that regardless of all my erudition, which is undoubtedly important, I increasingly strive to perform beautiful music and rather communicate that which is contained in it than that which is merely historically authentic. As we know, when it comes to the vocal technique we can hardly attain the precise parameters within which the music was originally performed. Similar is the situation as regards the timbre, tempo; perhaps we have a better knowledge of tuning. Although the Czechicised

chant does not pose any different vocal demands on us, I think that owing to a certain verbosity of the Czech chorale songs it is necessary to perform the text in a manner that is understood. Compared to Latin and Italian, the languages that are great to sing in, it is more toilsome. And when it comes to the form and demandingness, 16th-century polyphony is extremely diversified. I above all chose for the purposes of this project polyphonic arrangements of Advent songs from the Benešov Hymn Book. This, however, does not make work on polyphony any simpler. If you have the sonic ideal of artists such as Huelgas Ensemble, with whom I occasionally collaborate, it is necessary for the singers to work in such a manner that within this rich and full harmony the timbres of their voices create together a beautiful colour, which should surpass the song's ideal organ harmonisation. Moreover, in the case of the more sophisticated Franco-Flemish polyphony from the Codex Speciálník, great discipline is required when approaching the counterpoint.

*At the time of its origination, the polyphonic repertoire was performed by student ensembles and literary fraternities. The descant was many a time sung by boys, therefore it is often in the soprano register. Did you have to apply transposition?*

In my favourite sequence, *Pán Bůh všemohúcí* (God Almighty), which is interlaced with polyphony from the Benešov Hymn Book, it was necessary to use transposition with the song *Poslán jest od Boha anjel* (An Angel Was Sent from God), namely, a fourth down. This type of transposition was quite common in the 16th century, as evidenced by the period sources. In our ensemble the upper descant voices are sung by myself, but only up to a pitch that my voice can take. In the case of the other songs, it was not necessary to transpose, since much of this repertoire is written *ad aequales*, i.e. for tenors, baritones and basses. We have thus managed to knit together a repertoire that is suitable for us and, at the same time, we don't have to transpose it in an unnatural way. Some of the pieces from the Speciálník have been transposed too, but it was always just a certain tempering so that it was, so to speak, befitting for our voices.

*You have mentioned communicating the texts. Did you co-operate with a specialist in Old Czech? I primarily have in mind the chant, which, as is known, draws from the accents of Latin and its rhythm. Czech is a bit different in this respect after all...*

I consulted matters regarding the Czech chant with a linguist from the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic who was recommended by my friend and colleague Jiří Žůrek, especially when it comes to the written form of Old Czech, because of the texts in the booklet. As for the vocal performance, with the exception of a few linguistic peculiarities (for instance, doublets), there are no problems in pronunciation. I would also like to thank Martin Horyna, one of the leading experts in Czech musical practice of the 16th century, for his consultations.

*David Eben mentioned that you stand in for him when his work commitments in Switzerland prevent him from being with SGP. By the way, it was you who came up with the conception of the Adventus Domini project. Don't you have an itching to devise something new again?*



I have to say that when one looks at this very period of Czech music of the 15th and 16th centuries (including the chant) the project featuring the Advent repertoire seems to indicate that it is the first part of something that could very well continue. The Advent repertoire belongs to the time which starts the ecclesiastical year and then other liturgical periods follow, for instance, Christmas, Lent and the Easter period, the latter two of which I love in particular. Hence, I couldn't resist peeping into the sources and seeking there a repertoire that would be suitable for us, one we would embrace. A repertoire from another liturgical time, from the same period, from the Czech lands.

*To conclude, allow me to ask you a personal question. You are a core member of SGP, as well as of Collegium vocale 1704, Musica Florea and Ensemble Inégal. You perform as a guest with Huelgas Ensemble and other foreign artists. Your repertoire spans the period from the Middle Ages to the present day. What is your favourite type of music?*

I always approach all music with respect, and I and the ensembles that I collaborate with always strive for the best possible understanding and communicating to the listeners. Working with these ensembles gives me great pleasure. Naturally, the Gregorian chant is very close to my heart. My interest in it led me to Schola Gregoriana Pragensis after all. I have been a member of the ensemble since 1994 and from the extensive chant repertoire I am particularly fond of the compositions from Lent and Holy Week, Good Friday especially. I also like Medieval and early Franco-Flemish polyphony, primarily works by Guillaume de Machaut, whose cantilena and counterpoint I could simply listen to for ever. And when it comes to Baroque music, I'd like to mention Bach's Passions and Jan Dismas Zelenka's responsoria for Holy Week.

*With the kind permission of Harmonie magazine*

# FLIGHT OF THE IMPRISONED EAGLE

PARADOXES OF THE NATIONAL IDENTITY  
WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE STAGING  
OF JANÁČEK OPERAS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC  
AND ABROAD (1990–2011)<sup>1</sup>

National identity is easier to define negatively. We can feel it positively when, for instance, the Czech national anthem is played at the Olympic Games or a sports championships, with a mixture of emotion and pride at being Czech emerging. What are the mysterious bonds so connecting a group of people that they consider themselves a “nation”? The mother tongue, the land and traditions, linkage to the generations of ancestors who inhabited the given space. Memories of childhood, hearth and home. First love. Scents, food, humour, weather. The shared experience. And melodies of folk songs. Why is it that we recognise them after a few bars?

## Janáček on the wings and in the cage of Czech national identity

To reflect on the national identity, we have not chosen from among the creators-composers who could help us to elucidate the formation of the term “Czech national opera” such clear-cut personalities as the “founding fathers” of the Romantic period Bedřich Smetana, who intentionally decided to subordinate his work to creating the ideal of building up Czech national opera, and Antonín Dvořák, who felt this task

<sup>1</sup> The study originated within the Mapping of the Culture and Creative Industries in the Czech Republic project for the Arts Institute-Theatre Institute, Prague.



PHOTO: J. HALLOVÁ NDB 2x

instinctively. Instead, we have chosen Leoš Janáček, whose operas are deeply rooted in Czech/Moravian language and music yet have experienced a chronic discrepancy between their enthusiastic reception around the world and the reserved, constrained, even cold reception at home. In light of their experience, directors of Czech theatres vigilantly see to it that the low audience numbers for a Janáček work are offset by a Verdi opera or another title guaranteed to put “bums on seats”. The marked discrepancy between the enthusiastic embracement of Janáček abroad and the much more distant reception on the part of Czech audiences has also been confirmed by Czech artists who have participated in productions of Janáček operas worldwide.

Leoš Janáček was a one-off owing both to his impulsively sensuous personality and his inimitable musical style, closely linked with Moravian folk song and local speech. In addition to folk songs, Janáček collected “tunelets” (melodies) of speech, as he termed situational onomatopoeic moments of speech. Furthermore, he noted down birdsong, as well as various sounds and noises that intrigued him. Janáček also considered speech tunelets to bear within them the psychological characteristics of a person, and they in turn became a significant aspect of his singular operatic style. He was among the first to compose to the natural flow and rhythm of unrestrained spoken language. First in *Jenufa* and then, following his bad experience with librettists, from *Katya Kabanova* on he created all the librettos to his operas himself and thanks to his keen sense of the dramatic was able to shape his operas into flowing, compendious and concise musical dramas.

Numerous renowned foreign artists have remarked on their first encounter with Janáček’s music as being an epiphany that exerted a lifelong influence. And their statements highlight Janáček’s very rooting in the national identity and operatic tradition. Sir Charles Mackerras: *“The main reason for Janáček’s popularity is the drama of his operas and the intensity with which he peers within human beings, women in particular. The remarkable colourfulness of his music is linked to Janáček’s affinity to nature. This attracts the audience. And the system of repeating rhythmic phrases, tunelets, helps the listener to orientate himself in the music. Janáček actually invented minimalism long before the Americans did. At the same time, he is a great romantic – what could be more romantic than Katya of Jenufa?”* Jan Latham-Koenig: *“He showed how emotions, nationality and originality can be interconnected in an absolutely unique way – everything springs from the depths of his soul.”* Christopher Alden: *“Janáček links up to why opera was created in the first place, and returns it to its roots.”*

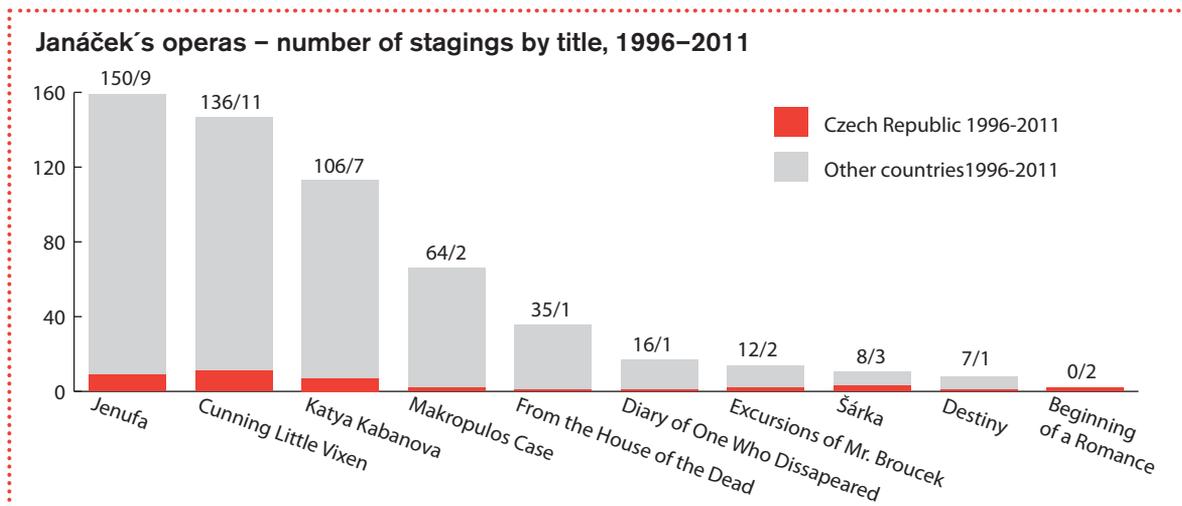
It is said that no one is a prophet at home, yet the “mystery” of the Moravian Maestro’s being received with “perplexity” at home and enjoying great popularity worldwide is very closely connected with the topic of national identity. And it is necessary to raise the question of whether or not this paradox itself is part of our national identity.

## Janáček maps, 1945–2011

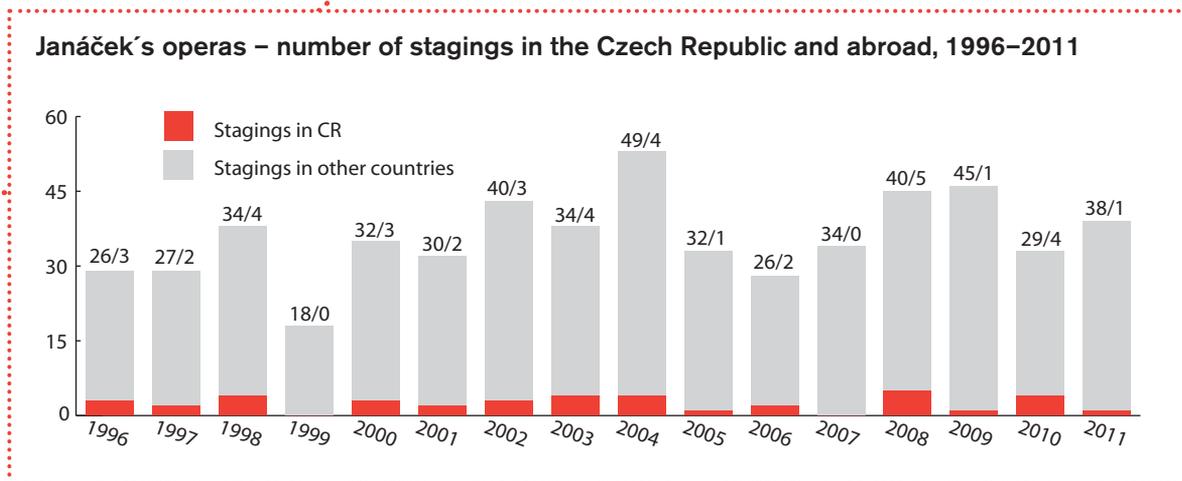
What is the reality behind the cold statistical data relating to the staging of Janáček’s operas at home and abroad?<sup>2</sup> Since 1945 (when the network of ten permanent opera theatres was formed in Czechoslovakia) the frequency of staging Leoš Janáček’s operas

<sup>2</sup> There is no complete central record of the staging of Janáček operas. Unless explicitly stated otherwise, the lists of Czech productions since 1945 are drawn from the databases of the Theatre Institute, the National Theatre in Prague and the National Theatre in Brno. The list of foreign productions is a summary and comparison of data from [www.operabase.com](http://www.operabase.com), currently the most comprehensive internet server about opera theatres, productions and artists from around the world, which has been collecting data since 1996; from the list of performances since 1996 on [www.universaledition.com](http://www.universaledition.com), maintained by Universal Edition as a copyright holder, publisher and lender of sheet music; and from the internet server [www.theoperacritic.com](http://www.theoperacritic.com), which since 2000 has mainly collected reviews of opera productions. The mentioned databases of foreign productions differ significantly and are by no means exhaustive and complete. Hence, it was often difficult to decide whether to classify a particular staging as a new production, revival or repeated performance. The terms “premiere”, “revival” and “repeated performance” are understood differently in individual countries. Therefore, to list the productions of Janáček operas we draw upon our customary practices.

has undergone considerable swings. New productions have most frequently been presented in the years marking the anniversaries of Janáček's death. And in 2004, on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of his birth, the Brno International Music Festival for the first time presented the complete Janáček operatic works, with the participation of a number of Czech theatres. What is striking, however, is the declining trend. The high-water mark was the immediate post-war years (1945-1948), with an average number of 4.75 productions annually, which gradually dropped to 2.41 in the period following the "Velvet Revolution" (1990-2011), when opera theatres began assuming a "market" approach.

