



13

Magdalena Kožená

Folk music goes digital

Adam Plachetka

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Verlagsgruppe Hermann, 1010 Wien, www.hermann.eu

Dear readers,

I would above all like to draw your attention to the new book by the leading Czech Janáček connoisseur Jiří Zahrádka, "Theatre must not be comedy for the people". Below a review of the book, with the publisher's kind consent, you will find an extensive extract pertaining to the numerous complications pertaining to the staging of Janáček's breakthrough opera Jenůfa. I believe that this will whet your appetite for Zahrádka's publication. In addition to its indisputable qualities, the book is printed in Czech and English, which makes it a title of international relevance. Also relating to opera are the two interviews contained in this issue – with the stellar Magdalena Kožená and with the rising star of Czech (primarily) operatic singing, the bass-baritone Adam Plachetka. Worthy of your attention too is the recently launched internet portal Musicbase, by means of which the Czech Music Information Centre (by the way, the publisher of this journal) will provide a better and more user-friendly information service about Czech music culture.

Happy reading

Petr Bakla

Contents:

Magdalena Kožená Two decades on

by Petr Veber

page 2

Folk music goes digital

by Matěj Kratochvíl

page 14

Graham Melville-Mason turns 80

by Markéta Hallová

page 20

A new version of Musicbase

by Ondřej Čihák

page 21

Adam Plachetka: In Vienna I've learnt how to work efficiently

by Dita Kopáčková-Hradecká

page 23

Jiří Zahrádka

***Theatre must not be comedy for the people
Leoš Janáček and the National Theatre
in Brno***

by Libuše Janáčková

page 27

Jenůfa (excerpt from the book)

by Jiří Zahrádka

page 30

Reviews

page 38



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Czech Music Quarterly is issued
by the Czech Music Information Centre
with support of the Ministry of Culture
of the Czech Republic
and the Czech Music Fund.

Editor: Petr Bakla, Producer: Nina Koubová
Translation: Hilda Hearne
Graphic design: Ditta Jiříčková
DTP: HD EDITION. Print: Tiskárna Macík.
ISSN 1211-0264 (Print), ISSN 1804-0586 (Online)

MK ČR E 7099

Price and subscription (shipping included):
Czech Republic: one issue Kč 60,
subscription (4 issues) Kč 200
Europe: one issue € 6.25, subscription (4 issues) € 25.
Overseas countries: one issue \$ 9, subscription
(4 issues) \$ 36 or respective equivalents.
Electronic subscription: \$ 18 (see www.czech-music.net)



cover photo © Felix Broede, Deutsche Grammophon

MAGDALENA KOŽENÁ

TWO DECADES ON

During an illustrious career spanning more than fifteen years, the Czech mezzo-soprano Magdalena Kožená has taken various directions from her starting point, early music, yet has kept returning and intends to keep returning to it. The feted singer releases a new album virtually every year, works with the cream of the international music world, and as an opera soloist with a passion for song recitals and performing with Baroque ensembles appears on prestigious stages worldwide.

Kožená, dubbed the “operatic Bond Girl”, has garnered numerous accolades abroad, yet she views fame from a sensible distance and fiercely guards her privacy. At the present time, she is indisputably the most renowned Czech classical music artist. And since she has been living in Berlin for several years, Kožená is always eagerly awaited by her loyal fans back at home, with concerts in the Czech Republic being a regular item in her calendar. She has been singing in public for two decades, half her entire life. At the end of last year, a few weeks before Christmas, Magdalena Kožená gave an interview in Berlin to the journal *Harmonie* in which she talked about anniversaries (in May she will be celebrating her 40th birthday), taking stock and what the future holds, about her vocation (which she considers beautiful and enjoyable), as well as about the growing burden of demands and expectations as opposed to the erstwhile carefreeness. She arrived at our meeting by bike and, despite being overburdened with work and maternal duties, with a broad smile on her face, radiating positive energy. If they hadn’t recognised her already, she certainly drew the attention of the café guests with her rich full voice.



PHOTO © DEUTSCHE GRAMMOPHON

Are you still, at least a little bit, the student who in the first half of the 1990s started to appear in public? Or has your life changed so utterly since that time that it's virtually impossible to recall how things were twenty odd years ago?

Perhaps all of us have the feeling that everyone around us is getting older but we have remained the same, not comprehending that ageing can happen to us too. Yes, I will be forty soon and have started wondering... It doesn't seem to me that so many years have passed. Only your own children actually make you realise that time is flying – really flying...

Was the victory at the Salzburg competition in 1995 the springboard at the outset of your career?

At the time, it was a great experience for me, a great surprise, of course... I consider the success at the competition one of the apexes of my career – emotionally, as well as in terms of the self-confidence it gave me. You know, self-confidence didn't come naturally to me. And the fact is that the Communist-era education system didn't overly nurture such aspects of personality. We were told at school that our singing was never good enough, that we weren't ready to present it anywhere. In actual fact, I have been battling this rather negative background all my life. That is another reason why the Salzburg competition meant so much to me. I'm not entirely sure that it actually kick-started my career, but it definitely did draw attention to me. After that it was easier to get a sponsor for the Bach album, which was crucial. And I was also offered an engagement in Vienna, although in retrospect I have mixed feelings about that time. I had quite a lot of problems in Vienna and wasn't very satisfied there. But, on the other hand, my Vienna engagement undoubtedly played a significant role as regards the Czech audience's reception – I mean the fact that I had managed to establish myself abroad...

Did the victory in Salzburg boost your spirits?

As you know, I used to sing a lot of Baroque music with Czech ensembles. Salzburg was a signal that I could cross its borders.

Which of the great musical figures you met in Europe in the 1990s gave you the most?

At the beginning, I actually met one by one all the prominent Baroque gurus. The first of them was Marc Minkowski, then I met John Eliot Gardiner; that was an immense school for me in terms of music. And Nikolaus Harnoncourt... All the giants. And Reinhard Goebel too, a really interesting personality, a truly erudite theoretician, possessing a huge archive at home. Yet when it comes to Baroque music, sometimes I find it funny how learned and enthusiastic all these pioneers and connoisseurs are and how, as a result, many a time every one of them is of a different opinion. It was interesting to compare their approaches and opinions, juxtapose everything in your head. Every now and then, I miss that time, almost pine for it. I began to become known but was by no means famous. I was still just a "talent" who may but need not necessarily develop further. And at the time, I was still really able to do music. I didn't have to practise everything over and over again.

Brilliant musicians got together, improvised to a certain extent, and the result was live music. It didn't involve detailed perfectionism. I miss those times. The only sort of return to those days was my collaboration with the ensemble Private Musicke, which on each occasion was made up of different musicians. It was like when great musicians get together in a jazz club, play wonderfully, the atmosphere is electric, and it doesn't matter if something happens not to turn out perfectly. The situation with the Berliner Philharmoniker is different. An aura of importance pervades a concert, they weigh up thoroughly how someone or other did it, every single note matters... The requisite endeavour for being increasingly perfect in this context brings about great stress. It is rather limiting, narrow-minded, the pure joy of being on stage dwindles.

Does this mean that you are under greater scrutiny in private too, that you are impinged upon by many things?

I have to say that people in Germany lay greater store by privacy and it is respected more than is the case in England or the Czech Republic. Here in Germany the media leave celebrities alone to a greater extent. Another thing is that people recognise you in the street. Sometimes it's nice, when they want to express something positive and you find out that what you do makes people happy. But frankly speaking, especially given my husband's face, it is virtually impossible to go somewhere private in Berlin... And hats don't suit him, so he doesn't hide that face. It can be difficult sometimes.

Which of your numerous official awards do you value and treasure the most?

Receiving a public award for your work is always very nice. Yet – and this may sound like a cliché, but I'll say it anyway – when someone comes up to me and says something interesting, like what my singing means to them personally, such an acknowledgment on the personal basis is much more valuable than any gong. By the way, I recently appeared in Mozart's Tito in Vienna. It is perhaps the only city in the world where classical music enjoys a position almost equal to that of pop. In Vienna, even the taxi drivers listen to classical music.

You have not only enjoyed acclaim, things that have advanced you further... you must have experienced situations not entirely pleasant too.

Well, everyone faces them now and then... Life goes in twists and turns, up and down. I very much doubt if anyone can say that everything is like a fairy tale all the time. Yet it depends on the type of crisis... After having my second child, my situation wasn't easy. Once you reach thirty-five, you probably change physically as well. You begin realising that you are no longer twenty, you start to feel much greater responsibility for everything you do. People often think that it must be a piece of cake, given that I have been singing for twenty years... Yet the very opposite is the case. The more famous you are and the more is expected from you, the greater the pressure you exert on yourself, the more you expect from yourself. And when you have a baby, you can't sleep at night, have to get up and breastfeed. So it's not easy to manage what you would like to. I had everything under control with the first child, I had the feeling that I didn't need to sleep, that I could sing everything fine.



And then you have not one but two children... And two kids, it's all so much more at once, as though more than twice one.

How do you cope with crises when they crop up?

You must accept yourself as you are. People don't feel like admitting that some things are different to what they used to be, that they must view them in a different way, that they must turn down something, that they must find more time for regeneration and exercise. I am able to learn quickly, and I used to do one thing after another. I was singing all the time, so I had proper training, many a time I didn't even have to rehearse that much. I just got down to the singing... And then one day you change - you begin realising that some singer sang it this way, another that way... - and you want to reach the same level. But you've got to awaken to the fact that now everything needs far more time. And when I say "find time", it not only means when it comes to the profession itself but also time for relaxation, so that you have enough strength for the profession. It was difficult for me to accept that I would have to slow down... You begin saying to yourself: maybe I only have fifteen years of career ahead - and that doesn't seem much at all. How will I actually cram it all in? So it is clear that you don't really feel like reducing your workload. But your body will have its say. And you ultimately arrive at the conclusion that you have to take things as they are.

By the way, do you really only count with another fifteen years?

No, of course not. I hope there will be more... Yet to be realistic, after reaching fifty-five years of age female voices can begin to lose their lustre. Ljuba Orgonášová, however, was recently singing here alongside my husband, and her voice is still amazing. On the other hand, there are women whose voices are no longer so good after they've reached the menopause.

Have you ever faced a problem with your voice, any turning point?

I don't think so, not really. It was rather after having my second child. You sing with your entire body, not only with the vocal chords. And when the body is exhausted, not everything functions perfectly. So I went through a physical crisis, exhaustion, and a resulting mental crisis too, since when you can't sleep properly you don't have the nerves to cope with everything. Some of my colleagues have gone through significant hormonal transformations and these can really affect the voice. When it comes to singing, you have a certain physical feeling – and when the body changes, after childbirth, for instance, you're not able to find that feeling for some time. Or it may be different, and you believe that you are starting from scratch. I was already singing six weeks after giving birth. It was all right, but your psyche is affected when you're not absolutely certain that everything will turn out well.

The bulk of your discography isn't commercial by any means; you've even had to convince labels to release some of the albums. Which of your recording projects do you consider the most significant?

I haven't got around to pigeonholing them, but I have attained some private victories: for instance, my second disc of Czech songs made with the pianist Graham Johnson (*DG, Dvořák – Janáček – Martinů, 2000; editor's note*) didn't have a smooth path. Deutsche Grammophon initially didn't want to produce it, they didn't find the repertoire interesting and hence the material was recorded as a reserve, in case someone would happen to like it some day. Ultimately, though, I received a Gramophone Award for the album. I felt a sense of satisfaction, since it didn't turn out that badly after all.

Are you pleased when you raise awareness of Czech music on the global market?

Yes, I am. But today it isn't as complicated as it once was. The current trend is to want artists to deliver pieces from their homeland, so it is much easier to come up with a Czech disc. During that time, fifteen years ago, the situation was different. I deem it especially creditable when songs get heard. It is highly unlikely that any singer who is not Czech would get down to exploring songs in Czech. And although, for example, it is possible to sing Dvořák in German too, the original language belongs to the Slavonic spirit.

And what about your album of Bach arias?

Perhaps it was this very disc that represented my greatest milestone, one even greater than the Salzburg competition. This recording is the fruit of a vast amount of work done by Mrs. Stehlíková. Those who know the lady in person can testify that her enthusiasm is simply irresistible. She succeeded in getting the recording to a German label. The point was not just the fact that an album was released at a certain moment, it actually started up my international career. Peter Czornyj from Archiv Produktion recommended me to a London-based agency. I didn't have such contacts and without Peter it wouldn't have been easy at all. Then I met conductors dealing with

Baroque music... All this may not have happened from day to day but it was very fast indeed.

Is it good that you have an exclusive contract with Deutsche Grammophon?

Yes, it is superb. Today, the majority of labels are breaking up their operations. I don't know for how much longer compact discs will still exist. But having - on any disc - a professionally recorded programme will perhaps go on functioning for a while yet. Admittedly, there are few artists with contracts concluded with labels. For instance, EMI, for which my husband recorded, is actually winding up. So I am lucky that Deutsche Grammophon still somehow exists.

Has recording been an essential part of your work or is it rather a by-product?