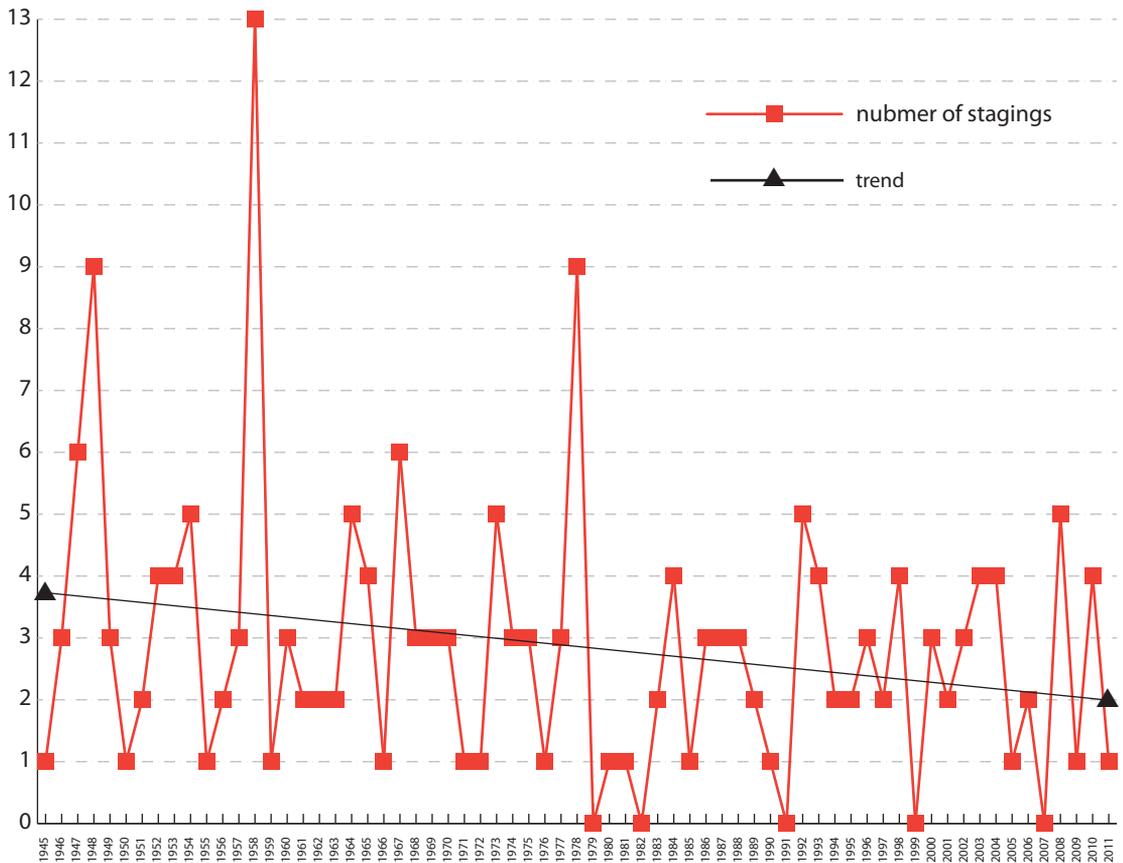


This downturn is even more evident when comparing the number of performances of Janáček operas at the National Theatre in Prague, since productions used to remain in the repertoire for a long time and were regularly given, thus the National Theatre routinely had a "reserve" of four or five titles. And in the case of the "core" Janáček operas – *Jenufa*, *The Cunning Little Vixen* and *Katya Kabanova* – the final performances were for the most part soon followed by a new production. Whereas in the Czech Republic the lukewarm attitude to staging Janáček operas has been deepening, the trend abroad has been the opposite – constantly growing, with obvious peaks in the anniversary years 2004 and 2008/2009.



During the sixteen-year period from 1996 to 2011, Janáček operas were presented in almost six hundred productions all over the world, from Australia to Canada, including even Argentina, Mexico, New Zealand and South Africa. In terms of countries, Germany (the country with the highest number of opera performances in the world) is a long way ahead, followed by Great Britain, with the Czech Republic occupying fifth place. The surveys have revealed that Janáček is mainly popular in the “West”; his operas are not staged frequently in Slovakia or in Russia and other Slavonic countries, notwithstanding Janáček’s well-known fellow-feeling towards Russia and Slavs in general. As regards individual cities, London (32 Janáček opera productions) comes first, a long way ahead of Berlin (19), Paris, Vienna and New York (13). When it comes to Czech cities, Brno (13) is first, followed by Prague (11) and Ostrava (5). In terms of the number of productions of Janáček operas from 1996 to 2011, the most frequently staged in the Czech Republic was *The Cunning Little Vixen*, while abroad it was *Jenufa*.

**Janáček’s operas - number of stagings in the Czech Republic, 1945-2011**



Yet the total number of productions does not take into consideration the population. Although it is a mere coefficient (not regarding, for instance, the number of repeated performances and the size of the theatres), when converting the number of productions to million inhabitants, the Czech Republic clearly leads and the hypothesis of Janáček operas being staged abroad significantly more frequently falls by the wayside:

<b>Czech Republic</b>	<b>3.71</b>	<b>Belgium</b>	<b>1.19</b>	<b>Denmark</b>	<b>0.56</b>
<b>Austria</b>	<b>2.68</b>	<b>Netherlands</b>	<b>0.91</b>	<b>Australia</b>	<b>0.51</b>
<b>Switzerland</b>	<b>2.53</b>	<b>France</b>	<b>0.88</b>	<b>Portugal</b>	<b>0.47</b>
<b>Germany</b>	<b>1.77</b>	<b>Sveden</b>	<b>0.65</b>	<b>Spain</b>	<b>0.46</b>
<b>Great Britain</b>	<b>1.22</b>	<b>Finland</b>	<b>0.57</b>	<b>Italy</b>	<b>0.31</b>

Irrespective of the impressive figures, Janáček is far from attaining the popularity of Puccini, the world's most frequently staged opera composer, Bizet, Richard Strauss, Tchaikovsky, nor is his popularity as high as that of Benjamin Britten. Yet when it comes to the number of repeated performances, it surpasses Massenet, and is approximately twofold that of Ravel, Weill, Mussorgsky, Berg, Stravinsky and Prokofiev. And Janáček operas are performed three times more frequently than those of Giordano, Shostakovich, Debussy, Orff, Bartók and Schönberg. He is among the group of composers with a high proportion of performances given outside "the country of origin".

Accordingly, Janáček is a long way ahead of any other Czech composer when it comes to the frequency of staging of operas worldwide (the number of repeated performances is about twofold that of Smetana and Dvořák). In this country, however, the situation is the exact opposite.

On the basis of the data on [www.operabase.com](http://www.operabase.com), we can conclude that over the past five seasons no other similarly "small" country can boast of having its composers established so firmly in the world's operatic repertoire. And we rank immediately after the opera "superpowers" Italy, Germany/Austria, France and Russia, alongside Great Britain and ahead of the USA, far outstripping other countries, including, for example, Spain. Today, Janáček is a reliable "export article" and part of the family silver, not only in comparison with other Czech opera composers but also creators from larger countries with an extensive operatic tradition. Owing to Janáček operas, thousands of artists and millions of spectators have become aware of the Czech Republic.

### **Janáček as an export "product" - and what next?**

In spite of initially being spurned, rejected and misunderstood, Janáček and his operas have gained global recognition. Are we able to make use of this fact, as documented above, to promote Czech national culture and our national identity today, when opera is a markedly globalised art? How do Czech (and Slovak) artists, who possess (or should possess) the comparative advantage of intimate knowledge of Czech (the language in which the majority of Janáček operas are performed worldwide), assert themselves in foreign productions? Are the Czech productions the models for Janáček interpretation? Is there anything at all we can offer?

According to the available data, in the monitored period Czech and Slovak artists participated in less than a third, a mere 29%, of foreign productions of Janáček operas. After Gabriela Beňačková began scaling back her career, the singers most frequently appearing in Janáček roles have been - surprisingly - tenors: Peter Straka, Štefan Margita, as well as Aleš Briscein and Miroslav Dvorský, Jan Vacík and Ludovit Ludha, performing on prestigious stages. The soloists who have garnered acclaim on several occasions include Eva Randová and Ivan Kusnjer from the older generation, primarily Eva Jenis, as well as Dagmar Pecková, Helena Kaupová and Eva Urbanová, from the middle generation, and Hannah Ester Minutillo and Martina Janková from among the young singers. Another of our Janáček paradoxes is that when soloists who have



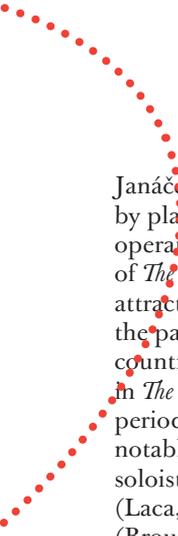
established a steady position at foreign theatres are cast in Janáček opera productions in the Czech Republic their performances tend to meet with a lukewarm, even negative critical response. By no means does it hold true that a narrow group of soloists has a monopoly on Janáček roles worldwide, or that Janáček roles are assigned to singers of inferior quality.

While our singers have not been overly successful in the global Janáček opera business, this applies even more so in the case of our stage directors: Jiří Nekvasil, Martin Otava, Václav Věžník and Josef Průdek haven't exactly set the world alight. Orbiting renowned opera theatres and festivals worldwide are the productions of David Pountney, who in the mentioned period was one of the most sought-after directors of Janáček operas, Nikolaus Lehnhoff, Robert Carsen and David Alden. Yet Janáček's operas have also served as a vehicle for radical interpretations staged by such "provocateurs" as Calixto Bieito and the Spanish theatre company La Fura dels Baus.

The situation, however, is different in the case of Czech conductors, who have managed to join the elite of Janáček conductors – not only as regards the number of productions but also the significance of theatres. Jiří Bělohlávek can even be designated as the Janáček conductor most in demand (some 14 productions). He is followed by the late Sir Charles Mackerras, whose operatic career, to a large extent dedicated to Janáček, was in its twilight in the monitored period, and Jiří Kout (11 productions).

## The riddle of staging Janáček's operas at home

The fact that the most frequently staged Czech opera composer in the Czech Republic is Smetana, closely followed by Dvořák and only then Janáček (who in recent years has had Martinů breathing down his neck), should by no means be perceived as a sort of deliberate or even programmatic snub against Janáček. The reason definitely cannot be found in the works themselves – their value is generally accepted. It may lie in promotion: opera theatres are only gradually beginning to grasp the significance of the communication mix as one of the basic marketing tools for music theatre too. The decades-old riddle of Janáček's reception was laid bare by the first edition of the festival which from the eightieth anniversary of Janáček's death onwards Brno decided to hold so as to pay tribute to the musical genius as a broadly conceived biennale presenting Janáček's work within differing staging and interpretational approaches. The organisers certainly did not lack ambition: they had a grand vision of Brno transforming into cultural metropolis of Europe-wide significance, up there with Mozart's Salzburg and Wagner's Bayreuth. The result, however, was a fiasco in terms of visitor numbers. It is difficult to judge whether the application of harshly provocative guerrilla marketing techniques was the reason why in 2008 the second edition of the Janáček's Brno festival managed to attract greater attention (unlike the Moravian Autumn international festival, with a tradition dating back to 1966, which in recent years has experienced a severe lack of interest on the part of visitors). The performances were packed, and young people came too. Yet the illegal (eventually dispersed by the police) "Janáček Is Our Everything" event on Brno's central square, during which the director of the festival and of the National Theatre in Brno, Daniel Dvořák, attached Janáček's head to life-size paper dummies of Marilyn Monroe, Pamela Anderson, Charlie Chaplin, The Beatles, as well as Jesus, the Pope and Hitler, and in the "Leoš Test" had the answers to the questions about his music (in a competition for free tickets) selected from "Amazing – Tolerable – Life-threatening", thoroughly irritated more conservative theatre-goers.



Janáček's operas cannot make do with the breeziness and routine that can be "endured" by plain impressive Romantic scores and that have become so domesticated in our operatic climes. Even Sir Charles Mackerras paid dearly for this as the conductor of *The Excursions of Mr. Brouček* at the National Theatre in Prague in 2003. Janáček's attractiveness is less ostentatious yet profound, humanely true, so beautiful that you feel the pain. In the past, the sensuous ferocity of Janáček's was successfully unveiled in our country by the conductors Oldřich Bohuňovský in *Jenufa* (Opava) and Bohumil Gregor in *The Makropulos Case* (National Theatre in Prague), the latter of whom in the 1996–2011 period only explored *The Cunning Little Vixen* (National Theatre in Prague). With the notable exception of Jiří Kout, they did not have successors of equal calibre. As for the soloists, those who have forcibly portrayed Janáček roles include above all Peter Straka (Laca, Mazal), Štefan Margita (Laca), Jan Vacík (Laca, Brouček), Jaroslav Březina (Brouček), Gianluca Zampieri (Laca, Albert Gregor), Christina Vasileva (Katya), Helena Kaupová (Jenufa), Eva Dřízgová (Bystrouška the Vixen) and Eva Urbanová (Kostelnička, Kabanicha).