Recording has always been an essential part of my work. Yet I'm not like Cecilia Bartoli, who after recording an album makes sure that she sings its repertoire at concerts as much as possible. Hence, I probably wouldn't like discs to form as large a part of my work as in her case. Granted, I have sung in many styles - and I enjoy it, since I wouldn't be able to squeeze into a single one. If I then have approximately one album a year, it is a picture of that which I've been doing the most or that which I feel like doing, it is a document, something that will be left behind me. I've got used to releasing something every year, and I consider it an important feeling.

Following its presentation at the Salzburg Easter festival and recording a bit later by EMI Classics in Berlin, your Carmen was released within a very short time, in the very same year in fact.

Yes, unusually promptly. You normally wait two years or so. I am pleased that I obtained the permission to record it, although it was for another label.

And was Carmen a landmark? Or rather a digression?

It gave rise to various discussions. Everyone knows Carmen, everyone has a clear-cut opinion of it. Even though it concerned a controversial conception, it was vital that people divided into two camps. I was approached and told: don't read the reviews at all, keep singing Carmen in this manner, someone is singing it differently at last. But it isn't easy to deal with negative responses... I'd dedicated a year of preparations to Carmen, I even attended flamenco lessons, learned to play the castanets, which, by the way, isn't easy... And then you go on stage and people are booing you. I'd counted with it, but still - it's not easy to take it in your stride. It's not a pleasant feeling. Yet I deem Carmen a great personal success, even though some didn't see it that way.

Are you planning anything else as major as Carmen? Is there any other similarly fundamental, visible, discussed role, one shared with the audience, you could sing?

There aren't that many such roles for mezzo-soprano...



What about Charlotte in Massenet's Werther?

I hope to have the opportunity to sing it one day, but it's not in the Carmen league.

Or Octavian in Richard Strauss's Der Rosenkavalier?

I'm singing the role here in Berlin, in a revived production, which is wonderful. Octavian is an amazing role, and I love it. Opera fans know it, yet it's not Carmen either, nor Traviata... There are precious few cult roles like them.

I'm half-jesting - but is there any chance you'll sing Verdi's Traviata?

None whatsoever!! There are other roles I would like to sing, but nothing controversial. If I were to try my hand at a soprano role, it would probably cause quite a stir. Yet I'm not planning anything like that for the foreseeable future.



Mařenka or Rusalka, for instance?

Precisely. That would raise quite a stir, wouldn't it?

Can you reveal what you have currently lined up?

My next recording project is a purely Monteverdi album. And the next one will be non-commercial, really non-commercial, featuring chamber pieces: Ravel, Mallarmé, Berio, Janáček's Nursery Rhymes arranged for a version for piano, clarinet and one singer. It should also feature Chausson, Manuel de Falla, De Lange... Such are my recording plans for the next two years.

And what are you preparing for Czech audiences?

On May 1, my husband and I will be appearing in Prague with the Berliner Philharmoniker at their traditional European concert - at the Spanish Hall in the Castle I'll be singing the Biblical Songs. On May 6, at the same venue, the pianist Malcolm Martineau and I will give a recital at which we will present Ravel's cycles *Histoires Naturelles* and *Deux mélodies hébraïques*, Haydn's *Ariadne auf Naxos* and Bartók's *Village Scenes*, and, with the flautist Kaspar Zehnder and the cellist Tomáš Jarník, we will also perform Ravel's *Chansons madécasses*. I'm really glad that this year I will also be able to appear at the *Concentus Moraviae* festival, on June 11 in *Moravský Krumlov*. I'll be singing Vivaldi and Handel alongside the *Venice Baroque Orchestra* and *Andrea Marcon*.

You gave a splendid concert in Prague with Collegium 1704 and Václav Luks, who is currently deemed the leading figure in Baroque music in the Czech Republic. How was it? What was working with them like?

It was an extremely pleasant experience. I was singing a programme that I had performed with the ensemble previously, yet with *Andrea Marcon*. It was interesting to see two different conductors with the same orchestra. I liked the fact that *Václav* - although he came to the rehearsals with *Andrea Marcon* earlier to have a look at how we were doing it - had his own take on things afterwards. He possesses intuition, he really accompanies, keeps an eye out for the changes that occur from concert to concert. I'd previously heard their recordings, yet they were even better live than I'd dared to imagine. Many of the musicians in *Collegium 1704* are my age, they also played or still play in *Musica Florea*. We had a very pleasant tour, owing in large part to the Czech sense of humour, which you encounter after returning to the Czech environment, to the things you'd once experienced... Naturally, it was different to when you travel as a soloist with an orchestra you don't know. Its players have a sense of awe for the soloist and in fact you are often quite alone, there are borders that are difficult to overcome. So, with *Collegium 1704* it was really nice in human terms too.

Do you ever feel homesick?

Yes, I do. Yet, fortunately, Berlin is a nice city. I'm the outdoor type and where we live I can go to the forest, have a dip in the lake. We are surrounded by nature in



the midst of a big city. A good many foreigners live here in Berlin, so you don't feel entirely alone. Yet I can also feel a certain barrier: they are famous, we don't want to bother them... You are somewhat isolated from some things experienced by "normal" people.

Do you feel more at ease when you visit your friends in the Czech Republic?

Everyone needs to unwind, to have a laugh... When you have grown up in a certain milieu, read the same books, watched the same TV series and experienced a number of pleasant things together, there is something to link up to, follow up on when meeting your peers, even though you haven't seen them for ten years or so. Similar friendships are hard to establish later on. Let alone abroad, given that you hail from a different cultural environment. Hence, sometimes I appreciate the fact that Berlin isn't that far from Brno.

Is it difficult to sing, say, Monteverdi one evening, Mozart the next and Mahler the third?

Previously, I would have considered your question nonsensical. Why, I simply sing, and it doesn't really matter what... But I have arrived at the conclusion that it is indeed possible to sing various styles one after another, but you need some time between such projects so as to be able to retune yourself technically and mentally. When it comes to the vocal technique, various things differ between various styles, it is good to get into the style and then take a rest... But they aren't that different. If I were singing Baroque music in the manner it is sung by the singers who devote exclusively to it, the differences would suddenly be greater. Then it would be far more difficult to sing Mahler the next day.

But you don't sing Baroque music in such a specialised manner.

I cannot sing it that way.

And what's it like singing Richard Strauss?

When rehearsing his Rosenkavalier, I can feel that, as regards drama, Octavian is a role at my borders. In some places it almost tends towards the Wagnerian style, and I then feel the necessity to rehearse nothing else. That, within this context, Monteverdi would unbalance me. That I simply need to switch over to singing in a different style.

Will you be celebrating your imminent birthday in public? Or is it a private matter?

My husband has a surprise in store for me, I have allocated four days for it, yet by no means do I plan any public celebration, a gala concert or the like.

Will you be going back home to Moravia?

Not precisely at the time of my birthday, but I would definitely like to get over there some time.

Those remaining fifteen years - it doesn't seem that the prospect fills you with dread. I have already asked how you view things in retrospect - now I'd like to ask how you view the future.

I'm not angst-ridden. I just ask myself - how long is left...? A singer's career doesn't go on for ever. When it comes to conductors, the older they get the better they are. Even at the age of eighty. The situation of singers is different; the voice doesn't improve with age, with the opposite being the case. So what are my prospects? Above all, I will have to accept that everything is different. And find something else to do before it's too late. There are alternatives galore. At around the age of forty-five, many of my colleagues begin pondering what comes next, what they are going to do "after". It is interesting to observe them. Nathalie Stutzmann, for instance, has begun conducting, very successfully I may add. Or the mezzo-soprano Lilli Paasikivi, whom I admire, has become director of the Finnish Opera... Many people start to teach, which is praiseworthy. We will see whether I will ever arrive at it too. One day, everyone begins thinking of what the future has in store. I haven't reached that point yet, however... I still have time. Yet that day is bound to come. Men have it easier, in most cases they sing for longer.

You could conduct, like Nathalie Stutzmann, you have a conductor at home to consult after all...

This I can say with absolute certainty: there's no way I'll be doing that!

Magdalena Kožená

1973 – Born on 26 May in Brno * 1991 – Graduates from the Brno Conservatory * 1995 – Graduates from the University of Performing Arts in Bratislava under the tutelage of the singer Eva Blahová * 1995 – Winner of the 6th edition of the W.A. Mozart International Competition in Salzburg * 1995 – CD featuring songs by A. Dvořák, J. Křička and R. Schumann * 1996 – Soloist of the Volksoper in Vienna * 1996 – Beginning of collaboration with the conductor Marc Minkowski and Les musiciens du Louvre * 1996 – Recording of Bach's arias with Musica Florea * 1997 – Contract with PolyGram, a Bach album for the Archiv Produktion catalogue * 1997 – Titular role in the opera Ariodante at the Handel Festival in Halle * 1998 – Production of Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Volksoper Wien * 1998 – Debut with the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra in Mahler's *Symphony No. 4*, with the conductor Libor Pešek * 1998 – HARMONIE journal prize for the Bach album (Best Czech Recording of 1997) * 1998 – Recording of Ryba's *Czech Christmas Mass* * 1999 – Appearance in Gluck's opera *Orfeo ed Euridice* at Paris's Châtelet with the conductor Sir John Eliot Gardiner * 2000 – Germany's Echo Klassik award (Newcomer of the Year) * 2000 – Recordings of Bach's cantatas and Handel's Italian cantatas * 2000 – The album *Love Songs* (Dvořák, Janáček, Martinů) with the pianist Graham Johnson * 2001 – Gramophone Award for *Love Songs* * 2001 – *Mélisande* in Debussy's opera *Pelléas et Mélisande* in Leipzig * 2001 – Recording of Handel's *Messiah* * 2002 – *Zerlina* in Mozart's *Don Giovanni* at the Salzburger Festspiele with the conductor Nikolaus Harnoncourt * 2002 – *Cleopatra* in Handel's *Julius Caesar* opposite Anne Sofie von Otter * 2002 – The album *Le belle immagini*, featuring Mozart, Gluck and Mysliveček arias, with the conductor Michel Swierczewski * 2003 – *Idamantes* in Mozart's opera *Idomeneo* at the Glyndebourne Festival * 2003 – Debut at the Metropolitan Opera in New York in the role of Cherubino in Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*, with the conductor James Levin * 2003 – The album *French Arias* * 2003 – Named Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres * 2004 – *Dorabella* in Mozart's opera *Così fan tutte* at the Easter Festival in Salzburg opposite Cecilia Bartoli * 2004 – *Varvara* in Janáček's *Katya Kabanova* at the Met in New York with the debuting conductor Jiří Bělohávek * 2004 – Life partnership with the conductor Sir Simon Rattle * 2004 – Gramophone Award (Artist of the Year) * 2004 – The album *Songs* with the pianist Malcolm Martineau * 2005 – *Son Jonáš* born * 2005 – The album *Lamento* with Musica antiqua Köln * 2006 – *Idamantes* in Mozart's *Idomeneo* at the Salzburger Festspiele and the Metropolitan Opera in New York * 2006 – *Dorabella* in Mozart's *Così fan tutte* at the Met in New York * 2006 – World premiere of Zdeněk Lukáš's cantata *Triumph of Death* at the National Theatre in Prague * 2006 – Album of Mozart arias with the conductor Simon Rattle * 2007 – Debut at the Royal Opera Covent Garden as Rossini's *Cinderella* * 2007 – Album of Handel arias * 2008 – *Son Miloš* born * 2008 – The album *Songs My Mother Taught Me* with Malcolm Martineau * 2009 – Gramophone Award for the recording of *Fragments from Bohuslav Martinů's opera Juliette* with Sir Charles Mackerras * 2009 – Album featuring Vivaldi's arias with the Venice Baroque Orchestra * 2010 – *Mélisande* in Debussy's opera *Pelléas et Mélisande* at the Met with the conductor Simon Rattle * 2010 – The album *Lettere amorose* with Private Musicke * 2010 – Album featuring Gustav Mahler's songs with the conductor Pierre Boulez * 2012 – A concert featuring Dvořák's *Biblical Songs* together with the Berliner Philharmoniker broadcast live to dozens of cinemas in Europe * 2012 – The album *Love and Longing* with the Berliner Philharmoniker conducted by Simon Rattle, including *Biblical Songs* * 2012 – Recital at the Prague Spring festival * 2012 – *Carmen* at the Easter Festival in Salzburg * 2012 – *Carmen* recorded at concerts in Berlin and released on CD * 2013 – The Berliner Philharmoniker's traditional 1 May concert, always held in a different European city, will take place for the second time in history in Prague; conducted by Simon Rattle, she will sing Dvořák's *Biblical Songs* * 2013 – At the traditional music festival in Halle an der Saale, where she will give a gala concert, she will take over the prestigious Handel Prize on 14 June, previously awarded by the composer's birthplace to artists of such distinction as the mezzo-soprano Cecilia Bartoli and the conductor Sir John Eliot Gardiner

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FOLK MUSIC GOES

DIGITAL

Folk music is today often perceived as archival material which is presented at festivals as part of the reconstructed idyllic world of multicoloured costumes and traditional values. At the same time, it is viewed as something circumscribed by the borders of national states. An international project initiated by the Institute of Ethnology of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic aims to transcend the limits of these stereotypes.