The scope for a singular scenic interpretation of such laconic operas may seem narrow. In our country, however, it is barnacled with established practices which have become part of the untouchable canon. In the mid-90s, it appeared that calling for an increased frequency of staging Janáček operas was in actual fact counterproductive. The repetition of old-fashioned productions and slapdash treatment discouraged those who wanted to find their way to Janáček and put off connoisseurs, who preferred to turn to foreign recordings. Over the past sixteen years, the staging practice has begun changing in the Czech Republic. Yet not even inviting foreign opera directors, including those of unquestionable renown (David Pountney, Robert Wilson, Christopher Alden, James Conway, Pamela Howard), foreign soloists (Jormi Silvasti, Anja Silja) and Czech and Slovak artists who have regularly performed abroad (Peter Straka, Štefan Margita, Jan Vacík) has "remedied" our restraint towards Janáček. And not even Sir Charles Mackerras's attempts can be deemed an unqualified success. The audiences did not embrace the attempts at extrication from traditional interpretations and seeking new (and, in comparison with German theatres in particular, actually tame) yet for the large part half-hearted "alternative" solutions (the Caban brothers' *Cunning Little Vixen*, Tomáš Šimerda's *Katya Kabanová*).

We should not, however, reject out of hand the authentic conception of a folk ballad, which Michael Tarant succeeded with in the Ostrava staging of *Jenufa*, nor the endeavour to purge this opera of decorative folklorism (Jiří Nekvasil at the National Theatre in Prague). A prime example of the possibility to approach Janáček in an entirely different manner, as an epic poem of its kind, was Robert Wilson's production of *Fate* (2002) at the National Theatre in Prague (Wilson reapplied the principles of his directional poetics in the 2010 staging of *Katya Kabanová*).

Are Czech audiences (as well as opera reviewers) less perceptive than those abroad? Is the Czech spectator numb, lazy, deaf towards musical drama that cuts to the marrow and which enthral, without the "compulsory" respect for the national legacy, audiences in Germany, England, America, Australia? We can admit that Czech audiences are more conservative, because less steeped in modern opera and directional experimentation. And certainly less curious about "that oddball from somewhere in exotic Moravia", as Janáček can be perceived in countries that are exotic to us. Are Czech audiences hypercritical when it comes to Czech interpreters and intolerant towards foreign ones?

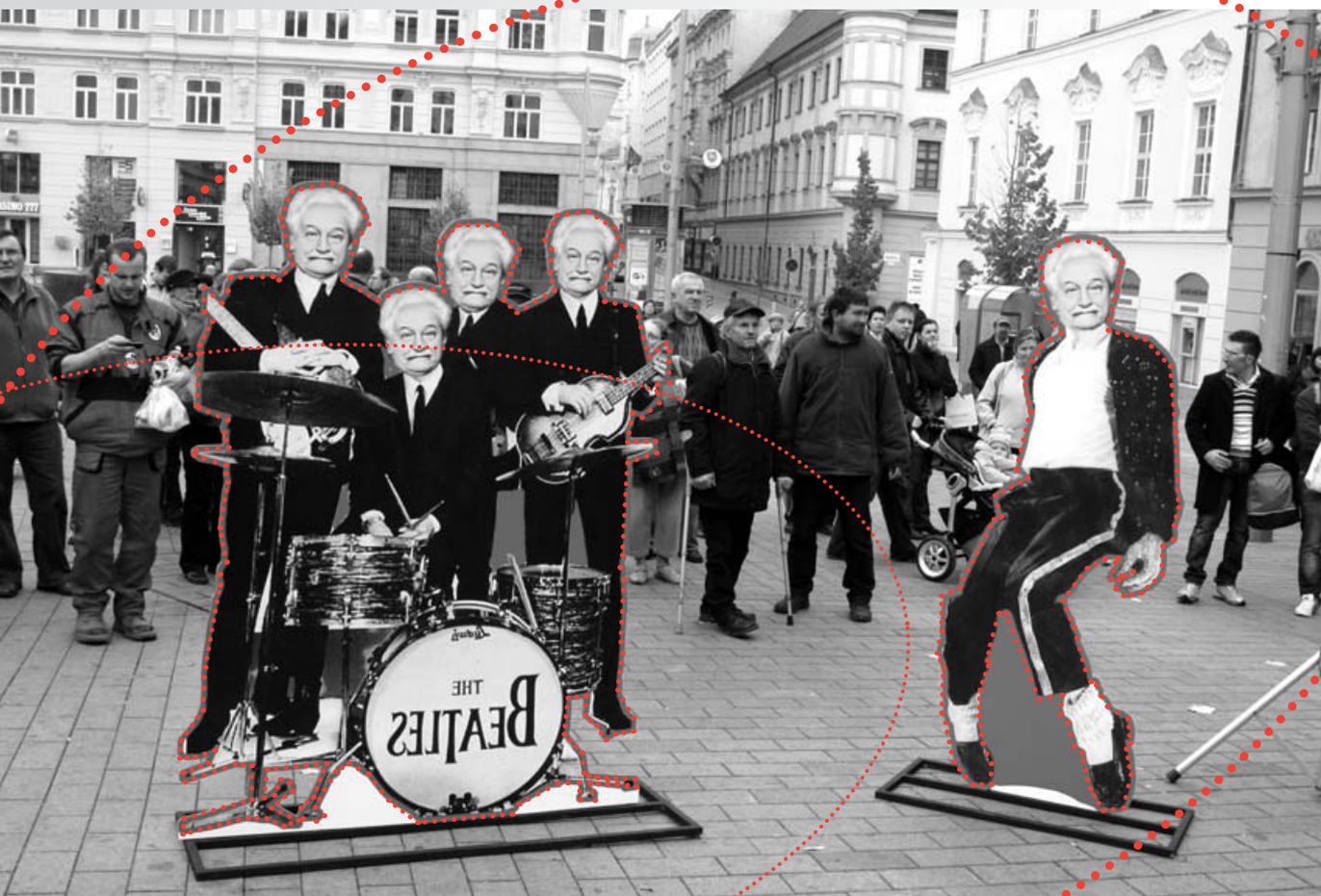
Productions of Janáček's works created by directors of great renown and enthusiastically applauded abroad are received in the Czech Republic in a much more tepid manner. The English National Opera production of *The Makropulos Case* explored and prepared by Charles Mackerras and Christopher Alden, which in 2006 was nominated for the prestigious Laurence Olivier Award (it ultimately went to Alden's brother David for his production of *Jenufa* at English National Opera), was as a 2008 co-production with the National Theatre in Prague greeted with numerous reservations on Czech soil and not even shortlisted (unlike *La finta giardiniera*, staged by Ursel and Karl-Ernst Herrmann) in the Production of the Year poll of Divadelní noviny magazine, with the annual participation of about 120 critics. And in the Divadelní noviny critical chart it received an average of between 3.5 – 4.5 points, overshadowed by the top ranking of five points given by the majority of reviewers to the State Opera Prague production of Britten's *Death in Venice*, directed by Yoshi Oida and conducted by Hilary Griffiths. Similar was the case of *Jenufa*, co-produced with the Wiener Staatsoper and directed by David Pountney (Brno 2004), which was only "remembered" by a single critic, while *The Excursions of Mr. Brouček*, explored by Sir Charles Mackerras with Jan Vácík and Peter Straka (National Theatre in Prague, 2003), was not nominated by anybody.

Some point to neglected aesthetic and spiritual education. Yet such reasoning can be applied with a territorial limitation – it undoubtedly holds true in comparison with the German, Austrian and, partially, English and French audiences. But are Czech theatre-goers really worse off in the sense of their "aesthetic and spiritual competence" than the audiences of those operatically "exotic" countries?

During Janáček's lifetime, Czech publishers missed out on the opportunity to issue the scores of his operas. It was left to Vienna's Universal Edition, for which Janáček eventually became an export article and a lucrative business. The endeavour to discover "ur" versions was also relinquished to foreigners (Sir Charles Mackerras, Mark Audus and his "detective search" for the version of *Jenufa* that (possibly) was heard by the Brno audience in 1904). In the Czech Republic, only the National Theatre Brno has attempted to draw attention to discovering original versions and within the second edition of the Janáček's Brno festival (2011) presented for the very first time the original versions of *The Excursion of Mr. Brouček* (i.e. without the Excursion to the 15th Century) and *Šárka* (with just piano).

History repeats itself: the two decades since 1989, which opened the borders and gave rise to the opportunity to burst upon the world stage not only as a supplier of the "raw materials" but also to craft Janáček interpretation in a creative manner and further evolve it, have been frittered away. It is not only that we have failed to put across Janáček at home; neither are we able to export him abroad, where the demand for his music is markedly higher than it is here. We may snigger at some foreign soloists' unsuccessful attempts to negotiate Czech consonant clusters and pronounce the letter "ř" properly, attack the artists who know little about this part of the world, and criticise everything possible, all from a safe distance. Yet this does not change the fact that it is foreign conductors, directors, set and light designers, chorus masters, soloists and dramaturges who are able to captivate millions of spectators with Janáček's engrossing musical dramas.

It is simply not possible to order audiences to like something by decree. But our opera theatres, financed from the public purse, must have the duty to protect the “family silver” of our music enshrined in the foundation charters. There is no doubt that Janáček laid bare the essence of our national identity and touched it in a manner that has inseparably connected him with his homeland and nation for ever. The paradox then is that in the case of Janáček we have yet to discover/seize it.



In his Janáček reflection that forms part of *Testaments Betrayed*, even the famously cosmopolitan Milan Kundera succumbed to self-lacerating provincial pettiness. Yet the energy of Janáček's operas has overcome the artificially constructed barriers of self-doubt, denigration and collective hang-ups. Despite Kundera's pessimistic predictions, the openness of the interpretation and enthusiastic response to Janáček's operas worldwide is more than evident. Whereas we Czechs keep him imprisoned, voluntarily and to our own detriment, in our neurotic dissatisfaction with everything that rises above the average, amid the permanent discontent that is part of the Czech national social convention, verbosely excused mediocrity and the hypocritically querulous pretence of having high demands.

The hitherto development of the staging and reception of Janáček's operas is yet another confirmation of the dilemma of our national identity: Yes, it does makes us feel good to take pride in the successes attained by productions of Janáček's operas abroad (and if need be criticise them pettily), but otherwise we drown in our own creative cultivation and enrichment of the cultural tradition in a grudging egocentric provincialism.

The staging practice of Janáček's operas in our country invites one to apply the metaphor of the wounded eagle which in the opera *From the House of the Dead* is released from its cage by the prisoners once it has recovered. For the time being, we are keeping Janáček and his operas imprisoned in the cage of the dilemmas of our national identity. Yet beyond our borders the eagle is soaring high.



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## ELECTROACOUSTIC MUSIC IN CRISIS?

**The MUSICA NOVA international competition has been taking place for 20 years with the annual participation of 70–120 creators from 25–35 countries. The contestants include students, composers with practical experience – postgraduates teaching at specialist university workplaces and education centres – as well as composers more than seventy years of age (this year, after a long pause, Charles Bestor, a pupil of Ussachevsky and Hindemith).**

With regard to its permanent focus, scope and duration, the competition features a representative selection of pieces of “free artistic work” and hence the contestants are not bound by any a priori limitations on their creativity, with the only limit being the duration of the pieces, which should not exceed 20 minutes. Within “art music”, the competition does not state any preference in terms of style; it is interested rather in the level of creativity, conceptuality and technical quality. The aim is to monitor the direction in which the genre has been proceeding in its most concentrated form, which is then co-opted in other applications – film, advertising, installations, computer games – and becomes a routine component of them. Of course, “pop music” is excluded, yet there is no strict boundary, only a transitional zone determined by the degree of creativity as regards approaches, while conventional approaches can naturally be extremely effective sonically. Although the make-up of the international jury has changed slightly over time, the majority of its members have long-term experience and

are also members of juries of other prestigious competitions. We may state that over the years we have listened to thousands of compositions from all over the world. We also have several “core” composers who have won accolades in other international competitions. Moreover, the project involves collecting verbal commentaries and curricula vitae, which makes it possible to observe changes in the creators’ thinking and social situation. During the listening process, which is divided into two phases, first privately and then jointly, we strive to avoid influencing each other, and lively discussion only takes place once it is necessary to choose from several composers who have attained roughly equal results. Nevertheless, when Juraj Ďuriš, a member of the MUSICA NOVA jury possessing experience with a number of other juries, recorded the jurors’ independent statements as to what they think of the overall status of the genre, a remarkable accord of views was revealed. What, then, is the current situation in electroacoustic music?

When we look back, we see that the genre of electroacoustic music has now existed for some sixty years. It took effect as a new paradigm in music, a restorative element in several directions:

1. In the phenomenological direction, turning musicians' attention to a) the essence of sound in the widest sense as a potential musical material, b) exploring that which we really "hear", i.e. whether there is any anthropological basis of "sonic objects", c) seeking how musical instruments work, how they influence the structure of compositions, what are their acoustic kinships and wider possibilities, d) the sound environment that surrounds us (ecology of sound), e) how sound functions in space;

2. In the constructivist direction: a) production of new sound sources and instruments (hardware, software), b) exploring the essence of composing irrespective of the actual material, comparing sign systems, etc., c) construction of new "soundspaces". As we know, the phenomenological direction drew from the theory and practice of Pierre Schaeffer and GRM, the constructivist direction rather from the original praxis of Karlheinz Stockhausen and Iannis Xenakis, later on IRCAM. They soon intermeshed, however, although the various starting points are still perceptible with various composers and schools.

It is also typical that in addition to evident schools (today, for instance, that of Denis Smalley from City University London), we can still also observe an anchoring in national and cultural traditions. The Italians, for instance, continue to give preference to work with voice and poetry; the Chinese, Koreans and Japanese have a penchant for using the sound of traditional instruments while also perceiving the pulse and tempo in a different way. The Czechs, it would appear, incline to clearer contentual and formal conceptions, shorter pointed compositions. Such was the composition of this year's winner of the Czech round, Martin Klusák.

Where has the genre progressed, and why do we talk of a "crisis"? By no means because the word "crisis" currently follows us everywhere we go. I shall try to give a brief summary of the situation:

1. The number of hunters of sounds from real life has been decreasing, with the real sonic heuristics being in decline, if we discount the banally conceived acoustic ecology consisting

of collecting mainly urban sounds which are usually just modified slightly and belong to sound art.

I have in mind the composers who are open-eared in a Buddhist manner and attend to taking in the interesting sounds of everyday life, gauging their expressive potential and recording them, and work appropriately with sound so as to make optimum use of its possibilities (when it comes to Czech composers, Radek Rejšek is undoubtedly in possession of an open ear). There are, however, a growing number of contestants from the ranks of users of semi-products from sound databases. By the way, the same problem of "cooking from semi-products" has also appeared in graphic design.

2. When it comes to respecting the anthropological parameters of hearing, breathing and physical gesture, there are a diminishing number of creators of electroacoustic music with actual experience of music-making, i.e. using their own voice or playing musical instruments, preferably string and wind. As in the case of experience with composing music for choreographic use, such praxis imbues music with a natural cadence, phrasing and tempo. Naturally, electroacoustics is specific in terms of the very possibility of transcending these borders, yet it must be clear that "this is the point", that it is the subject of inner reflection, intention, theme.

3. All the jury members sense an ongoing decrease in "compositional thinking" in the sense of having a clear idea, conception, form. Many creators, including renowned composers, which is startling, in some way or other elucidate the material, the new possibilities of software. Their music does not end, it stops short. They have a sort of personal "language", with one thing being similar to the other. One does not hear the reason: WHY, why THIS WAY, i.e. the inner meaning. The result is that there are still plenty of clichés. And these clichés mostly come from "petrified" modernism. Václav Havel once wrote that the staunchest convention is "the convention of negating the convention". It is the stupidest and most puerile convention. In electroacoustic music, this means the following scheme: I create a smoothly passing current of sound (melody, regular pulse) and will disturb it with rustles, clatter, disruptions in "unexpected places", thus evoking deconstruction, destruction, unease, distracting of concentration, distance towards that which is

heard. Instead of tonal structures, I conceptually apply perturbations, noises, highly intensive sounds almost nausea-inducing. I create aphysiological music. If this is becoming a conceptual cliché, it is detrimental and empty. The truth, however, is that some of the composers burnt out in this approach have ultimately moved towards a sort of rediscovered aesthetic of harmony, simplicity, often referring to the aesthetics of Taoism or Shintoism, so as to avoid finding themselves in the vacuum of their own “conservative” decision. What, then, are the prospects for the genre and the competition itself? The means of electroacoustic music are commonly available today. Yet this does not mean that greater availability equates to greater effortlessness; it is just a mirage, which in turn engenders a musical smog. The genre is exacting and it is necessary to refine it. In fact, it hasn't lasted a sufficient amount of time for one to orientate in it naturally, without sudden cramps. Therefore, it holds promise, unless, of course, there are problems with electricity supply, on which it is fully dependent. In terms of using the means of electronic music, artistic music and pop music are converging, pop and alternative electro are becoming more sophisticated. At the same time, greater emphasis is placed on the rhythmic pulse, in which artistic electroacoustic music is often lacking.

This is one of the reasons why we have decided to make the competition's next edition partially thematic and announced the category of modern dance music. We do not want to open the door to triviality but afford the creators a stimulus for pondering the anthropological dimensions of this type of music. At the same time, modern dance music too could gain an inspiring impulse. A multimedia theme has been prepared for the next edition of the Prague Quadrennial, which this year opened itself to electroacoustic music for the first time. We are leading discussions with partners active in alternative music. By and large, we want to pursue the path of partnership, interconnection, not extension of the project. Good and inventive creators can be found in each round of the competition, yet the point is for there to be more of them and that they don't find themselves trapped in an enclave of disinterest under the flag of experimental laboratory academism.



Antonio Scarcia

## MUSICA NOVA 2011

### 20th edition

**From 11 to 13 November 2011** an international jury convened at the Film Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague to evaluate **74 compositions by creators from 26 countries**. The winner of Category A, purely electroacoustic music, was Italy's **Antonio Scarcia** with his piece *Guide d'Onda*, while honourable mentions went to **Chien Wen Cheng** from Taiwan with the piece *Rain Reflection*, the Czech **Martin Klusák**, a graduate of the Film Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts (sound design) and currently studying composition at the Music Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts, with the piece *Strojvedoucí Cháron (Charon the Engine Driver)*, and **Diana Simpson Salazar** from the UK with the composition *La Voz del Fuelle*. The other finalists in this category were **Monty Adkins (UK)**, **Marilinda Santi (Italy)**,



Martin Klusák



Roderik de Man

**Robert Sazdov** (Australia) and **Keitaro Takahashi** (Japan).

The winner in Category B, electroacoustic music combined with an acoustic live component, was **Roderik de Man** from the Netherlands with the piece *Thou single wilt prove none* for solo voice and electronics. Honourable mentions were awarded to **Monty Adkins** (UK) with the composition *Permutations* for clarinet and electronics, **John Young** (UK) with the piece *X* for piano and electronics and **Alla Zagaykyevich** (Ukraine) with the composition *Myth IV* for violin, vocals and electronics. The other finalists were **Panayotis Kokoras** (Greece) and **Joao Pedro Oliveira** (Portugal).

The first prize in the special Czech round was awarded to **Martin Klusák**.

The international jury is chaired by the Czech composer **Rudolf Růžička** and the competition's director is the musicologist **Lenka Dohnalová**. The competition was organised by the Society for Electroacoustic Music in collaboration with the Czech Music Council / Arts and Theatre Institute, the Academy of Performing Arts and Czech Radio. It was financially supported by the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic, Prague City Council, the Czech Music Foundation and the OSA Foundation.

**The laureates performed the prize-winning compositions at a concert on 16 December 2011 at the Inspirace Theatre, Prague.**

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Brno City Council has decided that from 2012 onwards the Brno Philharmonic Orchestra will be the exclusive organiser of the Brno International Music Festival (BIMF). Over the 47 years of its existence, three significant projects have been carried out under the festival's heading – the Exposition of New Music (ENM), the Easter Festival of Spiritual Music (EFSM) and Moravian Autumn. The first two festivals have been held annually, while the latter has been a biennale since 2011.

## BRNO PHILHARMONIC TO ORGANISE THE BRNO INTERNATIONAL MUSIC FESTIVAL

### CAGE – Ceremony of Another GEneration

The 25th edition of the ENM festival,

scheduled to take place from 7 to 11 March 2012, will focus on the oeuvre of John Cage (1912–1992), whose double anniversary we will be celebrating this year. In addition to Cage works in “new” and “traditional” interpretations, the programme will also include Erik Satie compositions, as well as pieces by Cage’s associate Petr Kotík (1942) and Peter Graham (1952). This year’s festival will open with a Brno Philharmonic Orchestra concert made up of early Satie and Cage works. The orchestra’s management has decided to extend the festival to include an international composition competition, whose first edition will be announced for 2013. Within ENM 2012 the competition’s preliminary edition will take place, which will be open to composition students from the Visegrad Four countries as part of the CAGE 100 project. The participants will be from the Janáček Academy of Music and Performing Arts (JAMU) in Brno, the University of Performing Arts in Bratislava and the Academy of Music in Bydgoszcz, Poland. The jury will chose one composition from each of the universities, which will be prepared within a workshop of students of the Percussion Department of JAMU under the superlative Hungarian ensemble Amadinda Percussion Group.

The workshop and competition will culminate in a performance of the winning compositions, which will be included as an official concert within the ENM festival programme.

### Revamp for the 21st Easter Festival – history, acoustics and music combined with the Easter liturgy

The 2012 Easter Festival of Spiritual Music, taking place between 1 and 15 April, will celebrate the most sacred period of the ecclesiastical year. Within its 21st edition, the festival, bearing the motto “Six Concerts, Six Churches”, will be held at acoustically and spatially suitable churches in the centre of Brno. The story of the passion, death and resurrection of Christ is told in compositions spanning six centuries. The concerts have been conceived in line with the architecture, acoustics and history of the individual churches.

During the Paschal Triduum, after the fashion of the original vigils, responsories that form part of the Liturgy of the Hours will be heard after 9 pm. On Maundy Thursday (5 April) Vox Iuvenalis will be performing compositions from the Responsoria Book II by the contemporary American composer Richard Toensing. On Good Friday (6 April) responsories will be sung in their purest form, the Gregorian chant.

The six concerts will take place in six churches in the centre of Brno: Saint Jacob’s Church, the Minorite Church of St. John the Baptist and John the Apostle, the Jesuit Church of Our Lady of the Assumption, Saint Thomas’s Church, the Basilica of Our Lady of the Assumption in Old Brno, and the Cathedral of Sts. Peter and Paul. Those performing will include the Brno Philharmonic Orchestra, the Czech Philharmonic Choir Brno, Czech Virtuosi, Musica Florea, Hof-Musici, Ritornello, Tiburtina Ensemble and others.

The Easter Festival of Spiritual Music will thus pay tribute not only to the most important ecclesiastical holidays of the year but also the beauty of Brno churches.

[www.mhf-brno.cz](http://www.mhf-brno.cz)

czech music | focus

*Dita Eibenová*

***“It’s a limbo, not a piece of greenery in sight – just black smoke and dust.”***

*From Leoš Janáček’s letter to his wife Zdeňka about the Ostrava region, dated 2 October 1908.*



# Opera

***connections and visions,***

*The opera company of the National Moravian-Silesian Theatre (NDMS) performs at the Antonín Dvořák Theatre on Smetana square in Ostrava. Less than a kilometre east of the theatre, one of the greatest composers of the 20th century, Leoš Janáček, born in 1854 in Hukvaldy, about 30 kilometres away, died at the Klein Sanatorium on 14 August 1928. Neither Antonín Dvořák nor Bedřich Smetana ever visited Ostrava - if truth be told, they had no good reason for doing so. The city of Ostrava is a product of the second half of the 19th century. The discovery of black coal transformed a somewhat dull market town on the left bank of the river Ostravice (Moravská Ostrava), another small town on the right bank (Polská Ostrava) and the adjacent villages into a centre of heavy industry. Coal and iron, new opportunities, new people, a melting pot of different nationalities. Speed, drudgery, arriving, making money, leaving, or staying?*



# and **OSTRAVA**

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*from the industrial past to the postindustrial present*

*Vítkovice mining area*

SOURCE: NATIONAL MORAVIAN-SILESIA THEATRE ARCHIVE 4x



*Antonín Dvořák Theatre, the 1930s*

### **A theatre above a disused mine**

The Municipal Theatre (today bearing Dvořák's name) was opened in 1909 on Antonín (today Smetana) square and until 1919 all performances were staged in German. Following its recent reconstruction, the Neo-Baroque building, the work of the Viennese architect Alexander Graf, is one of the most exquisite theatres in the Czech Republic, with the auditorium possessing superb acoustics and resplendent in its gold-red beauty. Within the city's context, it is unrivalled. The building, with an archaic interior and steel-concrete frame (state-of-the-art in its time), is placed on another concrete foundation above the disused Antonín mine. The apparatus for exhalation of methane in front of the theatre building is still functional and necessary.

The refurbished National House, opened back in 1894, is today another stage of the National Moravian-Silesian Theatre and since the 1950s has borne the name of the Ostrava actor and director Jiří Myron. The opera company only performed there temporarily, after it had to leave the spectacular opera house, therefore we will pay no more attention to it.

A permanent opera company originated in Ostrava in 1919, in the fledgling Czechoslovak Republic, as a section of the new National Moravian-Silesian Theatre. The Municipal Theatre became its permanent stage and ceased to be a German theatre, with German-language productions moving to the German House.

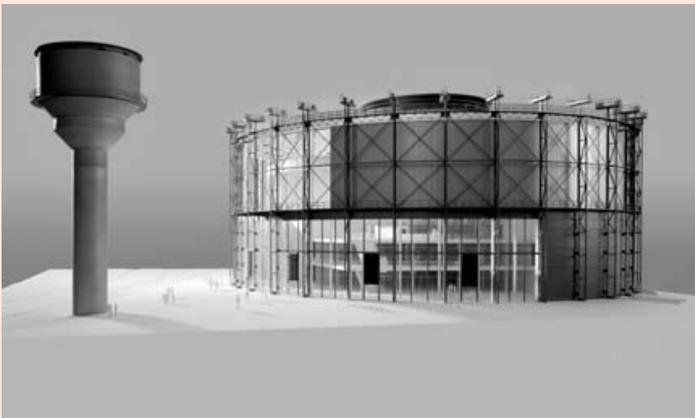
The Opera's very first artistic director, Emanuel Bastl (1874-1950), who opened the regular operation with a performance of Smetana's *The Bartered Bride*, had a passion for Czech music and presented virtually the complete Dvořák and



*Antonín Dvořák Theatre, the 1930s - interior*



*The Ostrava Opera stands above the disused Antonín mine. The methane outlet in front of the theatre building is still functional, and necessary.*



*Visualisation of the future congress centre (transformed former gas-holder)  
The future social and congress centre, which in 2014 is scheduled to stage the opera *From the House of the Dead* to mark the 160th anniversary of Leoš Janáček's birth. The glass, steel and concrete building will be set in the former gas-holder in the industrial part of Ostrava. It was designed by the architect Josef Pleskot.*

*above: Historical view*

Fibich repertoire and, attended by Leoš Janáček in person, staged *Jenufa* (11 September 1919) and *Katya Kabanova* (18 January 1924) in Ostrava.