Music – especially that denominated as “folk” – is frequently brought up as an argument in debates on national identity. In the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, composers sought in it inspiration, while a few folk songs acquired the status of a symbol uniting the nation at crucial times – as was the case of the Czech song *Ach synku, synku* (Ah, Son, Son), connected with the first Czechoslovak President, T.G. Masaryk, and sung by crowds on squares during the heady autumn of 1989. Yet how firm is the actual bond between the music and the nation appropriating it? Giving several examples, the following text attempts to show how traditional music in the territories of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia was in parallel an element with



Performance of a broadside ballad.

local identity and a current of information travelling across borders.

When in the 1920s Béla Bartók was collecting folk songs in Slovakia, he was asked by representatives of the *Matica slovenská* (Slovak Cultural Institution) to categorise the gathered material in terms of “purely Slovak” songs and songs hailing from neighbouring nations. Bartók considered this approach objectionable, which, along with other circumstances, resulted in the collections of Slovak songs only being published many years after his death. Bartók’s scepticism as to the possibility of clearly identifying the nationality of music is certainly salutary, especially when we deal with the folk music, and culture in general, of so-called Central and Central-Eastern Europe. With an acceptable degree of simplification, this rather difficult to define term can be linked with the area taken up before 1918 by Austria-Hungary. The current Czech Republic is situated in a place where the cultural radius of the German-speaking countries and their musical culture meets with the Eastern cultural circuit, stretching from Moravia through Slovakia to the Balkans. When listening to music, we may talk about a border demarcated by the *Českomoravská vrchovina* (Czech-Moravian Uplands), on whose

western side melodies are structured in a more regular manner, in major and minor keys, whereas in the east we can frequently encounter modal melodies, with some types of slow songs unwinding according to the singer’s breath and the text’s cadence instead of regular rhythm. Given this position of a cultural crossroads and its being part of a multinational empire, the culture of the Czech lands inevitably received various influences and concurrently also functioned as a source of influences taken up by the neighbouring areas.

Migratory songs

In his book *The Study of Ethnomusicology*, the distinguished American ethnomusicologist and Prague native Bruno Nettl writes about songs as “the most indefatigable tourists in the world” and highlights kindred variants of a melody from Hungary, Finland and Ireland. Finding the relations between such geographically distant areas may be rather a matter of accident, yet it is much more likely within the whole formed by the former Austria-Hungary.

A typical example of a Central and Eastern European “migratory song” is a melody to the text *Ej, padá, padá*

♩ = 68

Za-cvi-la ru - ža tro - ja - ka. Za-cvi-la ru - ža tro - ja - ka.

Ma-la ja mu - ža, mu-ža ja ma - la, ma-la ja mu - ža py - ja - ka.

Song „Zacvila ruža trojaka“ as recorded by Ivan Paňkevič in 1929.

rosěnka (Oh, Dew Is Falling), familiar in Bohemia, Moravia and western Slovakia. In this version, we can find it in the Czech Republic’s collections, whereas on a 1929 recording made by the collector and linguist Ivan Paňkevič the same melody is sung by men from the area of Uzhhorod, the Eastern extreme of Czechoslovakia at the time, while the text *Zacvila ruža trojaka* and the same melody to different lyrics can also be found in Poland and Hungary. In his book *U pramenů lidové hudby Slovanů* (The Roots of the Slavs’ Folk Music), the Prague-based Ukrainian philologist and folklorist Volodymyr Hošovskij (1922–1996) reconstructed a detective-like quest for the pedigree of a wedding melody, which he gradually discovered in western Ukraine, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia and Moravia. The Czech collector František Bartoš included it among his Moravian Folk Songs to the text *Kamarádko moja, už sa budu vdávat*.

In the times prior to the expansion of radio and other communication technologies, the travelling of melodies was primarily connected with the migration of the population for work or with military service, which for several years took young men to more distant climes. Certain population groups were more mobile than others, with special cases being members of the Roma and Jewish ethnic minorities. Noteworthy is the fact that these were the groups that frequently contained professional musicians who were hired to play at parties and weddings of the majority population in the given country. For professional reasons, these musicians had to be able to learn new material quickly, and it

was they who propagated numerous melodies across Central and Eastern Europe.

Similarly to melodies, folk dance forms, such as the *ländler*, *mateník* or *czardas*, migrated too. Some of the Austrian and Hungarian dances made their way to our territory and began being perceived as an integral part of the local culture. The *Ländler* (adopted in Czech as “*ländler*”), a dance named after a fertile area in Lower Austria (“*Landl*”), became domesticated in Bohemia in all the areas inhabited by a mixed Czech-German population, including the Plzeň region, the Šumava and Jizerka mountains, and the Jihlava region, where the *ländler* was embraced as the main component of wedding feasts.

Singing tabloids

A specific form of musical expression which constitutes part of our musical culture history and in the case of which crossing borders and transcending distances played an important role was the broadside ballad. In the past, this narrative formation executed a function identical to that of today’s tabloid press. The history of the broadside dates back to the invention of the letterpress in the middle of the 15th century and led to the origination of a genre combining music and poetry, performed in a specific, semi-theatrical manner. Singers accompanied by the harp, hurdy-gurdy and, later on, the barrel-organ, standing in front of a sheet bearing illustrations to the song, were part of the colour of town and village fairs. Texts were added to simple, preferably widely familiar, melodies so that the audience did

not have to deal with anything new and could thus accept a new piece easily. The broadside performers travelled from town to town, with their activity significantly contributing to songs' migration between regions. Their repertoire included songs about extraordinary political events, such as battles and rebellions, as well as ballads about crimes, primarily those caused by ill-fated love or adultery. The titles starting with the words "Come all ye..." ("Truthful news...", "The tragic story of...") feature the characteristic traits of today's advertising slogans, while the pictures on the title pages of the song prints highlighted the most significant moments of the story presented. The audience did not inquire into whether the described events actually happened, of major importance were the emotions they evoked. The news of a murder in the neighbouring village could be just as alluring as military events taking place at the other end of the country. The song *Andreas Hofer, hrdina tyrolský* (Andreas Hofer, the Hero of Tyrol) is an example of such a political-sentimental chronicle and takes us to the era of the Napoleonic Wars. At the beginning of the 19th century, its hero, originally a wine and horse merchant, headed an army fighting against Bavaria and France, yet following a series of victories he was betrayed, captured and executed. The German song in his honour, to the text of the German poet Julius Mosen, spread throughout the Austrian Empire and was also translated into a Czech variant. At the end of the 19th century, the song even aspired to become the unofficial anthem of Czech workers.

A Czech instrument builder in Pest

Besides songs, musical instruments and instrument configurations migrated too. An instrument linking up the musical traditions across Europe is the bagpipes. Another example is the cimbalom, which was originally brought to Europe from Asia and in its small, portable version was played throughout Central Europe. Until the middle of the 19th century, the mobile cimbalom was used in the Czech lands too; for instance, in the Labe (Elbe) basin. The semblance in which the instrument is most widespread today and in which it became a symbol of Central and Eastern European folk music (the chromatic cimbalom, reminiscent of a table with a pedal) only appeared in the 19th century. The instrument was technically innovated by Jozef Schunda, born in 1845 in Říčany, near Prague. He began working as a violin-maker, later moved to Budapest (Pest at the time), where in 1866 he built an instrument on four legs with a greater

range, more robust sound and possessing the ability to suppress the reverberation of the strings by means of a pedal. In 1875 this model of the cimbalom was given the status of an orchestra instrument owing to Ferenc Liszt, who employed it in his piece *Ungarischer Sturm*, and at the same time, it became the dominant instrument of Gypsy bands playing in Central Europe cafes. From Hungary, this model of the cimbalom spread to Moravia, and during the course of the 20th century it formed a regular part of Moravian folk ensembles.

Somewhat later, Schunda got down to reconstructing the wind instrument *tárogató*, originally with a double reed, which was played in the Balkans and was brought from Turkey to Hungary during the Ottoman Wars and widely used from at least the 16th century. Schunda's patented variant was single-reed, was similar to the soprano saxophone and, in comparison with the bleating timbre of its predecessor, had a much more pleasant sound. Owing to these properties, it was readily accepted by Hungarian musicians, who still deem the *tárogató* one of the symbols of their folk musical tradition.

Opening of the archives

Research into musical (and other) folklore has often focused on that which makes the national music unique, on how it differs from the music of neighbouring countries. The examples above, however, demonstrate that it is also necessary to explore the interconnection between individual national cultures into higher entities. Folk culture is frequently linked with open-air museums and forgotten traditions, and is understood as something nice to listen to and look at yet concurrently isolated from contemporary life.



Older form of cimbalom from Valachia (Czech Republic)

To a large extent, this approach on the part of the general public to folk culture results from the fact that plenty of remarkable materials lie hidden in archives and are thus merely accessible to a narrow circle of experts. The countries of Central Europe have a long tradition of studying their folk heritage, yet for the layman it is rather difficult to get hold of reliable information, and even more difficult to put it in a context and find the connections between the information.

Endeavours for creating a joint system for inquiring into the relations between and mutual influencing of folk cultures and traditions date back to the period after World War II, yet political and historical reasons precluded their materialisation and hence the majority of such projects were limited to individual countries. The standards that would allow for putting information into an interconnected whole have yet to be set, with each institution creating its own system of “meta-data” without these systems being compatible. With a view to changing this situation, the Etnofolk project, headed by the Institute of Ethnology of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, was launched. The project’s initiators are convinced that folk culture can be practically utilised in numerous aspects. And this objective can be achieved by means of establishing a unified system and place that would provide access to such information.

The Etnofolk project commenced in 2011 and to date has been joined by subjects from the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia and Austria: the Institute of Ethnology of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic (the main partner); the Institute of Ethnology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences; the Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica, Slovakia; the Institute of Ethnology of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences; the Institute of Ethnology of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts; and AiP Beroun, a company taking care of the project’s technical aspects. The Österreichisches VolksLiedWerk participates in Etnofolk as an associated partner. Each of the institutions possesses ample experience with processing folk music sources, yet the academic workplaces do not have sufficient experience and finance for such an extensive enterprise that would consolidate the vast amount of data. Hence, they turned to AiP Beron, which possess experience with, among other things, working on the Czech digital manuscript library Manuscriptorium.

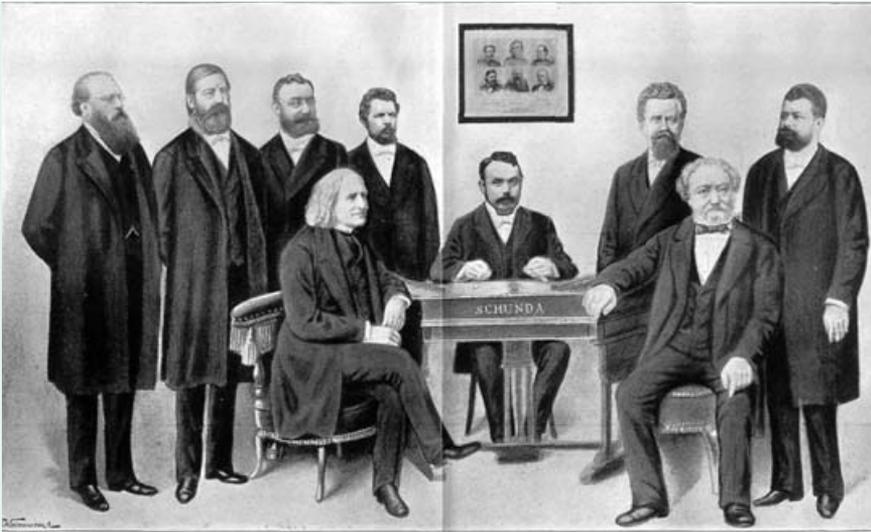
The project is divided into several phases. The initial preparations are followed by digitisation of the content and definition of the standards for metadata. Each of the partner institutions has in its archives

First presentation of Schunda’s cimbalom. In the center Jozef Schunda, seated to the left Ferenc Liszt.

a vast quantity of various documents – photographs, written, audio and film recordings. A representative selection of these documents is digitised and furnished with detailed information concerning the time of origin, classification, etc. Within the next phase, the digitised and annotated documents are included in the database, which is designed in such a manner that it can be made use of by various groups of users, ranging from researchers to the general public. The database makes it possible to seek connections between the individual items. For instance, in the case of a recording of a Czech song it displays whether its variants also occur in the other countries participating in the project.

Folk in the digital world

What is concealed behind the digitisation processes and the metadata? What should the use of the Etnofolk database be like in practice? The place through which the public will be able to get to information will be the portal www.etnofolk.eu, which will contain hundreds of thousands of pictures, dozens of maps, hundreds of hours of audio and video recordings. These figures will gradually grow, since digitisation of sources will be an ongoing process in all the workplaces involved in the project. Etnofolk is focused on several target groups, and each of them can benefit from the enormous quantity of processed data. Information on folk architecture in a specific region may prove useful for architects and building companies, to whom the database will provide examples of traditional architectural patterns and construction methods and thus they will be able to



adapt their designs to the location in which they plan to build. State institutions and private companies alike will be able to select more appropriate strategies for starting up new projects and businesses and tackling current problems with unemployment when possessing knowledge of what professions and crafts are traditional in certain areas. For their part, researchers, not only those working for the institutions participating in the project, will be able to use the portal for comparing phenomena in all spheres of folk culture; for instance, for identification of items in museum collections. The portal can also be used within education at all types of schools, which will be provided with an easily accessible and extensive source of examples of folk culture, as well as scope for more complex comparative studies. The project will be of great importance for tourism too. Although entrepreneurs and government authorities are aware of the enormous significance of folk culture for tourism, its potential has to date only been utilised to a small extent, and non-systemically. Owing to the Etnofolk database, the regions will be able to promote specific local traditions and matters of interest, while tourists will be able to plan their trips with regard to the taking place of festivals, occurrence of singular architecture, etc.

Returning to the aforementioned examples of folk music, the portal will make it possible to compare kindred melodies from individual countries in scores and recordings, and as a result this will allow for determining the routes through which the songs today deemed, say, Czech or Moravian wandered through the Czech territory and across Central Europe. When entering “cimbalom”, for instance, the portal will interconnect the historical variants of the instrument and information on its making and repertoire, while in the case of broadside ballads the user will find examples of historical prints and variants of text.

The database and the internet portal will be linked up to by other activities whose objective it will be to help the individual subjects concerned to make maximum use of the possibilities afforded by Etnofolk.

Folk culture should not only be a museum exhibit disconnected from the present. The Etnofolk project, supported from the EU structural funds within the Central Europe programme, aims to show how this heritage can be properly brought to bear within contemporary life in the Central European countries.



GRAHAM MELVILLE-MASON, A GREAT CHAMPION OF CZECH MUSIC IN ENGLISH-SPEAKING COUNTRIES, TURNS 80



PHOTO © ZDENEK CHRAPEK

On 4 March 2013, Mr Graham Melville-Mason, an ardent promoter of Czech and Slovak music in Great Britain, as well as English music in the Czech Republic, celebrated his 80th birthday. Although he is renowned in musical circles, we would like to take this opportunity to highlight his invaluable work.

Originally trained as bassoonist, later on an organiser of cultural life, musicologist and conductor, Graham Melville-Mason played a vital role in promoting Czech music and its performers in Britain during his three decades at BBC 3. A great fan of Czech music, he began paying frequent visits to Czechoslovakia back at the end of the 1970s. He was a regular guest at the Music Information Centre of the Czech Music Fund in Prague, where he familiarised himself with Czech music, above all 20th-century and contemporary works.

As an adviser to the Edinburgh Music Festival in his native Scotland, in 1990 Mr Melville-Mason played a major role in focusing its dramaturgy on Bohuslav Martinů, and in the following year on Antonín Dvořák. Over twenty years, from 1987 to 2007, he served as President of The Dvořák Society for Czech and Slovak Music in London (established in 1974 and today associating more than 700 members, most of them hailing from English-speaking countries, including the USA and Australia). Owing to Mr Melville Mason's activities, the society contributed to boosting the interest of British audiences not only in the oeuvre of Antonín Dvořák but also in the music of other Czech (and Slovak) composers of both the past and present. At the beginning of the 1990s, the Antonín Dvořák Museum in Prague received from The Dvořák Society in London its very first computer with a specialised program aimed at establishing the International Dvořák Database. After 1989, Mr Melville Mason also brought to bear his abundant knowledge and plentiful contacts as an adviser to the Prague Spring international music festival. Within his lectures at Czech universities, he propagated British musical culture in our country, especially the work of Benjamin Britten. Mr Melville Mason has received a number of prestigious Czech honours, including the Bohuslav Martinů Foundation Medal (1998), the Jan Masaryk Award "Gratias agit" from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1999), the Czech Music Council Prize (2007), the "Artis Bohemiae Amicis" medal from the Ministry of Culture (2010), and was also named an honorary member of the Antonín Dvořák Society (2009). Several composers have written or dedicated works to him. We congratulate Mr Graham Melville Mason on his birthday, extend our heartfelt thanks and wish him all the best and good health.

A NEW VERSION OF MUSICBASE

The Czech Music Information Centre has launched a new version of its MUSICBASE (www.musicbase.cz) featuring new functions and boldly aspiring to become an encyclopaedia of music by contemporary Czech composers.



Over the course of its long-term cultural operations in Central Europe, the Czech Music Information Centre (HIS) has gathered together a unique collection of scores, recordings and associated materials which currently constitutes the basis of a public archive available to both professionals and laypersons in the research room, as well as in electronic form. For several years, the e-database of HIS's collections in Prague also served as a catalogue for a music lending library within Czech Radio, yet owing to the constant development of modern technologies the existing database was lagging behind, with its proprietary nature precluding the possibility of extending its utility by new functions which have become standard in the online environment (fulltext searching, audio streaming, document previews, connection to other databases, web portals, social networks, etc.). The endeavour to unify the physical archive with its digital counterpart and, at the same time, to allow for systemic presentation of “born-digital” (materials that originate

in an electronic form) documents, which we are bound to encounter ever more frequently, has resulted in the MUSICBASE project, whose aim it is not only to serve the needs of the centre's in-house documentation and archiving but also, and most significantly, to play an information-providing, educational and popularisation role which, after all, is the main mission of our institution.

In this manner, the original database (still available, yet not being updated in its old form) is being transformed into an effective tool for propagation of information about contemporary Czech music, its representatives, compositions, performers and related cultural events. It undertakes a new role, one previously lacking in the Czech environment, as an electronic encyclopaedia of contemporary musical life so as, alongside HIS's other publishing and musical activities (Czech Music Quarterly, HIS Voice and other publications), to highlight the breadth and wealth of this sphere of living culture. Although still in the phase of ongoing minor modifications and corrections, as well as, and most crucially, constant updating of records and multimedia, MUSICBASE already successfully serves both professionals and the general public, as documented by the increased number of newly registered users and their inquiries addressed to the institution's staff. Owing to the database's modular structure, the further gradual addition of new functions (e.g. streamed video, direct connection to YouTube, Wikipedia, social networks, etc.) is easier and will follow its "tuning up", especially in dependence on the users' requirements and suggestions, either from within or from without. In technical terms, the database consists of two parts: the front-end (a user interface working at three levels of user access - unregistered, registered and administrator) and the CMS (the content

management system only accessible to the database's administrators and editors). The front-end is primarily focused on fast fulltext searching among music compositions according to title, but also available is advanced searching by composer, instrumental configuration, score and recording, while providing ample possibilities of filtering the results in line with the pre-selected parameters and logical operators. The database also uses the function of a "basket" into which users can put the retrieved database records, which can subsequently be exported into a text or Excel file. In addition, users can, if available, order materials for HIS's research room or request borrowing from Czech Radio's lending library.

Instrumental within MUSICBASE's educational and popularisation mission is the "anthology", i.e. historical, music-style, biographic and otherwise thematically profiled selections of compositions and composers from the database, supplemented by an introductory article written by the author of such an anthology, be it a specialist in a composer or period, music historian, critic, aesthetician or pedagogue. A similar role is also fulfilled by the "Composer of the Week" feature, which on the homepage presents the artists who are celebrating their birthday within the current week. And last but not least: Users can communicate with the administrator of the database or archive through a contact form in which they can write their questions, remarks and suggestions.

The MUSICBASE project would not have come to fruition without the support provided by the institutions whose logos can be found on the database's home page (www.musicbase.cz), with the most noteworthy being the Vodafone Czech Republic Foundation and a grant from the European Union within the international MINSTREL project.

ADAM PLACHETKA: IN VIENNA I'VE LEARNT HOW TO WORK EFFICIENTLY

He only visits Prague very occasionally, and when he does his programme is planned to the minute. This time, his schedule had to include an entire afternoon given over to interviews with journalists, a performance at the National Theatre, as well as putting together a kitchen unit in the new flat he and his wife are furnishing at the present time. He and his wife, the soprano Kateřina Kněžíková, do not compete when practising since Adam spends most of his time in Vienna, where he is a State Opera soloist.



PHOTO © ILONA SOCHOROVÁ

Could you try and sum up 2012?

Above all, my wife and I got married... Well, there were quite a few things: I sang the Count for the very first time, which I was looking forward to for a long time, thus completing all my roles in *Le nozze di Figaro*. In addition, I sang a few new roles in Vienna. In the summer, I made the first recording of an entire opera for Gramophone (*Così fan tutte*, with Yannick Nézet-Séguin), then my first solo album for Supraphon (Handel Oratorio Arias), thus returning to Baroque.

What was the atmosphere like during the recording sessions in Třebíč, and why did you record the CD there in particular?

The atmosphere was wonderful, yet there wasn't much time. The album was made in Třebíč for acoustic reasons, since the local basilica is suitable for recording, and also because the Třebíč Opera Festival participated in the CD's release.

Why did you choose Handel's oratorios for your debut solo album?

Because Roman Válek and I sought a joint project. And since Roman and his ensemble primarily perform Baroque music, we were fishing in the same waters. Within Baroque, Handel is my number one composer, hence the choice was clear. We wanted to bring to bear the repertoire we have prepared together over the past decade or so. And after exploring the market, we found out that in the deeper voice category there was not a single recording featuring Handel's oratorios. At that moment, it all fell into place. We found something new, yet something that is close to us.

2013 promises to be a big year for you, perhaps a breakthrough one... You'll be making your first guest appearance in the USA.

There will be a concert in Chicago with the city's symphony orchestra and Riccardo Muti, where we'll be performing Bach's *Mass in B minor*. And then my debut at Glyndebourne, in *Figaro*. The rest of the time I'll again be spending mostly in Vienna.

Being permanently engaged at such a prestigious theatre as the Vienna State Opera must be a fabulous opportunity for such a young singer. Still and all, don't you feel a bit constrained?

Yes, it do, but I don't think it's a bad thing. Originally, I actually didn't want to join the ensemble, and when I received the offer I seriously contemplated whether to accept it or not. I'd always chosen my repertoire myself and I was afraid of losing this freedom, that I would have to perform that which they would assign me. I was afraid that it would be too much, that I would have to sing unfitting roles which would have a negative impact on my further direction. But this hasn't happened, on the contrary, and I must say that my work in Vienna has developed me immensely and that there is no other opera house in the world that could have afforded me such practical experience. We in Vienna have by far the largest repertoire of any European or overseas opera house: this year we are presenting 50 titles for adults and two or three operas and ballets for children. Munich, with the second most extensive repertoire, has approximately 40 programmes.

What about rehearsals, given such a rapid turnover of performances?

The number of productions goes hand in hand with the fact that things are occasionally a bit slapdash. Nevertheless, there are enough rehearsals. When a revival is being prepared in, say, London, they have three or four weeks for it, whereas we in Vienna have to make do with three to ten days. Yet this teaches



PHOTO © HANA SMEJKALOVA

As Argante in Rinadlo, National Theatre Prague

As Don Giovanni, Wiener Staatsoper



PHOTO © MICHAEL PÖHN

you how to work with maximum efficiency – how to distribute forces, what to agree upon first, what is essential and what is seen on stage, etc. If I had taken the staggiona direction, I wouldn't have got into this positive routine. The singers who only do staggionas sometimes seem a little bit inflexible to me.

What were your beginnings in Vienna like? Did your new colleagues receive you warmly?

I was lucky that *La bohème*, the very first piece I appeared in, was positively received. I arrived prepared and even though they piled a lot of work on me, by and large I managed to cope with it. And when I couldn't, they understood. The first impression is the most vital, so it is good that my colleagues and I got on right from the beginning. I have always felt support from the others. I wasn't a shooting star, I started with the smallest roles, and naturally, step by step, worked my way up.

Who of the opera managers is a soloist in regular contact with?

With all of them – I am the kind of person who, when faced with a problem, strives to tackle it promptly. I try to resolve everything directly, without mediators; this is the only way to prevent misunderstandings. I go to see managers quite often, when I need to sort out a holiday or anything else.

Next year, your permanent engagement will expire. What will you do then?

I will remain in Vienna on a part-time basis. They would like me to stay, yet now I need to introduce myself elsewhere too. Accordingly, we have agreed

upon a residence contract. I will perform in about five productions throughout the year.

Was your engagement in Chicago arranged by an agency or was it a matter of chance?

That is by and large my own work. I know people who know the conductor Muti, and they recommended me. An agency is mainly important in the beginning, when it can help promote a young, promising singer. At the level I am now, if I do well, I have a chance to be known by so many people that my work should be able to sell itself. I am curious about America, I would like to spend some time there over the next few years.

You gained success while still very young. Were you taken by surprise?

It isn't possible to think of it in advance – I tried to get ready for it, put sufficient energy into my work, so that some things developed, shifted forward. Yet the main thing was to be in the right place at the right moment. If, at the very beginning, I hadn't auditioned for Tito at the National Theatre in Prague (although I didn't feel like going to it, since I told myself they knew me already), I wouldn't have met the Herrmanns. In that case, I wouldn't have been spotted by Eva Maria Wieser, who cast me in Salzburg. And if I hadn't been in Salzburg, I wouldn't have gone to Japan and encountered my present agency...

After graduating from the conservatory, did you plan to continue your formal education?

I am still continuing! After the conservatory, I enrolled at the Faculty of Education in Plzeň, from

there I jumped ship to the Academy of Performing Arts, where I am still registered as a student...

And what about your voice advisers?

When something isn't clear to me in the score, I work with the répétiteurs at the theatre, and when I need technical advice, I still call Professor Löbl, with whom I worked at the conservatory and afterwards. I have always treasured his opinions, and all my following pedagogues respected it. I have the feeling that the less you intervene with the technique the better - when something works well, it isn't good to go poking around.