**Jaroslav Vogel and world-renowned composers - Hindemith, Stravinsky, Prokofiev**

The theatre became a centre of the city's musical culture in general, not just opera. Bastl also organised in Ostrava the first symphony concerts performed by the orchestra of the NDMS.

The major personality of the local musical life was the Opera's next artistic director, the conductor and composer, dramaturge and organiser of music events **Jaroslav Vogel** (1884–1970), who assumed the post at the beginning of the 1927/28 season. He was a personal friend of Leoš Janáček and later on the author of an excellent monograph on the composer. Vogel spent 22 years in Ostrava on and off. In the interwar period, the city underwent another wave of breakneck development: new

modern buildings designed by progressive architects were erected in the centre next to industrial complexes, among them the House of Arts.

In the 1930s, Vogel invited musicians of such renown as Paul Hindemith (three concerts), Igor Stravinsky and Sergey Prokofiev to Ostrava. His intention was to present in the city world-famous composers who can also “play something”. In this connection, we should bear in mind that between the wars Ostrava was a city lacking a university, an urban centre whose intelligentsia was made up of engineers, doctors, lawyers and secondary-school teachers.

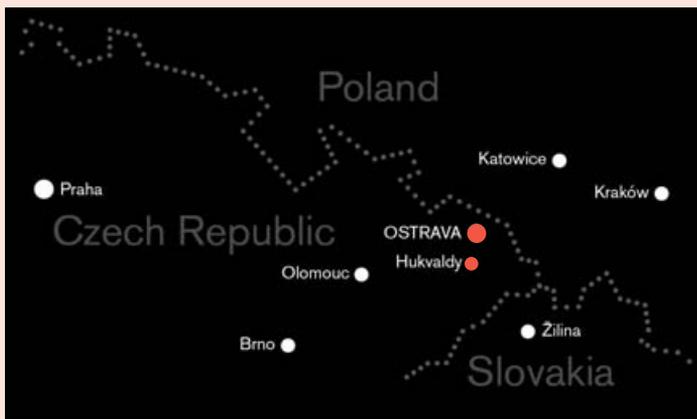
Various tales have been passed down the Ostrava generations in connection with the visits paid by the mentioned celebrities. One such local legend is as follows: The Ostrava elite were preparing for the night-time arrival of Paul Hindemith, who later on declared himself to be an “Ostrauer Stammgast” (Ostrava regular), at the U Rady restaurant. Yet they were so absorbed in the preparations that they didn’t make it to the railway station in time, leaving the star of the avant-garde sitting on his suitcase on the deserted platform... Some of the more credible stories are contained in Jaroslav Vogel’s memoirs, including that relating to Stravinsky’s visit. On 24 January 1933 Stravinsky arrived at night by express train in Bohumín, where Vogel waited for him and drove him to Ostrava. As Vogel puts it: “When we were entering the snowbound, unusually quiet city, Stravinsky made a modest joke: ‘Ostrava is sleeping, unsuspecting of who has just entered its walls.’” On Thursday 26 January there was a concert at which Stravinsky played



*The Artistic Director of the Ostrava Opera and conductor Jaroslav Vogel with Paul Hindemith (on the right, with a viola) on 6 December 1932 in Ostrava.*



*Paul Hindemith’s self-caricature, which he drew for Jaroslav Vogel’s daughter Milada Vogelová-Ottová in her album on the occasion of his concert in Ostrava in December 1932. He called himself an Ostrauer Stammgast.*



## *„When I haven't been in Ostrava for a while I feel sick, like someone with a vitamin C deficiency.“*

*Paul Hindemith's letter to Jaroslav Vogel sent from Berlin on 28 July 1934*

*Ostrava Museum, Historical Music Collections, Ref. No. G 918*

his piano pieces. The performance, sold out well in advance and with record box-office takings (14,344 Czechoslovak crowns), was broadcast by all the Czechoslovak radio stations. (Vogel banked upon this transmission, and the revenues accruing from it, in advance, otherwise he would not have been able to pay Stravinsky the required fee). The broadcast, like Stravinsky's visit in general, was fraught with complications. First, Vogel received "...an official letter from Brno stating that Stravinsky's performance was not permitted 'since [Stravinsky] is not irreplaceable on the domestic labour market'. The pen-pushers invoked this clause, intended for craftsmen, bricklayers, chimney-sweeps and the like, to Stravinsky!" The planned transmission too was first revoked by reason of the radio quotas being reduced, yet "following four unnerving days... disaster was averted." The director general of the Vítkovice Ironworks, Oskar Federer (among other things, a prominent collector of European modernist paintings), hosted a post-concert dinner in honour of Stravinsky, just as he had done for Hindemith and would later do for Prokofiev. In his memoirs, Vogel also writes: "The reader can judge for himself how this single concert made Stravinsky popular in Ostrava overnight by the fact that when the next day he came to a bank to change his fee into dollars or francs (...) all the clerks and customers gathered round and asked for his autograph!"

### **Despite the ideology and smog**

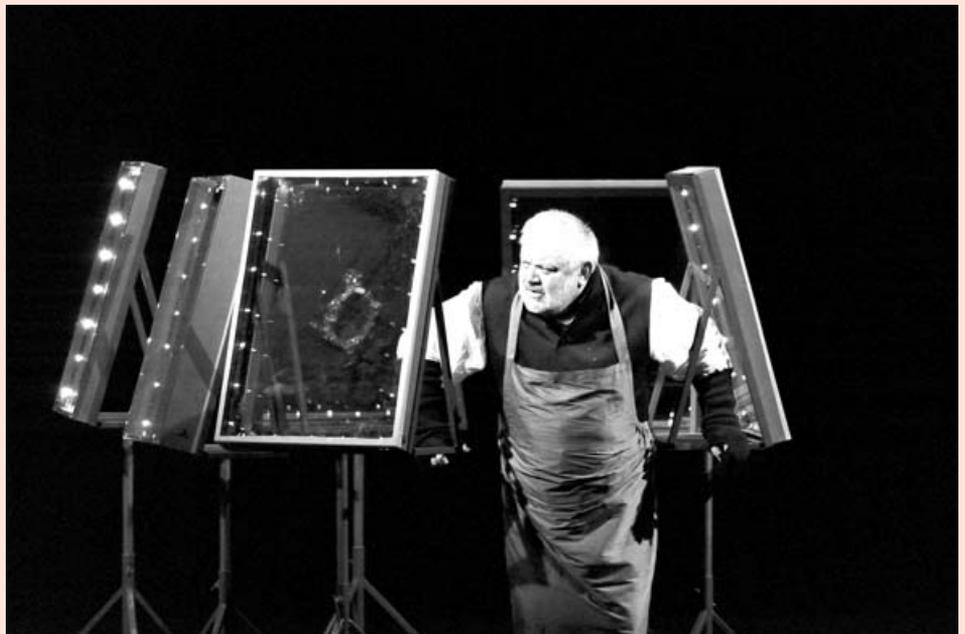
Before being named in honour of Antonín Dvořák in 1990, the Ostrava opera house had had various official titles – the Municipal Theatre, the Provincial Theatre, the Grand Theatre. During the Communist era, it was named after the Minister of Culture, arbiter, or rather censor, of the official taste in the area of "high art", Zdeněk Nejedlý. By the way, there were quite a few theatres bearing his name in totalitarian Czechoslovakia. Dvořák was by no means a favourite of Nejedlý's, quite the contrary. The minister placed him in opposition to Bedřich Smetana, with ideology and misinterpretation prevailing over the historical facts. There wasn't a single theatre in the territory of today's Czech Republic named after Antonín Dvořák until 1990. Bedřich Smetana had "his" theatre in Prague (before it was renamed the State Opera on 1 April 1992), and Leoš Janáček still has, in Brno.

The direction the Ostrava Opera took in the post-war years was mainly determined by its artistic directors and conductors, who after their successful tenures in the city worked for leading opera houses and renowned orchestras both in Czechoslovakia and abroad. Numerous opera recordings of theirs (including those made by Jaroslav Vogel) are still considered benchmarks in many respects. Although very different and distinctive artistic individuals in their own right, what Zdeněk Chalabala, Rudolf Vašata, Bohumil Gregor, Zdeněk Košler and Jirí Pinkas had in common was a high degree of professionalism, clear dramaturgical conceptions, systematic endeavouring



*Zuzana Šveda and Luciano Mastro in  
Hindemith's Cardillac in Ostrava*

to raise the level of the Ostrava opera company within the boundaries and limits of the ideological oversight, and many a time somewhat in defiance of it. The Ostrava Opera is a company with a glittering past, an ambitious present and bold plans for the future. Today, at the beginning of the second decade of the 21st century, Ostrava is experiencing long-term, ongoing and yet to be completed change. The industrial city of miners and metallurgists is becoming increasingly postindustrial. The last remaining coal mine in Ostrava closed down in 1994, steel output is falling, new technologies have given rise to mass unemployment. Ostrava, seeking, sometimes painfully, a new identity, is transforming itself into a university city, with the technical subjects finally being supplemented by the humanities and arts studies. Culture, art and theatre are among the possibilities for imbuing this singular cityscape, one all too often choking beneath a blanket of toxic smog, with a new sense of meaning.

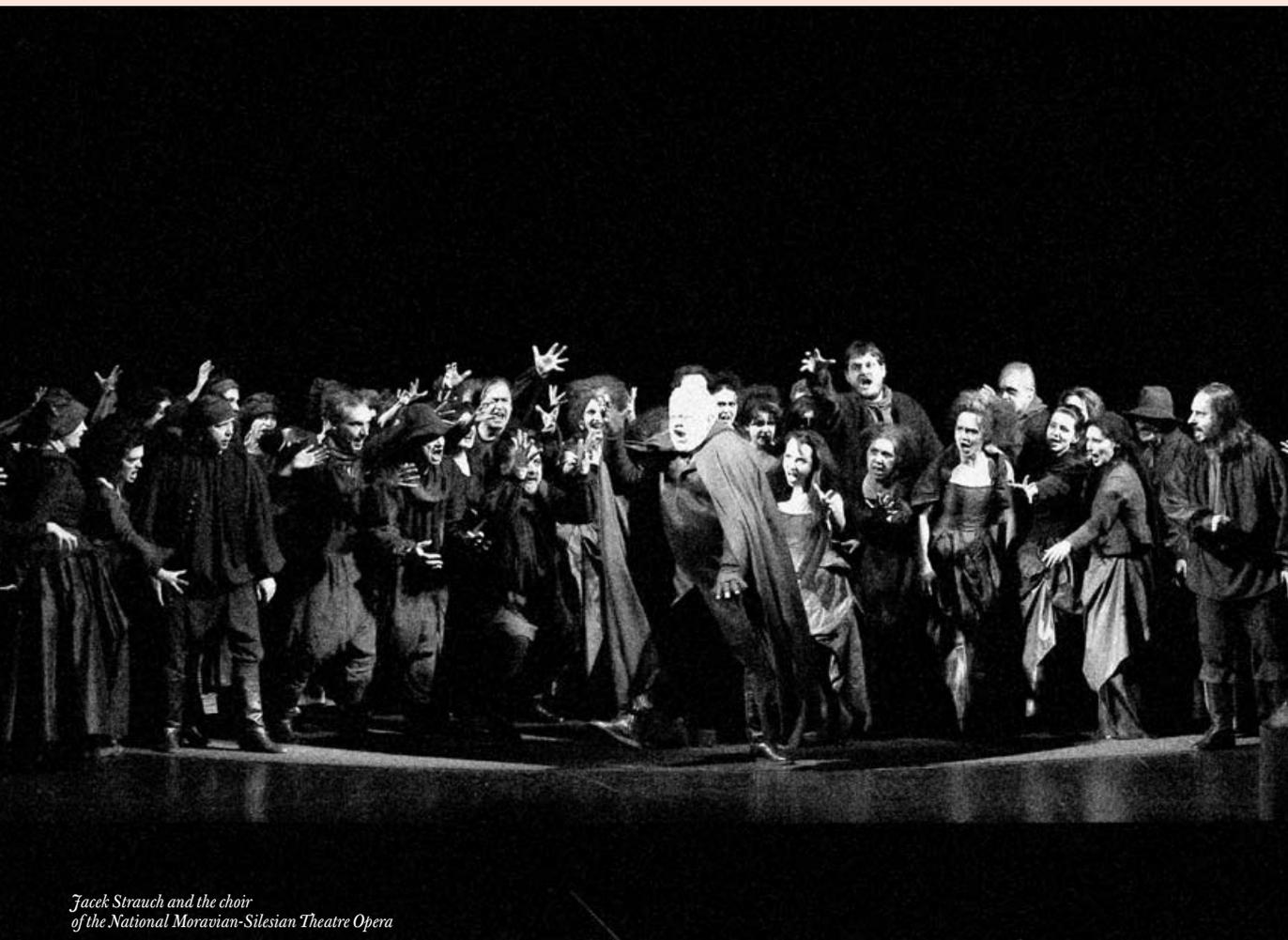


*Jacek Strauch  
(Cardillac)*

### **Dramaturgy as artefact**

The Opera of the National Moravian-Silesian Theatre began writing a new chapter at the beginning of 2010. The post of general director of this colossus made up of four companies (in addition to Opera, Ballet, Drama and Operetta/Musical sections) was assumed by Jiří Nekvasil (1962), an opera stage director with more than twenty years' experience, including abroad, who has brought to bear his experience as artistic director of several opera companies in Prague (Opera Furore, Opera Mozart, State Opera Prague, the National Theatre Opera). Nekvasil brought to the management of the Ostrava Opera Robert Jindra (1977), one of the most talented young Czech conductors, who has drawn upon his previous experience from working at the National Theatre in Prague and abroad to systematically raise the standard of the Opera's orchestra and chorus and has brought in new singers to perform as guests or become permanent soloists.