Has your voice ever betrayed you?

Oh yes, because of indisposition or technical difficulties - we're not machines. The worst thing is the moment of decision-making, as to whether or not to cancel a performance. If I were to be completely responsible towards my voice and the delivered performance, I would have to cancel half the appearances a year - and then no one would invite me because they'd think I was unreliable.

Most of the characters you perform on stage are actually biologically older than you...

This was above all the case of my first engagement, in the role of Mícha at the National Theatre in Prague, when at the age of 19 I was singing Valentin Prolet's father. But now I no longer have this feeling, with the core of my repertoire being Figaro, Giovanni, who can be portrayed both as mature men and youths.

Are there any roles you've thought about but haven't yet ventured on?

I have always given the answer that I am already singing that which I would like to sing. But now I do have in mind a role I would like to sing in the future - Hans Sachs in *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. The question is whether my voice will move up or down, but one day I could be Scarpia or Escamillo. A few years on, I would like trying Wolfram in *Tannhäuser*, and then we'll see.

How do the Vienna audience treat their singers?

They are perhaps the best in the world. The atmosphere is wonderful, people stand and wait by the back entrance... When you are tired after a performance, you're not always in the mood to sign autographs for a quarter of an hour, but on the other

hand it's the most beautiful form of appreciation there is, proof that I'm doing my job well.



PHOTO © MICHAEL POHN

Born in 1985, bass-baritone Adam Plachetka was educated at the conservatory of his native Prague. In addition to his many national competition victories, he won The First Prize at the Antonín Dvořák's International Vocal Competition.

*In 2005 he made his debut at the National Theatre in Prague. Since then he has appeared there - among others - as Don Giovanni, Publio (*La clemenza di Tito*), Figaro (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Nardo (*La finta giardiniera*), Argante (*Rinaldo*) and Guglielmo (*Così fan tutte*). He also performed the roles of Don Basilio (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*) and Papageno (*Die Zauberflöte*) at the Prague State Opera.*

*He is a regular guest of the Salzburger Festspiele (Benvenuto Cellini, Rusalka, *Le nozze di Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*). His past engagements include Hajný (*Rusalka*) in the Opéra de Nice, Sylvano (*La Calisto*) at the Bayerische Staatsoper in Munich, Nardo in the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie in Bruxelles and in the Seoul Arts Center as Ping (*Turandot*) and Argante, that he also sang in the Théâtre de Caen, the Grand Théâtre de Luxembourg, the Opéra de Rennes and the Opéra Royal de Versailles.*

*In september 2010 he became a member of the Ensemble of the Wiener Staatsoper. After his debut as Schaunard (*La bohème*), he moved on to roles such as Don Basilio, Melisso (*Alcina*), Masetto (*Don Giovanni*), *Don Giovanni* and *Dulcamara* (*L'elisir d'amore*).*

He performs under the baton of such conductors as Alain Altinoglu, Marco Armiliato, Bruno Campanella, Alessandro De Marchi, John Fiore, Asher Fisch, Valery Gergiev, Friedrich Haider, Daniel Harding, Jakub Hrůša, Patrick Lange, Louis Langrée, Marc Minkowski, John Nelson, Tomáš Netopil, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Robin Ticciati or Franz Welser-Möst.

JIŘÍ ZAHRÁDKA

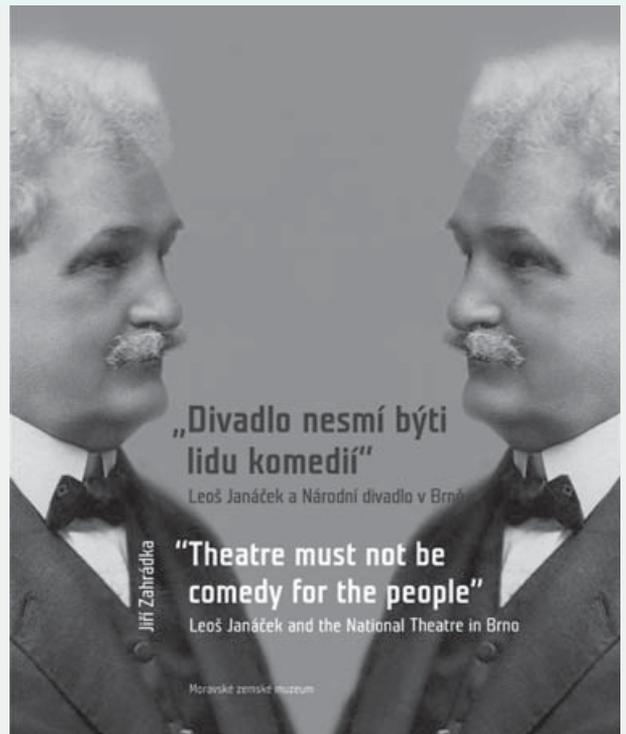
“THEATRE MUST NOT BE COMEDY FOR THE PEOPLE” LEOŠ JANÁČEK AND THE NATIONAL THEATRE IN BRNO

Moravian Museum and Editio Janáček, o.p.s. Brno 2012

146 pp. Text: Czech and English. Translation: Graeme and Suzanne Dibble

The latest book by the Czech musicologist Jiří Zahrádka, the curator of the Janáček collections at the History of Music Department of the Moravian Museum and a world-renowned author of critical editions of Janáček's works, combines two seemingly contradictory qualities – erudition and a highly readable style. As is known, specialist publications more frequently serve for retrieving the necessary information than providing a good read. When, however, you immerse yourself in Zahrádka's book on Leoš Janáček (1854–1928) and the National Theatre in Brno, you find that it's simply unputdownable. Yet before plunging into the book, I highly recommend that you leaf through it and have a look at the pictorial supplements, whose uniqueness, copiousness and, in many cases, sheer novelty make them truly exceptional. You will also be pleasantly surprised by the quantity of source materials and the publication's overall visual aspect, including the imaginative jacket. Foreign readers will undoubtedly be pleased by the fact that the book provides both Czech and English texts.

The book focuses on the relationship between Leoš Janáček and the National Theatre in Brno (NDB), Moravia's most significant cultural institution. As Jiří Zahrádka writes in his preface, this relationship was “multi-



layered, reflecting artistic, social, as well as political aspects". And this approach is similarly applied by the author too – in seven chapters, he presents the NDB's history connected with Leoš Janáček from the composer's very first experience with opera through the establishment of the Society of the Czech National Theatre in Brno and the composer's diverse activity within it, the problems related to performing his works on this stage, to the theatre's final bidding farewell to the famous artist. The importance of Zahrádka's work primarily rests in the breadth and coherence of his coverage of the subject, in the originality of some of the chapters and subchapters, and the integration of the previously fractionalised, often only partially explored minor themes, as the current Janáček research requires.

The first chapter, titled *Janáček and Brno opera productions before the opening of the theatre in Vevří ulice in 1884*, familiarises the reader with Janáček's initial experience with opera and his relationship to musical drama. The main attention is paid to the history of operatic productions in Brno before 1884 (the year that saw the opening in Brno of the Czech provisional theatre) in relation to Janáček. In addition, the author elucidates the history of theatre in Brno in general – including drama and operetta productions.

The next chapter, *Janáček as a reviewer of the Czech National Theatre in Brno*, again manifests Zahrádka's skill at concisely setting his topic into a more general historical framework – besides the relationship between Janáček and the NDB, he gives a brief yet comprehensive account of the theatre's history. The author maps Janáček's contributing to the journals *Hudební listy* and, later on, *Moravské listy*. This subject has previously been treated in part, therefore Zahrádka mainly concentrates on the content of Janáček's reviews. Praiseworthy too is the list of works about which Janáček wrote (or didn't write) in his articles, and the highlighting of his ongoing critical approach by means of which the composer strove to conduce to improving the general level of Czech opera theatre.

The third chapter, the second most extensive, focuses on *Janáček as a member and representative*

of the Družstvo of the Czech National Theatre in Brno.

The names of the chronologically sequenced subchapters indicate their content – *Janáček's first election to the committee; The search for a leader of the orchestra; Controversy over the new Czech National Theatre building – Janáček voted onto the committee a second time; In the new republic – Janáček voted onto the committee a third time; The search for a new head of the National Theatre – Janáček's championing of Neumann; The City Theatre for the Czechs!; The City Theatre*. As we know, from 1884 Brno's Czech National Theatre did not have available a permanent building for its operation. Hence, the Society mainly occupied itself with the construction of a new theatre, which would provide better conditions for performances. Although Janáček did not live to see the theatre's construction, from 1919 on the Czech National Theatre in Brno was able to use the exquisite premises of the German Municipal Theatre (today the Mahen Theatre). A significant role in this respect was played by Janáček, whose attitudes, opinions and active involvement are described step by step. The entire chapter is truly detailed, brilliantly elaborate, abounding in entirely new information which is consolidated with the facts previously known. The author accentuates as Janáček's most significant achievements his success in getting František Neumann appointed artistic director of the opera section, as well as the mutually beneficial and manifold co-operation between the composer and the Society. The chapter's text is befittingly interlaced with numerous quotations from Janáček's personal correspondence, photographs of personalities, as well as the eight designs for the Czech NDB submitted by various architects within the 1911 tender. I personally consider the most valuable the publication of period photographs of the exterior and interior of the theatre in Na Vevří street, published in this complete form for the very first time.

Janáček as a visitor to performances at the Brno National Theatre is the shortest chapter, comprising a mere two pages. Zahrádka writes about the performances Janáček attended, or may have attended, at the NDB, thus acquainting the reader with the scope of the composer's interest in theatre.

The fifth chapter, titled *Janáček's work on the stage of the Brno National Theatre*, provides a colourful account of each Janáček opera performed at the NDB – their entrusting to the theatre, rehearsals and all the productions staged during the composer's lifetime. This chapter, the most extensive in the book, deals with the operas *The Beginning of a Romance*, *Jenufa*, *Destiny*, *Katya Kabanova*, *The Cunning Little Vixen*, *Šárka*, *The Excursion of Mr. Brouček to the Moon*, *The Makropulos Case* and *From the House of the Dead*, as well as the stage performance of the *Valachian Dances*. These small “theatre programmes” afford a host of new information relating to the National Theatre in Brno, while attention is paid not only to the premieres but all the stagings until 1928. In the case of each work, the author notes the cast, the performance delivered by the orchestra and singers, the conductor, stage direction, sets, etc., and adroitly sprinkles the text with quotations from the correspondence and responses published in the period press, even stating the precise, or at least approximate, amount Janáček received as royalties. The pictorial supplements contain photographs of theatre posters, score autographs and letters, individual celebrities and the whole theatre company and, most significantly, the costume and set designs for Janáček's operas, with the most lavish being Eduard Milén's designs for *The Cunning Little Vixen*, published in their entirety for the first time. The seven pages given over to this opera include prints of the designs of the Cubist-Futurist costumes, sketches for the graphic form of the stage, set designs, photos taken at the production's premiere, as well as Milén's jacket for the piano score. Besides the documents relating to *The Cunning Little Vixen*, the chapter presents Vlastislav Hofman's set and costume designs for the opera *Šárka* and Josef Čapek's lovely designs for *The Excursion of Mr. Brouček to the Moon*. Yet when it comes to the novelty of the content, pride of place is taken by the subchapter devoted to Janáček's most famous opera, *Jenufa*, which we are reprinting in this issue.

The penultimate chapter, titled *Janáček's works in concerts by the Brno National Theatre orchestra*, loosely links up to the previous chapter. The author focuses on the orchestral concerts and

the circumstances relating to their performances in Brno until 1928. With regard to the fact that during Leoš Janáček's lifetime Brno did not have a philharmonic or any other symphony orchestra, many of his works were explored and premiered by the NDB orchestra conducted by František Neumann. This chapter too is accompanied by plenty of pictorial materials. Entirely unknown previously was the beautiful photograph taken in 1927 of the Stadium in Kounicova street, where Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass* was premiered the same year.

The final chapter, *The Brno National Theatre's farewell to Janáček*, provides inspiring and entirely new information. Noteworthy is the speed with which the news of Janáček's death got to Brno or the NDB's intention to perform one of his operas in honour of the composer. Jiří Zahradka rounds off this chapter with František Neumann's death at the beginning of 1929 and an account of his artistic relationship to Janáček, who in 1926 told Neumann: “*You are the best to conduct my Jenufa!*”

One of the book's significant fortes is the appendices following the mentioned chapters: the list of chairpersons of the Society of the Czech National Theatre in Brno (1881–1928); the list of NDB directors (1884–1928); the list of performances of Janáček's operas at the NDB (1884–1928); the glossary of selected figures; the list of abbreviations and literature; the list of pictorial materials; and the index of persons. Owing to its readability, pictorial supplements, parallel English translation and, above all, its uniqueness, it has good prospects of gaining readers both in the Czech Republic and abroad, thus becoming a permanent contribution to Janáček research.



Linking up to **Libuše Janáčková's review**

(see pp. 27–29), below is an excerpt from Jiří Zahrádka's book

"Theatre must not be comedy for the people".

Leoš Janáček and the National Theatre in Brno.

(The footnotes are omitted for the purposes of reprinting.)

JENŮFA

the text is part of the chapter

Janáček's work on the stage of the Brno National Theatre

The next Brno Janáček premiere [after *The Beginning of a Romance*] was *Jenůfa*, staged in 1904. Shortly before that, however, the Brno National Theatre had given the premiere of another work by Janáček, *Our Father*. Three works were staged at the theatre premises in Veverčí ulice on 15 June 1901 in cooperation with Brno's Tyl amateur theatre club: *Závodiště* by Gabriela Preissová, *Ze světla do tmy...* by Jaroslav Havránek and of course Janáček's *Our Father*.

The work was enacted as five tableaux vivants inspired by the paintings of the Polish artist Józef Męcina-Krzesz, apparently in the version with a solo tenor, mixed chorus, harmonium and harp (as the orchestra lacked a harpist, this was replaced by a piano), and was conducted by Max Koblížek. Once again, *Jenůfa* made it onto the stage of the theatre in Veverčí ulice only after its rejection by Prague's National Theatre. The director, Gustav Schmoranz, wrote to Janáček on 28 April 1903: "I sincerely regret that we cannot accept your opera for performance. We would wish your work to meet on the stage with complete success for you and for us, but we fear that your work would not have this type of success. We return both the full score and the piano-vocal score."

Janáček reached a decision to entrust the opera to the Brno theatre, which in a letter from 8 October 1903 accepted both the work and the composer's conditions regarding orchestral forces. However, the decision to give the premiere of the composer's new work was not taken until after the publication

of the schedule for the season 1903/04, so *Jenůfa* does not appear in any printed promotional material for the season 1903/04 and was not even discussed by the committee of the Družstvo. It was clearly the initiative of the then director Alois Staňek Doubravský which made it possible to go ahead with the work. In October the copying out of the performance material began and in December the soloists and the choir already knew their parts, although the orchestra did not begin to rehearse until early 1904. Interestingly, the orchestra parts were written with a prelude – the overture *Jealousy* – although this was never performed with the opera (the only exception being the Brno performance of 21 January 1954). The preparations did not proceed as idyllically and enthusiastically as is often suggested; this is best demonstrated by the recollection of Cyril Metoděj Hrazdira, the conductor of the first staging, from 1924:

When I had given out the parts and the first coaching sessions began, what I too had feared came to pass. The singers were reluctant to sing it, shook their heads over it and handed back the parts [...] Janáček had come to the very first coaching sessions. Lingering reluctance on the part of the singers, difficulties in the studying process, and on top of that the presence of the composer gave rise to such a gloomy mood that Janáček became convinced that it was impossible to study the work. I asked him not to join us at rehearsals for at least a fortnight and I assured him that it would "work out".



Poster for the world premiere of *Jenůfa*

attended another performance in December). With the approaching premiere, which was set for 21 January 1904, more and more reports appeared in the press about the forthcoming musical sensation. Alongside the conductor Hrazdír, the production was undertaken by the theatrical director Josef Malý. The *Kostelnička* was portrayed by Leopoldina Svobodová, *Jenůfa* by Marie Kabeláčová, *Laca* by Alois Staněk-Doubravský, and *Števa* by Theodor Schütz (real name Bohdan Procházka). The premiere was literally a triumph for the author:

Yesterday Maestro Janáček was not only the object of enthusiastic ovations in the theatre, but was also celebrated in the Readers' Club. On his way from the theatre to the *Besední dům* the audience formed a guard of honour and impatiently awaited the maestro. When servants went by with wreaths and bouquets, curiosity mounted. As soon as the maestro appeared with the conductor Hrazdír and the actors, the audience cheered for maestro Janáček and accompanied the composer all the way to the *Besední dům*.

A whole range of reviews came out after the premiere – the Brno ones more celebratory and the Prague ones more critical. They were mostly concerned with the work itself rather than the way it was performed. For the most part the reviewers expressed praise for the performances of the protagonists and the dedication of the conductor, Hrazdír. One serious shortcoming of the staging was the absence of some instruments which played an important part in the score: the *cor anglais* and bass clarinet. The lack of a harpist in the orchestra at that time was apparently resolved during the premiere by inviting a guest player. There was only a single player of the flute, the oboe and even the second violin. The situation grew worse with each performance so that by 2 February 1904 the performance was close to catastrophic:

Through its ramshackle, even offensive rendition, not only is the artistic reputation of the theatre damaged

Sure enough, after about three weeks I invited him along. He came, he followed the rehearsal closely, he smiled and, giving me his hand, he said in his unique way: “Now I believe that it will work out.”

Tension also prevailed at the orchestral rehearsals, as an undated letter from Janáček to Kamila Urválková testifies:

Today I returned from the first full rehearsal of Act 1 thoroughly fed up. There was such a wretched argument between the director [of the theatre] and the conductor that it left me feeling on edge. The ‘trumpet player’, reprimanded during the rehearsal, took it so much to heart that he got dangerously drunk. He no longer recognized any ‘authority’. He swore at everyone like a trooper. It was like a stone which is thrown and brings down an avalanche with it – which in this case would have badly damaged my premiere. With difficulty they managed to straighten out and reconcile everything in order to complete the rehearsal.

Shortly before the premiere Janáček visited Prague in order to personally invite Karel Kovařovic, the chief conductor of the National Theatre, to the premiere; however, he did not come because of a visit to the French Riviera for his health (he eventually

but the work itself, which has just garnered such success, is also being killed off. We expected more reverence towards Moravian art from the management! It casts a curious shadow on the artistic leadership of the theatre when *Jenůfa* is staged without a flute, where the composer has stipulated three in the score! It was not until noon on Tuesday that a flautist was sent for from Židenice and he was supposed to play without a rehearsal. That is quite impossible. So we experienced *Jenůfa* without a flute. [...] But on Tuesday it was not only a *Jenůfa* staged without a flute but also with ailing powers. Since Sunday Miss Kabeláčová has been unable to sing, Mr Staněk-Doubravský too. Because of that she had to leave out Jenůfa's prayer in the 2nd act, and the exquisite imitation of the choir "Every couple must endure its sorrow" remained unsung. We will pass over other places in the opera, recalling that they caused the listener embarrassment and that we trembled in anticipation of how this or that place would turn out. [...] Other parts of the performance were also very weak, especially in the 1st act. It has been a long time since we have heard such disharmonies, uncoordinated ensemble and out-of-tune fingering in the strings.

Nevertheless, Janáček attempted to invite Gustav Mahler, the conductor of the Vienna Court Opera, to Brno for the repeat performances, but in vain. *Jenůfa* had eight repeat performances on the stage of Brno's National Theatre, with the last one taking place on 7 February 1905. In addition, in May 1904 the Brno theatre gave guest performances of this production in České Budějovice and Písek. In 1904 Janáček was paid the sum of 146 crowns for the work's performance (the premiere and eight repeat performances at 12 crowns, two tours at 8 crowns and 10 crowns for the loan of the score). Antoň J. Frýda, the director of the Czech National Theatre, asked the composer for another staging in a letter from 5 July 1906. The musical side was once again taken on by the conductor Cyril Metoděj Hrazdira, and before the beginning of rehearsals on 11 July 1906 he suggested to Janáček some cuts which would help increase the dramatic momentum: "It chiefly concerns both ensembles: "A vy muzikanti jděte dom..." and "Každý párek si musí svoje trápení přestát..." Janáček clearly revised these very places and apparently at that time also removed the Kostelníčka's aria "Aji on byl zlatohřívý". The first public performance of the new staging under the direction of Eduard Aschenbrenner took place on 25 September 1906 in Moravská Ostrava, after which two repeat performances followed in Brno (a planned performance in Olomouc evidently

did not take place). For this production Janáček received the sum of 42 crowns (1 tour at 8 crowns, 2 performances in Brno at 12 crowns, 10 crowns for the loan of the score). However, once again there was a significant problem with the incompleteness of the orchestra and rebellious singers:

[...] in the orchestra in place of the promised 28 sat barely 20 people. (According to my reckoning, the following played: 4 first violins, 2 seconds, 2 violas, 2 violincellos and 2 contrabasses, and one each of flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, trumpet, horn and trombone. 1 player saw to the percussion instruments. The piccolo was entirely missing.) [...] Only the groaning of the first violins (at times unbearably out of tune) and the grating sawing of the contrabasses were audible; at times the rolls of the timpani drowned everything out, or the brass mournfully howled... It left me with a feeling of anxiety - anxiety and shame! [...] The behaviour of some of the individuals on stage was offensively coarse, vulgar and unartistic. In places I had the impression that the chorus (and even some soloists, e.g. Mr. Pokorný and others) were making fun of the work.

It may well be that the slapdash staging was the reason for Janáček's dispute with the committee of the Družstvo of the Czech National Theatre in Brno over the presentation of the opera *Fate* and even led to the composer's request for the return of the score of *Jenůfa*, as a written reply from the theatre's director Frýda from 11 December 1906 testifies. At the turn of the year 1906/1907 Janáček once again revised the returned score, however this time much more extensively. He modified and shortened some of the scenes, particularly in the first and second acts, added extra instrumentation to some places, cut down on repetition and part of Laca's scene in the second act when he reproaches himself for being to blame for Jenůfa's misfortune. Overall the revisions served to play down the emphasis on folklore as well as the veristic tone. The revisions subsequently had to be incorporated into the performance material, the piano score and the orchestral parts. It was this version of the opera's piano vocal score which was published by the Club of the Friends of Art in Brno in 1908.

The revised *Jenůfa* was subsequently advertised in the theatre's leaflet for the subscription series for the season 1908/09 with a note that this was a new musical arrangement. Janáček was informed about the preparation of a new production by the theatrical director Karel Komarov in a letter from 30 August 1908: "After a lengthy consultation with



*Theatre director and the first Laca,
Alois Staněk Doubravský*



*Cyril Metoděj Hrazdira,
the first conductor of *Jenůfa**

Mrs Preissová, master Uprka and others about where best to locate *Jenůfa*, the education advisor Mr Mareš drew my attention to the Břeclav area, and more specifically to Kostice and Lanžhot. According to a decision by the Družstvo committee I will therefore go there, probably at the end of September, to take a look at the setting for the mise-en-scène and folk costumes.” Janáček was very much taken with the idea of this new production, as is illustrated by a letter from 31 July 1908 addressed to Dr Jaroslav Elgart, a member of the Družstvo committee, which indicates that as well as the director, the conductor of the new staging had already been decided upon: “I even asked the director Frýda to leave *Jenůfa* in the repertoire now that there is the piano score. After all, remember with what sort of orchestra it had been performed so far! The premiere without flutes and at other times only ever half the colours. I also have faith in Mr Moor, that he will make a good job of it.” However, in the end the staging did not come about.

We are informed of possible reasons via the minutes of the committee meetings of the National Theatre Družstvo. During the eventful days culminating in the crisis of the Družstvo committee, which has been discussed above, Dr Jaroslav Elgart put forward a proposal to a committee meeting on 7 December 1908 that *Jenůfa* be presented once more on the Brno stage, especially if it was listed as part of the repertoire for the season. The chairman Dr Otakar Pražák and Dr Felix Rudiš strongly objected to this, claiming

that there was no obligation to put on Janáček’s works in the theatre. From the context it is clear that arguments against Janáček’s works being given in Brno had previously been put forward by Rudiš in the committee, although minutes from that period have not been preserved. However, Elgart continued to promote Janáček, saying that the theatre “has an obligation to see that the opera of Janáček, an outstanding Moravian composer, is staged.” The voting, however, turned out badly for *Jenůfa*; with a ratio of 4 to 5 votes it was decided not to present the opera. However, Elgart took advantage of the crisis in the committee and when both Pražák and Rudiš resigned their membership on 25 January 1909, at the very next meeting three days later he had another vote taken about the presentation of *Jenůfa*, which turned out favourably this time. Despite this, the opera never made it onto the stage of the Brno theatre in the 1908/09 season or the following one.

The question of why *Jenůfa* had not been staged in Brno was also put to the committee by Jan Kunc at a general meeting of the Družstvo on 29 June 1910. He received the reply that “the director conveyed that some members of the opera were reluctant to sing in *Jenůfa*.” In a report published the following day in *Lidové noviny*, a different answer to Kunc’s question is recorded: “Messrs. Žlábek and Rudiš explained that the composer does not wish a repeat performance of this opera.” Janáček thanked Kunc for his intercession in a letter from 30 June 1910: “Thank you for your question. It is good that I had left as I would have been embarrassed.

If Professor Žlábek and Dr. Rudiš replied to you as it says in today's *Lidové noviny*, then they did not speak the truth. This is the fourth year that the director has wanted to give *Jenůfa* – and yet it never comes about. The aforementioned gentlemen evidently know the reason why." Immediately afterwards Janáček also lodged a protest against the report from the general meeting in *Lidové noviny* in the brief article *Why is Jenůfa not being given at the Brno National Theatre?*: "The composer Director Leoš Janáček writes to us: "I read with astonishment in the report of the general meeting of the theatre družstvo the reply of Prof. Žlábek and Dr. Rudiš to Mr. Kunc's question of why *Jenůfa* is not being given. It is untrue that I do not wish for this opera to be staged." There was yet another dimension to this affair: at the general meeting the remark was heard from the mouth of Jan Kunc that Janáček did not wish a "Hrazdira-esque" production of *Jenůfa*. This issue was dealt with at length in the *Moravské hudební noviny*, which called on the conductor Cyril M. Hrazdira to comment on this unpleasant situation: "At the time when I performed *Jenůfa*, Janáček could not find enough words of admiration for me – and he set me up as a conductor of the first rank in the Czech lands; both he and Chvála." The author of the article, Janáček's pupil and colleague from the organ school Ladislav Kožušniček, admitted that not all the performances were of the same standard, but he defended Hrazdira, who himself wrote:

Every conductor already has an enemy in everyone in the theatre inasmuch as he is a conductor, and I perhaps even more so inasmuch as I wanted to bring the Moravian stage to the highest level of perfection. Every year, however, the orchestra and chorus were changed, rendering all my work from the previous year futile; I wanted a bigger and more capable orchestra – all this was denied me.