The path taken in the direction of contemporary music theatre also reflects in the long-term dramaturgical vision, which is being implemented within several cycles. At the Ostrava Opera, dramaturgy is not comprehended as a random selection of works; rather it is seen as an artefact, an artistic gesture with an awareness of the connections between time and space. While taking



*Jacek Strauch and the choir  
of the National Moravian-Silesian Theatre Opera*



Dana Burešová  
(Cardillac's daughter)

systematic care of the Czech operatic tradition, represented by at least one title each season, due attention is also paid to the international operatic repertoire, with many of the works presented rarely featuring in Czech opera programming (*Werther*, *Fedora*, *La Wally*, *Ruslan and Ludmila*). The ambitious 20th-century opera series can be considered groundbreaking.

#### The 20th-century opera series 2010–2014

One of the inspirations was the visits paid to Ostrava by stellar composers in the 1930s. And so this year the Opera of the National Moravian-Silesian Theatre presented **Hindemith's *Cardillac*** (for the first time ever in Ostrava and the first Czech staging for 84 years) and for 2012 is preparing **Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress***. In store for 2013 is **Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia*** (marking the centenary of the composer's birth), while **Sergey Prokofiev's *The Fiery Angel*** is scheduled for 2014. This will be the Ostrava debut for all these works and the first time in decades they have been staged at a Czech theatre/stage.

Naturally, the **Janáček repertoire** is another constant of the NDMS Opera dramaturgy. The 2010 production of the composer's first opera, ***Šárka***, was followed in 2011 by a revival of ***Jenufa***. The acclaimed Czech diva Eva Urbanová will debut in the role of Emilia Marty in a concert version of ***The Makropulos Case*** in 2012, and in the same year the audience can look forward to a new production of ***Katya Kabanova***. The year 2014, when we will be celebrating the 160th anniversary of Janáček's birth, will be borne in the spirit of an international co-production project entailing the staging of the composer's final opera, ***From the House of the Dead***. This remarkable work will be performed in a former industrial space, the until recently functional oldest sections of the Vítkovice Ironworks, which has been granted the European Cultural Heritage Label and is currently being transformed into a singular culture venue.

The final operatic work by Janáček's friend **Antonín Dvořák** will be staged at "his" theatre in May 2012. In the opinion of the current staging team, the somewhat underrated and seldom presented opera ***Armida*** is a work that deserves to be rediscovered for opera stages worldwide.

Old connections emerge in new connections. In Ostrava, this transforming and seeking city, opera has a significant role to play in the general re-encountering with beauty and finding a meaningful form of existence amid the post-industrial space. With an awareness of connections, with the promise of hope.

“*Well*, I make a racket,

*A new edition  
of the Glagolitic Mass*

*One day in the summer of 1920, Leoš Janáček met Leopold Prečan, the future Archbishop of Olomouc, in Hukvaldy. Prečan was visiting the archiepiscopal summer residence in Janáček's birthplace. During their walk, the priest asked the composer if he could write something valuable for him, since at the time sacred music was in decline and nothing really interesting was emerging.*



*The Augustinian House in Luhacovice where Janáček wrote the first version of the Glagolitic Mass*

# and *lightning* also”

In the autumn of 2011, the writer of this article was sitting in the Editio Bärenreiter Praha office, looking out at the church on Jiřího z Poděbrad square in Vinohrady and pondering how to shape the spine of the supplementary Volume B/5-II of the Janáček Complete Critical Edition. The company employees had recently raised a toast to the success of Volume B/5-I Volume and now the selfsame writer was about to deal with the second score of the same work.

Why two scores? What does B/5-II mean? And how does it relate to the Olomouc Archbishop?

“When the idea of it originated, I was a bit petulant,” says the Brno-based musicologist Jiří Zahrádka, who edited the famous work, about the early version of the *Glagolitic Mass*. The early version presents Janáček’s music in an unusual form, one that listeners initially find it difficult to get accustomed to. The work had yet to receive a thorough polishing and hence the early version should above all be a supplement, providing information about the unique creative process.

“Following the Vienna premiere, I heard the early version performed by the BBC Orchestra under Jiří Bělohlávek and my attitude softened somewhat. Now I simply



*Leoš Janáček in Luhačovice Spa*



Janáček's autograph instruction on how to score the timpani in *Věruju*.  
 Janáček Archives, Moravian Museum in Brno, A 52 699.

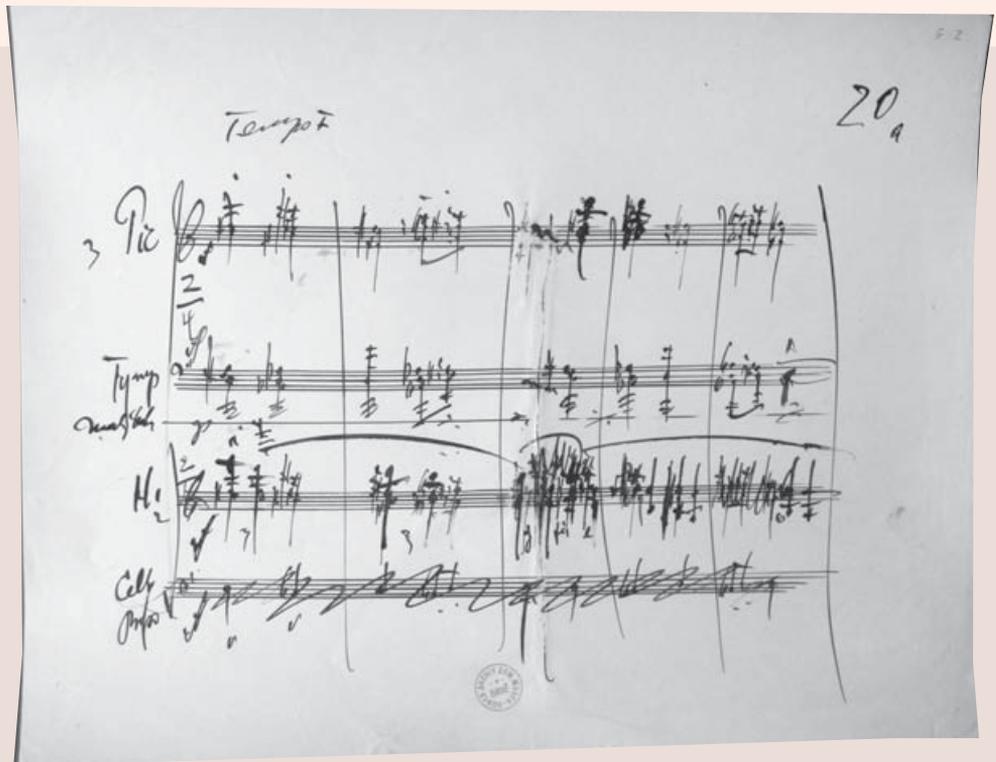
can't get enough of it; I even listen to the recording in my car," says the Janáček expert. The early version, dated September 1927, aroused interest on the part of dramaturges and stimulated the exploration of the primal, uncontrollably squirting ideas. It was this version, not the regularly performed final version, which circled the world during the live broadcast of the opening concert of the most recent Proms.

Janáček wrote the *Glagolitic Mass* hastily. "Before three eves at the baths were past, the piece was complete", he later recalled with lightness and self-irony in *Lidové noviny*, the newspaper that published his short essays, "so Dr. Nejedlý<sup>1</sup> would at least be partly true in that I do compose like Vymazal would, with speed and ease." The rough work on the

composition's overall conception most likely only lasted three days out of the total three weeks of his curative stay in August 1926. In an interview with *Literární svět*, Janáček said: "it was within three weeks". One way or the other, Janáček did compose with ease and the work went smoothly. Fully in accordance with František Vymazal's popular textbooks. The seventy-three-year-old youngster with a penchant for everything Slavonic was convalescing at the Luhačovice spa and evidently was a little bored. The text that had allured him for several years was a translation (or partially a modern reconstruction of a historical translation) of the Ordinary of the Mass into Old Church Slavonic, an ancient liturgical language. When in 1920 the Holy Congregation of Ordinances permitted the reintroduction of Old Church Slavonic in churches, transcriptions of texts from the Glagolitic script into Roman characters appeared and Janáček was overwhelmed with joy.

While working in the rainy spa, Janáček treated the text and the traditional mass structure loosely. He used about 95 per cent of the transcription published in *Cyril* magazine. In the Gloria ("Slava" in Old Church Slavonic) part, he omitted "Oh Lord God, heavenly King", while in the Credo ("Věruju") he left out the section relating to Pontius Pilate and even the basic pillar of Christianity: "and was made

<sup>1</sup> Zdeněk Nejedlý (1878–1962), a prominent Czech musicologist and polemical (at times dogmatic) music journalist and critic, an opponent of Leoš Janáček, later on, a notorious minister during the Communist regime.



A discarded page of the autograph score, "September 1927" version, *Věruju*, measures 226–30. Janáček Archives, Moravian Museum in Brno, A 7447. Extract from the part with three sets of timpani before "Raspet že zany" ("He was crucified").

Man". It is difficult to say whether Janáček had any specific reason for omitting the mystery of the union of God and Man or it was simply because he did not bother his head with theological matters. Yet in the respective place of both scores there is a long and beautiful orchestral interlude, and it is precisely at this central juncture where the two versions differ.

As Jiří Zahrádka writes in the foreword to the final version (Complete Critical Edition of the Works of Leoš Janáček, Volume B/5-I), it is difficult to date the individual transformations of the music text of the *Glagolitic Mass*. We can only consider certain some selected moments of the textual process, at which we can make a pause.

In addition to that which has been preserved in the printed editions published by Universal Edition and, above all, in their printed copies, in the case of such moments it is possible to determine that the score was transcribed by the Brno trombonist Jaroslav Kulhánek. The autograph, containing many coloured layers, from which Jaroslav Kvapil conducted the Brno premiere, is dated 1 September 1927. The *Glagolitic Mass* was first completed on this day at the latest.

The “September 1927” version primarily differs from the work’s usual version, as we know it from Janáček’s revisions, in the parts Introduction, *Gospodi pomiluj* (Kyrie) and *Věruju* (Credo). The Introduction and *Gospodi pomiluj* are notated in a different metre and are more complicated in terms of rhythm. This led the researcher Paul Wingfield to the conclusion that Janáček carried out the changes because the Brno orchestra could not cope with the intricate proportions (quintuplets versus septuplets). Jiří Zahrádka, on the other hand, is of the opinion that the majority of the modifications were only made after the premiere, which took place on 5 December 1927 in Brno. At the time, the orchestra of the National Theatre in Brno was of an excellent quality and very familiar with Janáček’s “inconsideration”.

In addition to metric changes, there are above all revisions made in the texture. Later on, Janáček filled in the sparser passages, instrumentally doubled up significant motifs, and also added figurations or held chords. Hence, the final version is in many aspects denser, with the early version appearing rather raw in comparison, like an *al fresco* painting. A number of smaller modifications of tone pitches appear throughout the score.

We can imagine Janáček’s work as a rolling current of never-ending revisions. The composition further matured in the transcription made by the flautist Václav Sedláček, into which Janáček put more and more details. This is from where Kulhánek then made a new clean copy of the score. By disregarding all the later alterations, from Kulhánek’s transcription we can reconstruct the condition of the work as it was in September 1927. Yet the wave continued and, especially in December, after the premiere, Janáček fiercely revised the work into the canonical form we are familiar with.

We could not, however, read the essential change that made the entire work sound different from Kulhánek’s or Sedláček’s transcription, since pages were cut out and replaced by new ones. It concerns shortening of the aforementioned orchestral interlude in the *Věruju*, in the part “*Raspet*” – “He was crucified, died and was buried”. In this case, the editor reached for the original autograph parts deposited in Vienna, from which by screening the paste-overs he deciphered the original notation.

What did he find out? That the organ solo in the middle of the *Věruju* was in the early version interlaid with chords of three sets of timpani with descending string passages in high dynamics. Shortly before the premiere, Janáček wrote to his femme fatale Kamila Stösslová: “I demonstrate somewhat the legend that when Christ was stretched out on the cross the heavens broke asunder. Well, I make a racket, and lightning also.” There is no doubt that he had this very section in mind.

The racket of amplified timpani, which the *Filharmonický spolek Beseda brněnská* (Brno Society Philharmonic Association), who organised the premiere, had to borrow, evidently did not satisfy Janáček, hence such dramatic interpolations had to go. All that was left from them in the final

Moderato  
2/4

226

flp 1 2 3

tn 1 2 3

tp 1 2 3

tpc

Vn 1 div. 3:2 3:2 3:2 3:2

Vn 2 div. 3:2 3:2 3:2 3:2

VI

Vc

Cb

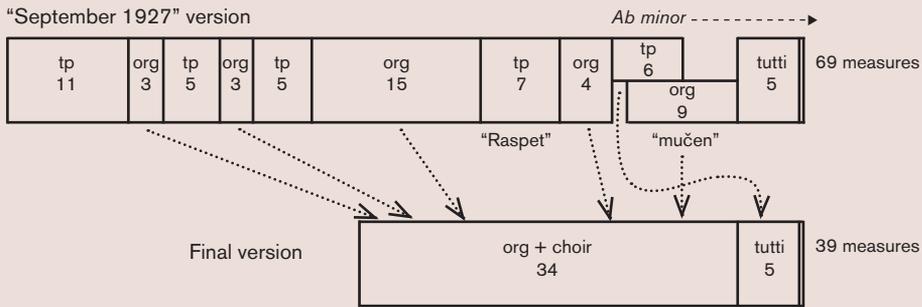
Allegro (♩. = 126)

231

9/8

org 2:3 2:3 2:3

The printed score of the "September 1927" version, ed. Jiří Zahradka. Janáček Archives, Moravian Museum in Brno.



version is the motif at the end of the modified part, and the entire “Raspet” is thirty bars shorter. Instead of three timpanists, just one would suffice.