However, in his conclusion Kožušniček challenged the idea that Janáček would slander Hrazdira in any way. This was subsequently confirmed by Janáček himself: "With his temperament Hrazdira did justice to the work. Of course with the orchestra of the time!" It seems therefore to have been the opinion of Jan Kunc, who in the past had been very critical of Hrazdira's performance in his reviews. *Moravské hudební noviny* also published the response of the director of the National Theatre, František Lacina, to Janáček's question of whether it was true that the singers were reluctant to sing *Jenůfa*, as Professor František



Leopoldina Svobodová – the first Kostelníčka



Růžena Kasparová – the second Jenůfa

Žlábek, a member of the commission, had claimed at the general meeting:

My esteemed director,

With regard to your communication I make so bold as to inform you that I did not say that the soloists did not want to sing in *Jenůfa*. When it was spoken of, I stated in the commission that I did not have anyone for the character of *Jenůfa*, as the conductor Mr Pavlata had said that Mrs Charvátová would never learn it, and Mr Krampera, when he gave notice in winter, also gave as one of his reasons the fact that he would not sing the parts in *The Thunderstorm* and *Jenůfa*. That is all that I said. Prof. Žlábek must also recall that. I hope that this explanation will suffice for you.

With deep respect, Frant. Lacina.

Luhačovice, 5 July 1910.

The consequence of this scandal, so much talked about in the press, was that a new staging of *Jenůfa* finally came about in the next season. The premiere, which was also a benefit for the construction of a monument dedicated to Pavel Křížkovský, took place on 31 January 1911 under the baton of Rudolf Pavlata, once again in the production by Josef Malý, and was followed by four further performances. We have only cursory information about this staging, with the reviews singling out the performance of the singers:

The individual singers on stage acquitted themselves admirably, while throughout the orchestra carried out its conscientious work in such a way that the celebratory mood in the audience hardly abated for even an instant.

The second act made an especially good impression.

The composer, who was present, was given noisy ovations by the audience and numerous floral tributes.

This staging was revived with one more performance on 25 March 1913, as part of a “Week of Czech Operas”, this time with Josef Winkler as conductor. For this staging Janáček was apparently awarded the sum of 70 crowns (according to the same scale as in 1904).

Another staging performed for the first time on 4 October 1916 was again undertaken by the conductor Josef Winkler and the director Karel Komarov. The opera was performed with Karel Kovařovic’s revisions in the instrumentation and, primarily thanks to the “beautiful and atmospheric scenery and very good direction”, but also in view of the political situation, was very well attended, as is illustrated by the high number of repeat performances. The last of these, the seventeenth, took place as late as 1 January 1919. This staging apparently earned the composer 226 crowns in royalties. We do not know much about the actual staging, perhaps only that the Prague Kostelnička Gabriela Horvátová appeared twice as a guest performer. Even at this point, however, Jan Kunc draws attention to the disastrous state of the orchestra and to an embarrassing situation during the curtain call at the premiere: “The audience called out enthusiastically for the composer too, but he did not appear, since he was not in the theatre. The rumour goes that someone had omitted to send him a ticket. It seems scarcely believable that this could be possible in Brno.”

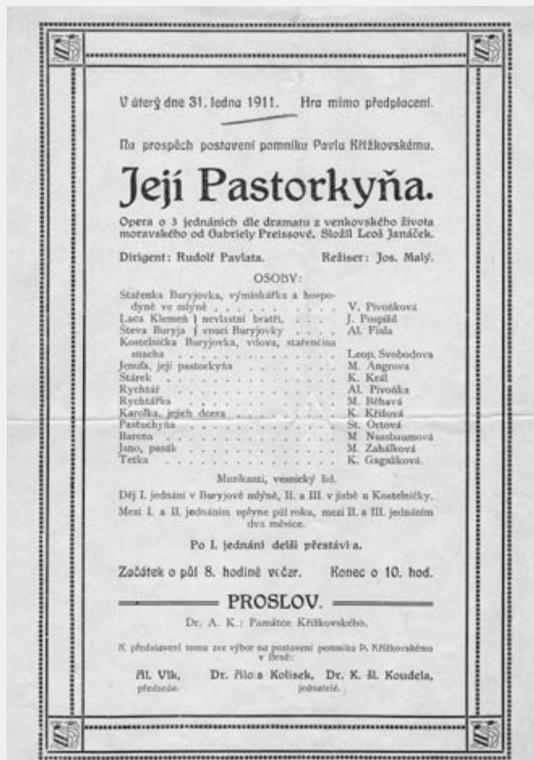
The Brno theatre ensemble with conductor Rudolf Pavlata (seated in the middle), around 1908



It is surely no coincidence that *Jenůfa* was the first opera premiere of the Czech National Theatre in the building of the originally German City Theatre. It took place on 23 August 1919 and was the first of the composer's operas to be staged by the new head František Neumann. The direction was undertaken by Rudolf Walter and the set by the new head of stage design František Šnajberk. The director of the theatre, Václav Štech, recalled the preparations for this important premiere:

We prepared everything very lavishly – but it involved us in a lot of work and rushing around. The trouble is that Janáček's opera required so many things which were in extremely short supply after the war. In particular, there were no coloured ribbons. They weren't available anywhere – neither in Prague nor anywhere we wrote to or sent our agents to. Neither was there any lace, let alone the ribbons which were supposed to flutter from the garments of the sweet girls for whom we had gone to so much trouble just to obtain clothes. The painter Šnajberk was a master of theatrical inventiveness – and he was able to conjure up everything using all kinds of illusions – but he racked his brains in vain over the silk ribbons.

Theatre poster for the 1911 staging of *Jenůfa*



Suddenly it dawned on me that I had a large supply of ribbons with which kind and well-wishing people had decorated wreaths for me during my premieres and other splendid theatrical occasions. “Worldly glory is but transitory,” I said, and for the greater glory of Janáček’s *Jenůfa* I gave my 96 triumphs to the painter Šnajberk to cut up into strips, with the fine words removed from them in various ways. A thousand streamers then flew for Janáček on the costumes of Moravian beauties – bearing his work into jubilation. We made the preparations for this first performance in the City Theatre on a grand scale, and at my request Šnajberk took a trip with experts in Moravian ethnography to villages which he could use as his model. Then so that our stage girls might be properly dressed – and that we couldn’t be criticized for even the slightest thing – we hired four vehicles to bring to Brno an enormous quantity of folk costumes and appropriate props that Šnajberk had chosen. In this way everything would be perfect and the theatre director Čech could not be reproached for having omitted or forgotten something. Four worthy women from the Moravian countryside were recruited to dress our ladies and dancers, and before the premiere they showed our seamstresses how everything should be put on correctly in the folk style – how the scarves should be tied on their heads and how to wear this or that accessory. Then they also remained in Brno for the first performances. Our expectations were therefore very high, and our conviction that everything would go well was unshakeable. In order to give every outward appearance of glamour to the performance, I arranged for the presence of all the available Moravian members of parliament who had been well-disposed towards us – and I took care of the seating of the city officials and journalists who would witness our efforts and our best will. Janáček went on to enjoy enormous success – he was continually called for – and there was lots of cheering for him when he appeared.

The composer was happy with the performance, as is clear from Neumann’s letter to his wife Milica: “The dress rehearsal for *Jenůfa* turned out to my satisfaction and, with God’s help, the performance tomorrow may go well too. Janáček was very happy with it!”

Neumann’s wish was granted, and the premiere was a success. From six o’clock in the evening guests began to assemble, including representatives of the state, the country and the city. There were important cultural figures such as Alois Mrštík, Jaroslav Kvapil, V. V. Štech, Vladimír Helfert, František Sokol-Tůma, Karel Matěj Čapek-Chod and the painter Joža Uprka. The invitation was turned down by the “Moravian bard” Petr Bezruč with the excuse that he avoided such pomp.

Poster for the gala first performance of the Czech National Theatre in the City Theatre on 23 August 1919



At the opening of the evening Dvořák's overture *Můj domov* was performed with a quotation from the Czech anthem. After thunderous applause the director Václav Štech made a speech about the relationship between art and the nation, and after enthusiastic expressions of agreement the performance of *Jenůfa* began. It was a huge success, primarily thanks to Neumann's outstanding musical staging, but also Šnajberk's highly realistic and well researched stage design and Walter's direction, which struck a chord with post-war nationalist sentiments. The performances of the soloists were also excellent: Božena Snopková, Valentin Šindler and especially Marie Veselá. After 17 repeat performances, the last performance of this staging took place on 28 August 1923. However, it was revived for the theatre's tour to Prague's City Theatre in Královské Vinohrady, where it was apparently given twice. The composer was informed about its success by Neumann himself in a letter from 2 July 1924:

It is a pity that you were not here yesterday and did not hear the jubilation of a full house which was provoked by your work! It was tremendous and worthy of the celebration of your birthday. I can safely say that our whole ensemble, stimulated by their love for you, outdid themselves and gave a quite exceptional performance. The president will visit us next Wednesday and wishes to hear your *Jenůfa*. We are therefore repeating it as a penultimate guest performance."

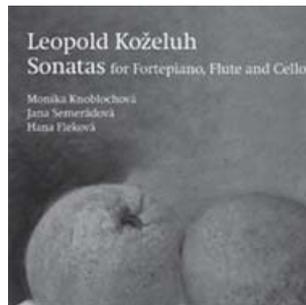
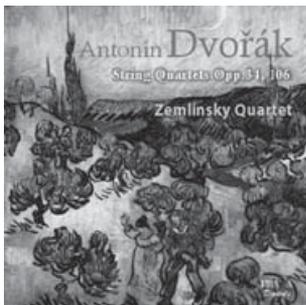
That very same day Janáček wrote back to Neumann and the members of the orchestra in Prague: "Thank you sincerely for that message during this deuced 70th year of mine. It brought me pleasure. Have a happy sojourn in Prague, enjoy the holidays and then - back to work with

gusto. Life is only bearable and pleasurable when it offers the possibility of work. Believe me, I feel it in my own case!" In the end Janáček went along to the second performance held on 9 July in Prague. The reason was the promised attendance of President T.G. Masaryk at the performance. However, Janáček did not get to meet him as Masaryk excused himself and sent the Minister of Foreign Affairs Edvard Beneš in his place. Shortly afterwards there followed another production, once again under the baton of František Neumann, but newly directed by the young Ota Zitek with stage design by Čeněk Jandl. The premiere took place on 9 October 1924 and was very well received:

It was a truly festive performance, both in terms of its own merit and also its outward form. Several important roles have been re-cast, notably that of Láca by Mr Olšovský, who gave his best performance to date on our stage, the mayor by Mr. Flögel, who created a robust and distinctive character whose singing provided a great degree of authenticity. Jano was performed by Mrs Hrdličková-Zavřelová and the mayor's wife by Miss Hloušková. All these characters came together excellently to the magnificent standard which has characterized Janáček's marvellous work in our theatre since its first performance. And the leadership of Director Neumann, who was able in many respects to create a particular, distinctive style of production of *Jenůfa*, inspired the whole ensemble with an enthusiasm that produced an exceptional performance. The composer, who was present in a tastefully decorated ground-level box, was greeted more and more thunderously after each act and had to offer his thanks from the stage many times for the enthusiastic ovations which seemed unending.

This staging was part of the repertoire until Neumann's death in 1929. During Janáček's lifetime until August 1928 it had 18 repeat performances. *Jenůfa* was generally a well attended opera and in the period 1919-1928 it earned the composer royalties from the Brno National Theatre amounting to almost 29,000 crowns. It is interesting to note that performances of *Jenůfa* were also subscribed to by political parties - the Socialist Party of Czechoslovakia (1924) and Czechoslovak National Democracy (1925), but also by the bar association (1925) and the Music Union (1928). It is also worth pointing out that there were two performances of *Jenůfa* at the 'Vereinigte Deutsche Theater in Brünn' in 1926.

Translation: Graeme and Suzanne Dibble



Antonín Dvořák String Quartets Op. 34 & Op. 106

Zemlinsky Quartet (František Souček,
Petr Strážek - violin, Petr Holman -
viola, Vladimír Fortin - cello).

Text: French, German. Recorded:
March 2012 (Studio Martinek, Prague).
Released: 2012. TT: 70:08. DDD. 1 SACD
Praga Digitals (Harmonia Mundi)
PRD/DSD 250292.

Antonín Dvořák's quartets have by no means been neglected of late by record labels, bearing witness to which are, for instance, the albums made by the Martinů Quartet (Arco Diva, 2011, Opp. 105 & 106), the Cecilia String Quartet (Analekta, 2011, Opp. 106, 54, Cypresses), the Pavel Haas Quartet (Supraphon, 2010, Opp. 96 & 106) and the Emerson Quartet (DG, 2009, Opp. 51, 61, 97, 106, Cypresses). This spring, the ranks of interesting studio recordings were extended by the CD featuring the Zemlinsky Quartet, who have garnered acclaim abroad owing to their recordings of the first seven string quartets by Dvořák (PRD/DSD 350 028) and the first twelve quartets by Franz Schubert (PRD 350 030). The ensemble's Dvořák discography now includes a sonically superior and spatially realistic SACD of the *String Quartets in D minor, Op. 34, B. 75* (1877, the cover erroneously states the year as 1878) and *G major, Op. 106, B. 192* (1895), which book-end Dvořák's mature quartet oeuvre and paramount creation in general. Among the twenty-four commercial recordings of the Quartet in D minor and the at least thirty-five recordings of the Quartet in G major that I know, the Zemlinsky Quartet's CD, concealed beneath a graphically high-quality cover with a reproduction of Van Gogh's *Evening Walk* and accompanied by a text written by Pierre E. Barbier (it's a pity about the mistakes in Czech diacritics, however), is definitely captivating. The SACD, abiding by the chronology of the pieces' origination, opens with

the Quartet in D minor, dedicated to Brahms. Right in its first, repetitive movement the ensemble present precise interplay, including dynamic proportions (unlike other recordings, the exposed first-violin solo in the second theme does not drown out the other instruments, and the same applies to the solos of the other instruments), immediately recognisable cello entries and a beautiful sound of the viola. The Zemlinsky Quartet play the second movement as a high-spirited polka, including the graceful rubatos and the theme's dance-like starting in the cello. The third movement is a real gem within Dvořák's quartet creation, and the ensemble play this sordid nocturne in the atmosphere of the discreet grief of *Stabat Mater* as a memory not uttered aloud (a splendid trio of the violins and viola). The finale of the Quartet in D minor already bears a number of traits identical with Dvořák's late, in comparison with his earlier string quartets, sonically opulent and thematically expressive Quartet in G major: more vivid accents (Op. 106/3+4), variable work with rhythm (Op. 106/1), sonic expressivity (Op. 106/2), lovely glissandos and rubatos (106/3) and evident folk background (the first bars of the final movement of the Quartet in G major possess the simplicity of a folk tune). The first movement of the Quartet in G major is lucidly structured, including horizontal division of individual parts, with the showy pointing in the finale. The second movement of the Quartet in G major is, in my opinion, the apex of the recording – the crisp agogic accent and constant tempo-rhythm changes pluck the movement from the world of "absolute" music and plunge it deep into the narrative sea of chamber music. When it comes to the tempos in general, compared with the majority of older recordings the Zemlinsky Quartet have chosen faster tempos, whereas they play the slow movements more placidly. And perhaps only the first violin's quiet performance and the endeavour for absolutely balanced dynamics of individual instruments have resulted in the reduced effervescence of the final ec-

static solo of the first violin at the end of the fourth movement of the Quartet in G major, which steers beyond the borders of chamber music. Listening to the Zemlinsky Quartet's new SACD (designated Vol. V, hence it is hopefully not the last one and we can dream about their recording the complete Dvořák quartets) is a real feast. And as such it is cause for celebration.

Martin Jemelka

Leopold Koželuh Sonatas for Fortepiano, Flute and Cello

Monika Knoblochová - fortepiano,
Jana Semerádová - flute,
Hana Fleková - cello.

Text: English, German, French, Czech.
Recorded: March and May 2011.
Released: 2012. TT: 80:57. DDD. 1 CD
Supraphon SU 4106-2.

The five Leopold Koželuh sonatas (two in C major, one in E minor, one in F major, and *A Grand Scotch Sonata in D major*), authentically performed by three superlative Czech female musicians, are five gems that will perhaps serve to increase the currently low level of interest on the part of the Czech professional and general public in the composer's work. At the peak of his career, the Velvary native Leopold Koželuh (1747–1818) was one of the greatest stars in Vienna, which at the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th centuries was the musical centre of the world. With this CD, recorded at the Martinek studio in Prague, Monika Knoblochová, Jana Semerádová and Hana Fleková have sought to retrieve Koželuh's erstwhile reputation. Their performances are deserving of the highest praise indeed and I can't imagine what more could be done to convince concert organisers to promote Koželuh and stop thinking that Czech music of this period begins and ends with František Xaver Dušek,



Jan Antonín Koželuh and Jan Václav Hugo Voříšek. Leopold Koželuh's is splendid music, replete with sparkling ideas, music matching the very finest creations of its time. The prime role on the recording is played by the technically virtuosic Monika Knoblochová, who has recently enthused Prague audiences with her interesting expressive project "Café Crème". And Jana Semerádová and Hana Fleková are equal partners. The Supraphon executive producer Matouš Vlčinský has helmed an exquisite title and it would be a great pity if the CD were to be overlooked amid the plethora of new recordings out there.

Luboš Stehlík

Johannes Brahms The Complete Piano Trios

Smetana Trio:

**Jitka Čechová - piano, Jana Vonášková-
Nováková - violin,
Jan Páleníček - cello;
Ludmila Peterková - clarinet,
Přemysl Vojta - horn.**

Executive Producer: Matouš Vlčinský.
Text: Czech, English, German, French.
Recorded: June 2011, June 2012,
Studio Martínek, Prague. Released: 2012.
TT: 71:43+64:43. DDD. 2 CD Supraphon
SU 4072-2.

Johannes Brahms wrote five piano trios. Three of them – in *B major, Op. 8; C major, Op. 87; C minor, Op. 101* – are for the standard piano, violin, cello formation, whereas the other two employ wind instruments. In the *Trio in E flat major, Op. 40*, the cello is replaced by the horn, while in the *Trio in A minor, Op. 114*, the clarinet substitutes the violin. The five trios are among the most significant pieces within Brahms's oeuvre and rank among the finest chamber works ever written. Brahms's trios place extremely high technical and expressive demands

on the players, with only truly seasoned ensembles mustering up the courage to record them. The Smetana Trio have ample experience with performing Romantic music, and their CDs featuring Dvořák, Smetana and Tchaikovsky piano trios have earned them prestigious international awards. And the present Brahms album confirms that Romantic music really befits the ensemble. Right away, the first movement of the *Trio in C minor*, which opens the recording and is probably the most emotive, is delivered in an absolutely engrossing manner. The listener remains fully captivated by Brahms's music throughout, increasingly succumbing to its magic as the CD progresses. Every movement has its own, singular and nuanced, atmosphere, each of them as though opening new views of Brahms's wonderful musical world. Jitka Čechová, Jana Vonášková-Nováková and Jan Páleníček play Brahms with extraordinary comprehension, every tone, every phrase makes us feel that the composer is close to their heart and that they understand each other. The interplay between the three instrumentalists is simply perfect, including in the most tricky passages. Especially amiable is the fact that, all the emotiveness notwithstanding, the artists approach Brahms with immense humility. The Smetana Trio chose the performers of the wind parts very wisely indeed. The clarinetist Ludmila Peterková and the horn player Přemysl Vojta, both ranking among the finest in their categories, have again demonstrated with the Brahms trios that they have true mastery over their instruments. Their tonal qualities and sense of chamber music are admirable, and owing to them the two Brahms trios acquire not only impressive colours but also new, whimsical shades. Supraphon's unique Brahms project is accompanied by an interesting text written by Vlasta Reittererová and, in addition, a striking design.

Věroslav Němec

Kaprál - Kaprálová - Martinů String Quartets

**Václav Kaprál:
String Quartet in C Minor
Vítězslava Kaprálová:
String Quartet, op. 8
Bohuslav Martinů:
String Quartet No. 5, H. 268**

**Škampa Quartet: Daniela Součková,
Helena Jiříková - violins,
Radim Sedmidubský - viola,
Lukáš Polák - violoncello.**

Booklet text: Czech, English. Recorded:
Czech Radio, Prague, 2012. Released: 2012.
TT: 67:43. DDD.
1 CD Radioservis CR0618-2.

The three Czech composers and their string quartets, composed between 1925 and 1938, featured on this recording, are connected in many intriguing ways. The first connection, impossible to overlook, is the personal relationship of the three artists, suggested immediately by the photograph on the CD cover. This snapshot of Václav Kaprál and his daughter Vítězslava along with Bohuslav Martinů was taken on a summer day in 1938 in the Village of Tři Studně. As we will learn from the CD liner notes, Kaprálová's String Quartet, op. 8 may have been inspired by her father's String Quartet in C Minor, from 1925. She sketched her quartet in 1935 in the very village where the cover photograph was to be taken three years later. And we know for a fact that the young composer was in turn an inspiration for Martinů's String Quartet No. 5, H. 268 from 1938. He not only dedicated the autograph sketch to her, but he also wrote and drew on it some very revealing comments and images that document the intensity of their relationship. Another noticeable feature that connects the three quartets is their music which, in all three cases, clearly renders an extra-musical narrative. The hidden program of Martinů's Fifth Quartet has been already pointed out by Martinu scholar Jaroslav Mihule; but when



Musica Bohemica
Songs and Dances of Bohemian
Baroque

Musica Bohemica, Jaroslav Krček -
Artistic Director.

Text: Czech, English. Recorded:
 May 1989, Dobříš chateau (CD2/7-34),
 September 1989, Studio Motorlet, Prague
 (CD1/13-30), May 1995, Studio Martinek,
 Prague (CD1/1-12, 31-34 and CD2/1-6).
 Released: 2012. TT: 75:59, 72:55. DDD.
 2CD Supraphon SU 4098-2.

Musica Bohemica's most recent CD, titled *Songs and Dances of Bohemian Baroque*, features a wide selection of folk songs and dances from various Czech collections, mainly dating from the 17th and 18th centuries. Are the songs and instrumental pieces, recorded under the artistic direction of Jaroslav Krček more than two decades ago, merely museum artefacts, or are they indeed still something topical, salutary, or even inspiring for today's listener? To find the answer, we must immerse ourselves in their melodies and (primarily) lyrics. The lyrics describe everyday moments (encompassing worry and happiness alike) that are simply timeless. Every person's natural reaction (in the past and today) to these events is the endeavour to tell and comment on, in a more or less creative manner, that which has happened around them. The fragment of history of Czech culture captured on the compact disc reminds us that our ancestors too lived and shared the everydayness in wedding, funeral, love or narrative songs. Thereby, we are connected to them by a certain belonging and understanding. When listening to the recording, we do not only look back to the past but also, at different emotional levels, accept the messages that pertain to us to a certain degree. The stories of ill-fated love, or military service, are delivered by various instrumental and vocal configurations. We are immediately captivated by the tender

and natural voice of Hana Chlomková (for instance, in the song "Kdybych já věděla" / If Only I Knew), with Jarmila Miháliková ("Měla jsem holoubka" / I Had A Sweet Dove) and Lubomír Vraspír (above all in "Včera mi svítilo slunečko" / Yesterday The Sun Shone For Me) too making a powerful impression. A true joy to listen to as well are all the choral arrangements ("Šup sem, šup tam" / Slapdash) and purely instrumental adaptations (dances from various Czech regions). I consider extremely positive the singers' excellent articulation of the lyrics, which are not, however, contained in the booklet.

Of the two CDs, the second, mainly recorded at the chateau in Dobříš, perhaps sounds better. The artists' first-class and forcible live performance may have been influenced at least in part by the inspiring milieu of the Colloredo-Mansfeld family's residence. The question arises though of whether the listener might not be a little disappointed with the studio recording, which may (yet need not) come across as too artful in comparison. Is it, after all, possible to perform folk music in an authentic manner within the confines of a studio? The long-time work of the conductor and composer Jaroslav Krček, who not only arranges but also interprets the songs from printed or manuscript collections, certainly deserves our attention and praise. When listening to the album, you can feel that it was created with love and joy. I can recommend it not only as a didactic aid for familiarisation with Czech culture but also as a recording suitable for a very young audience.

Veronika M. Mráčková

we listen to the quartets by Kaprál and his daughter, we do not doubt for a moment that they too carry a story. The three composers also came very close together in these works intellectually—to the point that the way their quartets are performed and combined on this recording gives an impression of a "through-composed" triptych. This triptych culminates with Martinů's *Fifth*, one of the most important works of the twentieth-century quartet literature. But while the other two composers have not achieved the fame of Martinů, their fine compositions provide dignified companionship to his acclaimed work: be it the highly individual quartet of Kaprál, oscillating between late romanticism and the Janáčekian way of reflection of Moravian folk song, or the youthful string quartet of Kaprálová, which enchants the listener from the first measures by its freshness and vitality. The Škampa Quartet also lives up to its reputation as one of the most renowned Czech quartets; theirs is a highly sophisticated and sensitive performance that attests to their extraordinary musical imagination. Not only are these players acutely aware of the "program" concealed in the three works, but they are also able to convey it to their listeners in the minutest expressive detail. And just to discover the "program" of these works becomes in itself an adventurous expedition that is certainly worth embarking on with both the Kapráls and Martinů.

Věroslav Němec
 Translated by Karla Hartl



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Ivan Polednak, Musicologist and

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

Bohuslav Martinů Revisited 2009

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

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