In Janáček’s correspondence we can find evidence that the composer considered his work complete and concluded only after it had first been performed in Prague. The Prague premiere took place in April 1928 and Janáček, who only had a few months to live, was extremely satisfied with it. “We did not come with empty cries, we did not carry faded flowers. We did not take the path trodden by slippers,” he wrote to the Beseda brněnská singers who had performed in it. At the time, the piano score penned by Ludvík Kundera (the father of the world-famous writer) was published too and plans were hatched for the *Glagolitic Mass* to be performed on foreign stages.

Why, then, should we relativise the form Janáček intended to keep for ever? Because the *Glagolitic Mass* is so significant and the story of its genesis so fascinating that it is worth acquainting ourselves with the previous development stage, as well as plunge deep into the unknown and modified passages. Jiří Zahradka too is of the opinion that the definitive version is still valid. Yet the early version, prepared for the Complete Edition mainly as food for thought, does possess something that the other version lacks. “A certain spontaneity, something pagan,” the researcher says. Now he is most fond of the timpani solo at the end of the Slava.

The sung text underwent a complicated development too. The impulsive Janáček did not have the complete transcription from Cyril magazine available in Luhačovice, hence he quoted it in part from memory. This gave rise to a flamboyant version with peculiar variants. Word accents, marked out in the transcription, were shifted in many places and, as has been mentioned, Janáček even omitted several passages. As for the Old Church Slavonic text, the composer asked the Prague-based expert Miloš Weingart to revise it. In some cases, Weingart could only turn his head in disbelief, since it was not possible to change the finished vocal lines. “Firstly, I am not an old man; nor am I a believer – not by any no means, not by any means!” These are the last words with which Janáček

commented on his non-sacred sacred work. Yet he did not forget about the initiator and thus in the printed editions of the *Glagolitic Mass* we can find the following text: “Dedicated to His Grace Dr. Leopold Prečan, Archbishop of Olomouc”. Owing to illness, Prečan could not attend the premiere in person, but he received the dedication with gratitude. Volume B/5-I saw the light of day, or rather the gloom of a warehouse in Loděnice near Prague, at the end of November 2011. Volume B/5-II will be published in the first half of 2012. It will only contain the score; a historical foreword and an editorial report with a listing of sources can be found in the final version edition. At the time of writing this article, its author came to the conclusion that he would like to see the inscription *Misa glagolskaja* on the spine of the “September 1927” version. The former variant of the title would thus at first glance, before opening, differentiate it from No. 1 - Volume B/5-I, which has the standard Old Church Slavonic name *Mša glagolskaja* embossed in gold letters. One way or the other, the *Glagolitic Mass* is here and, thanks to the indefatigable work of musicologists, we have the opportunity to know its differing versions. Following *Dunaj* (The Danube), the *Male Choruses* and *String Quartet No. 2*, its final version is the fourth volume of the Janáček Edition published in the modern history of Editio Bärenreiter Praha. Complete performance materials for both versions are available, the sung text was revised by the eminent scholar Radoslav Večerka, a professor of Slavonic studies. In addition to the “September 1927” score, we are also preparing the piano score. We believe that these accomplishments will not only contribute to the scholastic discussion but also lead the general public to deeper appreciation of the Moravian musical genius.

*The author is an editor at Editio Bärenreiter Praha*

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## Josef Suk

### Early Recordings

Dvořák: Romantic Piece (1956), Sonatina (1959), Sonata (1959). Suk: Four Pieces (1959). Janáček: Sonata (1958). Smetana: From the Homeland (1963). Ježek: Sonata (1956). Martinů: Duos for Violin and Cello (1965, 1967). Grieg: Sonata No. 3 (1956). Schumann: Evening Song (1956). Respighi: Sonata (1959). Brahms: Sonatas No. 1 (1957), No. 2, No. 3 (1963), Waltz (1956). Schubert: Sonatina, Duo (1963). Debussy: Sonata (1958), Clair de lune (1956), La plus que lente (1967). Poulenc: Sonata (1967). Franck: Sonata (1967). Mozart: Duo for Violin and Viola (1962). Honegger: Sonatina for Violin and Cello. Kodály: Duo for Violin and Cello (1965).

**Josef Suk – violin, André Navarra – cello, Milan Škampa – viola, Jan Hála, Alfréd Holeček, Jan Panenka – piano.**

Editor: Matouš Vlčinský. Text: English, German, French, Czech. Recorded: 1956–1967. Released: compilation 2011. TT: 7:09:15. AAD stereo/mono. 6 CDs. Supraphon SU 4075-2.

**S**even hours of marvellous music, seven hours spent with the greatest Czech violin legend of the second half of the 20th century, seven hours in the company of the finest accompanying pianists in the history of Czech music. I knew a few of the recordings made by **Josef Suk** (1929–2011) in his thirties, mainly those of his relatives' compositions – Dvořák's *Concerto, Sonatina, Sonata*, and Suk's *Four Pieces, Op. 17*. Yet only when I got hold of this box set did I realise the sheer breadth of his repertoire at

that time, his sensitivity towards the composer and the piano partner, his rigorous preparation, faultless intonation, as well as the singular musicality he already possessed. After all, he would retain his austere approach and perpetual diligence until the very end of his days. Josef Suk was not only blessed with extraordinary talent but was also immensely fortunate when it comes to the instruments he played and the congenial pianists who partnered him, which is evident from these archive recordings too. Within the CD box set, Suk is accompanied by **Alfréd Holeček** (Claude Debussy's four-minute waltz *La plus que lente*), while the other piano parts were played with extreme sensitivity by **Josef Hála** and **Jan Panenka** with his customary peerless stroke, thanks to whom the recordings of Brahms's *Sonatas Nos. 2 and 3* are truly timeless. (If they had also tried their hand at *Sonata No. 1*, the set would be in a way as seminal as the set recorded by Josef Suk and Julius Katchen in 1967 for Decca!) The album is abounding in highlights. The Czech repertoire (Smetana, Dvořák, Janáček) is exemplary and no later Suk recordings surpass these. Noteworthy too are the two Martinů duos, with the surprising perceptibility of the fabulous cellist **André Navarra** who, in my opinion, is absolutely amazing in the Honegger and, especially, Kodály pieces. You may be taken by surprise by Jaroslav Ježek's *Sonata*, a splendid composition scarcely performed and in Suk and Panenka's interpretation a true masterpiece. I do not know of a finer recording! I was pleasantly surprised by Suk's rendering of Respighi and Poulenc, in the case of whose pieces I did not expect such empathy from him. As for Debussy's works, I have heard them performed with a greater range of colour, yet Suk and Panenka's execution is singular and forcible. The only question mark relates to Mozart. Although in his time Josef Suk received awards for his recordings of the concerti, I do not think that Mozart was his cup of tea, which also applies to **Milan Škampa**, violist of the Smetana Quartet. Accordingly, the editor should have given the sixth disc over entirely to the Suk – Navarra duo... The box contains another

two gems: Franck's *Sonata in A major* and Schubert's subtly performed *Sonatina in D major*, both with Jan Panenka. At the end of the year, Supraphon has paid a magnificent tribute to the legendary violinist.

Luboš Stehlík

## Johann Jakob Froberger

### Clavichord Fantasias

**Jaroslav Tůma – clavichord.**

Text: Czech, English. Recorded: 2009, Borovany. Released: 2011. TT: not stated. DDD. 1 CD. Arta (2HP Production) F 10184.

**J**aroslav Tůma's new recording takes the listener back to the 17th century, a time when musicians intrepidly wandered across Europe, whose countries and regions possessed specific colours. These had in turn an impact on the minds and creations of the migratory players and composers, and no matter whether or not today we are able to notice these influences, this music, unfettered by rules, is refreshing and surprising. On the cover of the new recording released by the Czech label Arta, the names of the composer Johann Jakob Froberger and the interpreter Jaroslav Tůma are written in the same size of letters. This, however, is not a lack of modesty on the clavichordist's part: when we open the booklet, we find that nine out of the twenty-one tracks are Tůma's own improvisations inspired by Froberger motifs. Johann Jakob Froberger is an influential figure in the history of music, yet we only know sketchy details of his life. He was born in Stuttgart in 1616 and died fifty-one years later in France. He worked as a musician at the Viennese court, collaborated with Frescobaldi in Rome, lived in Florence, Mantua, and after long wandering paused in Dresden and Brussels before coming to Paris via Antwerp. Owing to his musical skills, he was warmly welcomed at aristocrats'



## Jan Dismas Zelenka

### Sepolcri. Immisit Dominus Pestilentiam ZWV 58, Attendite et videte ZWV 59, Deus Dux fortissime ZWV 60

Collegium Marianum,  
Jana Semerádová.

Executive producer: Matouš Vlčinský.  
Text: English, German, French, Czech.

Recorded: May 2011, Church of the  
Virgin Mary under the Chain, Prague.

Released: 2011. DDD.  
Supraphon SU 4068 2.

courts. (Some researchers speculate that he may have used these opportunities to spy on his employers...) As Froberger noted down in the heading of his Suite No. 30, his ship was attacked by pirates en route to London and hence he arrived on British soil empty-handed. He eventually returned to the Imperial Court in Vienna, but lost his job following Leopold I's accession to the throne. Precious little information has been preserved about the remaining ten years of Froberger's life. We do know, however, that he spent the last eighteen months in the services of the widowed Duchess Sibylle in Montbéliard, France.

The preserved Froberger compositions apply the common forms of keyboard music of the era: toccatas, ricercars, suites, capriccios, fantasias. Some of them were written to mark a specific occasion, such as the death of a ruler or friend and the composer's umbrage at the mentioned London-related incident. Although Froberger helped to constitute the rules of the genre, his music has a freeness about it which indicates that many pieces originated as a result of improvisation before the audience and reveals his sense of humour – he composed, for example, a fantasia whose theme is the first six notes of the scale, which is wittily countered by the improvisation of Jaroslav Tůma, who also took the scale, in his case in the descending order, as the basis for a passacaglia.

During the recording sessions, Jaroslav Tůma had available three instruments from the workshop of the German craftsman Martin Kather. In the improvisations, he even plays two at once. As is written in the introductory word, the clavichord is for music connoisseurs an ideal keyboard instrument allowing for the most effective contact of the finger with the string. When pressing the keys, it is even possible to fine-tune chords and produce gentle vibrations. That is why in the past composers considered the clavichord to be an ideal vehicle for expressing emotions. Today, however, and several centuries later, few ears are able to perceive and appreciate these nuances fully. Thus, it makes perfect sense that the

recording sessions took place in the former wine cellars of the Augustinian Monastery in Borovany, South Bohemia – they provided perfect quietude away from the clamour of the 21st century. And such precious tranquillity should be sought by those who decide to buy the recording. You definitely won't be able to savour it to the full if you only listen to it in the car.

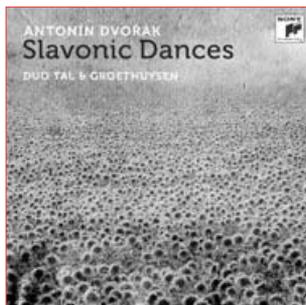
Jaroslav Tůma is an extremely versatile musician, one with the rare gift of weaving magic from any keyboard instrument he lays his hands on. The range of his activities cannot be squeezed into a single pigeon-hole, and his approach to interpretation cannot be designated as "historically informed". Indeed, in the booklet, Tůma distances himself from this trend. At a time when players of historical instruments are required to be "authentic", which in turn results in a certain homogeneity, I consider Tůma's refreshing opinion not to be an expression of aloofness but a welcome return to musicianly instincts.

Improvisation is an art that has all but disappeared from interpretational and pedagogic practice, with organists being an honourable exception in this respect. Yet there is no greater joy than that of witnessing musical ideas engendering and passing within a single one-off moment. Jaroslav Tůma took a step further when he recorded his improvisations (and not for the first time), thus making it possible to listen to them repeatedly and reap new rewards each time. With the exception of a few seemingly groping junctures, they sound extremely unrestrained, in some places pleasantly archaic, elsewhere surprisingly modern – but this can also be said of the original pieces. Thus, it may occur that when listening to the CD you cannot be sure whether it is a fantasia from 2009 or 1640. And in point of fact this ceases to be of importance.

The new addition to Jaroslav Tůma's extensive discography is again something new. It transcends the boundaries between music written down and improvised, the old and the new. And owing to the immaculate audio recording, it offers a special treat to the ear.

*Dita Hradecká*

**C**ollegium Marianum, an ensemble performing on period instruments, has participated in Supraphon's Music From Eighteenth-Century Prague project on three previous occasions – CDs featuring compositions by Jan Josef Ignác Brentner and František Jiránek, and the album *Rorate Coeli* – Advent and Christmas in Baroque Prague. All three recordings are remarkable in terms of dramaturgy and interpretation, and this also applies to the fourth, featuring Jan Dismas Zelenka's *sepolcri* – cantatas intended for performance during Easter at the Holy Sepulchre. The collection of Czech Zelenka albums has thus been enriched by another modern world premiere. Zelenka's *sepolcri* have been preserved in Dresden yet were premiered in Prague; all three pieces were commissioned by the music-loving Johann Hubert Hartig. The *sepolcri* were performed at the Saint Salvator Church at the Klementinum in 1709 (with Zelenka conducting), 1712 and 1716. The first-ever recording of Zelenka's cantatas was preceded by a concert presenting a selection of the *sepolcri*, *Deus dux fortissime and Attendite et videte*, on 12 April this year within the spring cycle of Baroque Evenings, organised by Collegium Marianum under its artistic director Jana Semerádová and taking place for a number of years in historically interesting venues in Prague. This concert already indicated that



the ensuing recording would be superlative, and the CD has confirmed this assumption to the full. Collegium Marianum work in the manner customary for music ensembles at the time of the origination of Zelenka's sepolcři – the instrumental ensemble and choir are made up of brilliant Czech and foreign musicians who play and sing both solo and ensemble numbers. The solo parts on the recording are performed by the soprano **Hana Blažíková**, the bass **Tomáš Král**, the German countertenor **David Erler** and the tenor **Tobias Hunger**, Erler's compatriot. The concert master of the 11-member instrumental ensemble was **Lenka Torgersen**. It is noteworthy that they also played the chalumeau – the precursor to the clarinet, with which Zelenka worked superbly and whose singular timbre and sonic poignancy precisely correspond to the term "vox humana", under which the clarinet was defined in 18th-century music dictionaries. Zelenka's first and third sepolcři have been preserved in autograph scores that were reconstructed for Erbe deutscher Musik by Reinhold Kubik and Wolfgang Horn. The latter also reconstructed the second sepolcři for the same edition. Horn's description of his work on the badly damaged score is part of the text of the booklet accompanying the recording. Jan Dismas Zelenka's Prague period is analysed by the musicologist Václav Kapsa, a specialist in music of the Czech lands in the first half of the 18th century. The CD is truly exemplary – in addition to the four-language sleeve notes, the listener is provided with the texts of all three pieces (in the Latin original and translated into four languages), brief profiles of the soloists, Jana Semerádová and Collegium Marianum members who participated in the recording. This is undoubtedly one of Supraphon's most significant artistic achievements of recent years and a real treat for anyone interested in Zelenka's music.

Michaela Freemanová

### Antonín Dvořák

#### Slavonic Dances, Op. 46, B. 78 and Op. 72, B. 145 for piano four hands

**Yaara Tal, Andreas Groethuysen** – piano. Text: English, German, French. Recorded: 2010. Released 2011. TT: 67:59. DDD. 1 CD. Sony Classical 88697792122.

**F**or two decades, the duo **Yaara Tal** (Israel) and **Andreas Groethuysen** (Germany) have ranked among the world's finest in playing piano four hands and two pianos, as evidenced by the hundreds of concerts they have given in the most prestigious halls worldwide and the ensuing enthusiastic critical acclaim. Their discography has been constantly extending, of late including most notably lesser-known works by famous composers (Mendelssohn's Octet and Symphony No. 1 in their own adaptations, Brahms's four-hand arrangements of Schubert's *ländlers*), as well as the re-edition of the seven-CD box set of Schubert's four-hand piano works (Sony Music 88697535492). From this perspective, Tal and Groethuysen's latest studio outing, a recording of the two series of Dvořák's *Slavonic Dances*, *Opp. 46 and 72*, is a return to the basic and best-known Czech repertoire. Yet more than two decades have passed since the duo's first Dvořák album, featuring the cycle *From the Bohemian Forest*, Op. 68, B. 133 (Sony Classical SK 47199, 1990), and thus the new recording with the *Slavonic Dances* is more a rediscovery of the new than a return to the standard repertoire of the Tal-Groethuysen duo, who possess long-term experience with interpretation of Schubert's four-hand piano music, including their arrangements from Brahms's workshop. (By the way, the

duo also detect and accentuate Schubert inspirations in the *Slavonic Dances*, at least in the last dance of the Op. 72 cycle, *Lento grazioso*, quasi tempo di valse.) There is no need to highlight the qualities of Tal and Groethuysen: faultless interplay, precise and gradated stroke, abundant dynamic scale, rather robust expression, pointing of even the tiniest phrases, a penchant for modulating repeated passages and a truly captivating, inimitable, enchanting agogic accent, which far outstrips their older recordings – and these are just a few of the characteristic traits. The album contains so many forcible and gracious passages that it is impossible to list them all here, but I must at least mention the rubatos in the introduction to the 1st and 8th dances, the witty and spirited cadence in the 4th dance of Op. 46, and the final dance, No. 8(16), of Op. 72, which is more a melancholic reminiscence of dance pictures than a faithful dance stylisation. To date, no other duo has been as particular about differentiating the nature of the two dance cycles as Tal and Groethuysen have: the first series is a sequence of dance stylisations, although also mutually combined within a single piece (as is repeatedly emphasised in the booklet by Yaara Tal), while the second is a cycle of dance pictures akin to romantic characteristic compositions with a programmatic background. In this respect, I would be immensely interested in their conception of the *Legends*, Op. 59, to say nothing of arrangements of the symphonic poems and symphonies (with the exception of the Prague Piano Duo, we are unlikely to see them attempted by Czech pianists any time soon). The reviewed CD can be highly recommended to Dvořák aficionados and lovers of piano and chamber music in general. The more than one hour recording of spellbinding music will enchant you with its glamour, esprit and melancholy. For me personally, Tal and Groethuysen's latest album is a truly exceptional, alluring musical accomplishment.

Martin Jemelka



## Antonín Rejcha

### Piano Trios in E flat major, D minor, C major, Op. 101/1-3

**Guarneri Trio Prague, Čeněk Pavlík - violin, Marek Jerie - cello, Ivan Klánský - piano.**

Text: Czech, English, German, French. Recorded: June 1994 - April 1995, Studio Domovina, Prague. Released: 2011. TT: 79:23. DDD. 1 CD. Supraphon SU 4057-2.

**A** mere seven piano trios can be found among Rejcha's copious chamber works. Trio Op. 47, published in 1804, bears the title *Sonata for piano with violin and cello accompaniment*. Two decades later, under opus number 101, Rejcha had published another six piano trios, this time designated as "*trios for piano, violin and cello*". The composer deemed the difference in instrumental texture between the two opuses so crucial that he even wrote a preface to the Opus 101 trios in which he emphasised that all three instruments in the compositions played an equal role. The preface also contains instructions as to how to rehearse the trios correctly. To conclude, Rejcha added a remarkable note: "A true virtuoso can be recognised by his ability to interpret subtle emotional tremors that cannot be rendered in the notation." In the case of **Guarneri Trio Prague**, Rejcha's pieces have come into extraordinarily competent hands. **Čeněk Pavlík, Marek Jerie** and **Ivan Klánský** are masters in their respective categories not only as soloists. They also have an exceptional sense of chamber play. They thoroughly respect the composer's intention while at the same time possessing – precisely according to the composer's expectations – musical imagination of such immensity that they can also convincingly complete that which is concealed in the depths behind

the score. Rejcha's Piano Trios Op. 101 feature everything that is typical of the bulk of the composer's oeuvre: ideational and formal refinement, as well as phenomenal creative inventiveness. Rejcha's musical language draws from Mozart-Beethoven foundations, with the composer evidently having a closer affinity to the latter (the exquisite "Beethovenian" theme for the variations in the third movement of the Trio in E flat major), yet when listening to his trios we cannot avoid thinking of composers significantly more modern: Schubert (the minuets in the Trios in E flat major and C major), Chopin (the solo piano third variation in the third movement of the Trio in E flat major) and Brahms, or even Bartók (the rhythmically bold "Hungarian" final movement of the Trio in D minor). On this recording, Rejcha's classically beautiful music is rendered in a classically beautiful manner, and there is but one thing you may regret after having listened to it: that Guarneri Trio Prague have only recorded the first three trios from Opus 101. We can only hope that the project will be completed in the future.

Věroslav Němec

## Antonín Dvořák

### Piano Quartets Opp. 23 B. 53 & 87 B. 162 Piano Quintets Opp. 5 B. 28 & 81 B. 155

**Tetra Lyre: Jan Michiels - piano, Nana Kawamura - violin, Tony Nys - viola, Geert de Bièvre - cello.**

Text: English, German. Recorded: June, July 2007. Released: 2008. TT: 67:10. DDD. 1 CD. Eufoda 1370.

**Prometheus Ensemble: Jan Michiels - piano, Nana Kawamura, Igor Semenov - violin, Tony Nys - viola, Geert de Bièvre - cello.**



Text: English, German. Recorded: Sep. 2009. Released: 2009. TT: 65:10. DDD. 1 CD. Eufoda 1378.

**J**uxtaposing Dvořák's early and mature piano quartets and quintets on a single CD is by no means a groundbreaking dramaturgical feat. The opportunity to make impressive comparisons of Dvořák's works from his early period (Op. 5 - 1872/1887), the beginning of the "Slavonic" period (Op. 23 - 1875) and the mature period between Symphonies Nos. 7 and 8 (Op. 81/87 - 1887/1889) was noticed by ensembles and producers long ago, which duly gave rise to a number of boring (for me at least, in the case of Opp. 5 & 81, surprisingly given that it featured Sviatoslav Richter and the Borodin Quartet), as well as interesting and forcible recordings (I would like to draw attention to at least Opp. 81 & 87 as performed by Andrés Schiff and the Panocha Quartet, or Menahem Pressler and the Emerson String Quartet). In 2007 and 2009 the mentioned recordings were joined by two discs with Piano Quartets or Piano Quintets, as performed by **Tetra Lyre** (Opp. 23 & 87) and **Prometheus Ensemble** (Opp. 5 & 81), made up of Belgium-based artists grouped around the forty-five-year-old pianist **Jan Michiels**. In addition to interesting recordings containing Brahms and Janáček works and 20th-century music, Michiels can take pride in a splendid recital album comprising Dvořák piano compositions (Eufoda 1348, 2003), which alongside William Howard's disc (Chandos 9044-2, 1990) I consider the best-ever recording of Dvořák piano works. Whereas in the Dumka and Furiant, Op. 12 B. 136 & 137; the selection of Poetic Moods, Op. 85 B. 161; the Suite in A major, Op. 98 B. 184; and the Humoresques, Op. 101 B. 187, Jan Michiels manifests a sufficient grasp of Dvořák's delicate and in technical terms frequently tricky piano poetics, in the piano quartets and quintets he presents himself as an experienced and sensitive

chamber player (exquisite arpeggios in Opp. 23 and 81) and a convincing piano narrator (the introductory piano epic gesture in Op. 5). The final movements of Opp. 5, 81 and 87 afford him sufficient scope for demonstrating Dvořák's conception of piano virtuosity. Serving as instrumentally solid and expressively becoming partners to Michiels on the recordings, which do not excessively foreground the sound of the piano, are the violinists **Nana Kawamura** and **Igor Semenov** (Opp. 5 & 81), the violist Tony Nys (possessing an instrument with a wonderful tone, see Opp. 81/1+2, 87/4) and the cellist **Geert de Bièvre**, playing an instrument with a tender yet sensitive tone (beautifully rendered cantilenas in the 1st and 2nd movements of Op. 5, a graciously dominant performance in the 1st movement of Op. 23). It is evident that these artists perform together on a regular basis, bearing witness to which is the flawless interplay and perfect communication between the instruments, as well as the identical utterance that in comparison with recordings of Czech and Slavonic provenience I would term far more self-contained and controlled. If I knew that I were not in danger of being misunderstood, I would venture to brand their chamber performance as intelligent and noble in the extreme – not even in the sonic apices of Opp. 5, 81 and 87 do they let themselves succumb to excessive dynamism, having as they do all the secondary parts under control. If I had to briefly comment on the individual recordings, as regards Quintet Op. 5, which I consider the most vital of Dvořák's early chamber works, I would accentuate the narrative grasp of the 1st movement and the winsome interpretation of the 2nd movement. When it comes to Quartet Op. 23, with its superbly constructed 2nd movement, I must highlight the fine dynamic work in the entire section (in the first movement, I miss the absorptive nature of the recording of Suk's trio with Kodoušek). Quintet Op. 81 is in many passages dominated by Jan Michiels's

gentle stroke (the 2nd movement, quiet and dreamily concentrated, does not hurry anywhere). As a minor caveat, I would perhaps only expect greater drive in the first and final movements of Quartet Op. 87, which well becomes this chamber work of symphonic dimensions and phraseology (that said, the variation movement is elaborate in its sheer detail). I have left the added value of attractiveness to the listener and forcible interpretation of the pieces on the two recordings to the very end: Jan Michiels plays a Steinway piano from Chris Maene's collection dating from 1875. Initially, I approached the recording with mixed instruments, period (piano) and contemporary (strings), with a degree of purist scepticism, although I am in possession of a number of recordings, e.g. those made by Harnoncourt, with mixed instruments (Beethoven, von Weber, Schumann, Bruckner, Verdi). The result, however, came as a pleasant surprise in terms of both dynamics and timbre (an interesting challenge for Czech artists would be recording with complete period instruments in which, however, I for one would prefer a Bösendorfer to a Steinway). The icing on the cake is the accompanying texts in the booklets of both recordings, written by Jan Michiels – although evidently dependent on foreign literature and with a few clichés, they are imbued with an affection for and sincere interest in Dvořák's music. What more could we Dvořák admirers possibly wish for?

*Martin Jemelka*



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### Ivan Polednak, Musicologist and

We regret to announce that Monday, musicologist, publicist and teacher Ivan music psychology, aesthetics, theory at 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 Beňáčková, Zuzana Růžičková, Josef Suk. Further information here

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