czech music quarterly



Petr Wagner

Dvořák's symphonies complete recordings Musica Rudolphina Petr Cígler



opera

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Dear readers,

The summer issue of our magazine is dominated by two articles on a Dvořák theme (one of them, owing to its sheer extent, will be continued in the autumn issue), yet attention is given to older and newer music too - as for the former, I would like to refer to the nascent musicological project focused on music in Prague during the reign of Emperor Rudolf II, which is described in a text written by Petr Daněk. I hope it augers well for the future: Czech Music Quarterly will make sure to keep you abreast of the outcomes of the research carried out by the respective team of musicologists. When it comes to newer music, the present issue contains an interview with the phenomenal chemist and composer Petr Cígler, as well as a covermount CD, which is part of the ongoing Czech Music Information Centre's "Composer Portraits" series, featuring music by Ivana Loudová.

> Enjoy your reading and listening Petr Bakla

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cover: Petr Wagner (photo by Vojtěch Havlík)



PHOTO: VOJTĚCH HAVLÍK 2x

PETR WAGNER: AS A MUSICIAN, I LIKE THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THE ROLES I FIND MYSELF IN

The golden age of the instrument can be deemed to span the period from the mid-16th century to the second half of the 18th. Between ca 1530–1800, this originally purely aristocratic instrument attained its greatest popularity, as well as the attention of such composers and virtuosos as Claudio Monteverdi, William Lawes, Marin Marais, Dietrich Buxtehude, Johann Sebastian Bach, George Frideric Handel, Georg Phillip Telemann, Antonio Vivaldi and Joseph Haydn. The instrument in question is the **Viola da gamba**, which up until the early 19th century, together with the lute and its period variants, formed one of the few connecting links with the dying-out universe of aristocracy, its exquisite taste, dramatic pathos, pomp, but also the spirited world of its intellectual elites. One of the world's leading players of this instrument, and its indefatigable champion, is Petr Wagner, a soloist, as well as founder and artistic director of Ensemble Tourbillon.

I hope you won't mind it if I don't start the interview with a question about you but with one about your instrument. I'd long been of the opinion - and I am perhaps not alone - that the viola da gamba is some sort of older version of the violoncello. I'm probably well wide of the mark though?

You certainly aren't alone. A great amount of texts, books and lecture notes containing this erroneous piece of information are still circulating in schools today. And, naturally, plenty of people still adhere to this myth disseminated by obsolete textbooks.

The truth, however, is that the viola da gamba has nothing in common with the cello, with perhaps the exception a certain percentage of music, especially the basso continuo, which in many cases can be played either on the viola da gamba or the cello.

Mature solo and chamber playing of the instrument was cultivated at the time when the cello was still in its infancy – we're talking about the first half of the 16th century – and its gradual, yet by no means rapid or forced, departure from the scene took place at the time when the cello began asserting itself as a respectable solo instrument, that is, around the middle of the 18th century. Period evidence suggests that the two instruments co-existed on concert stages for many years, with the viola da gamba always being perceived as the more aristocratic and significant instrument for musical expression, whereas at the beginning the cello was deemed a sort of bass extension of the violin, from which, after all, it is structurally derived. Only in the course of time did the cello start to be used as a solo instrument. And so, as I often tell my students and those interested in the viola da gamba, the viola da gamba and the cello are cousins, but definitely not siblings.

How was the viola da gamba actually used, and did the instrument have a "golden age"?

From the end of the 15th century, it was used in connection with the human voice, either to accompany or to imitate it. By the way, the viola da gamba's sound has always been compared to that of the human voice, including the nuances of its timbre, articulatory finesses and the dynamic envelope of the tone itself. At the same time, the viola da gamba's solo, chamber and consort repertoire evolved, right up until its departure from the scene in the early 19th century. The instrument experienced peaks in its popularity in practically all European countries over the course of approximately 300 years. The beginning of the 19th century saw interest in the viola da gamba wane, which would last for several decades (not that all its players died out, however!), before, in the second half of the 19th century and particularly the beginning of the 20th, it triumphantly returned in connection with the boom of so-called early music performed on period instruments.

Have any original instruments been preserved?

Although quite a lot of original, historical viola da gambas have been preserved and we can see and admire them at music museums and collections around the world, precious few of them are in a serviceable condition. Many original viola da gambas have undergone numerous repairs, often rather aggressive modifications, or have been rebuilt into a kind of mutated cello.

Just a few original instruments have been preserved in a good and playable condition. Consequently, for purely practical reasons, I personally give preference to top-quality and uncompromisingly modern copies, which have not accumulated period adjustments and strange reconstructive mutations. But I must admit that a major role in my decision has been played by the difference between the realistic prices of masterful modern copies and the millions you'd have to splash out on an original historical instrument. Over the past year, I have been playing a splendid new instrument made by the German master Claus Derenbach and I couldn't be more satisfied, since it combines everything that I have sought: the rich, darker tone, all the registers well-balanced, a wonderfully resonating body, stability in different climatic and temperature conditions and, last but not least, an outstanding technical design.

How often, and for how many hours a day, do you practise?

I used to practise many hours a day. Now I rather keep in regular contact with the instrument and study new compositions, not setting myself any specific time for practising. In a nutshell – I practise in dependence on the possibilities afforded by this or that day.

You have elucidated the relationship between the viola da gamba and the cello, yet I presume that the majority of viola da gamba players started on the cello – after all, this was your case too. When did you decide to replace the cello with the viola da gamba?

A number of important impulses gradually led me to the viola da gamba. In the 1980s, when I was at secondary school, my cello teacher, Tomáš Haškovec, brought to a lesson an LP of Marin Marais's *Pièces de Viole*, as performed by Jordi Savall. I was literally hypnotised by the instrument's fantastically archaic sound and would listen to the recording over and over again. Only much later, following frustrating, spirit-crushing study of the cello at the Prague Conservatory, which resulted in my giving up the instrument, sometime during my musicology studies at the Faculty of Arts of Charles University, did I begin making my first little steps on the viola da gamba. I was also greatly impressed by the film Tous les matins du monde, which I saw at the beginning of the 1990s at the French Institute in Prague. At the time, I deemed it logical that studying musicology and studying a historical instrument - the viola da gamba - could go hand in hand. So I started to devote to the viola da gamba without any real ambitions and plans, and focused more on musicology. Yet the viola da gamba and practical performing of the music I had become fond of began prevailing over my studies at the university and I began dedicating to the instrument and historically informed performance with greater intensity. I attended master classes given by Richard Boothby and Jaap ter Linden, which sealed my fate as a viola da gamba player. So I went on to study the viola da gamba at the Royal Conservatory of the Hague under the tutelage of Wieland Kuijken and after graduating I began earning my living by playing the viola da gamba, thus finding myself in the company of superlative musicians.

So you studied the viola da gamba abroad - I presume it wasn't primarily about the desire to go abroad but simply the fact that it wasn't possible to learn the instrument at home...?

It was only possible to study early music and, for that matter, the viola da gamba, abroad. Unfortunately, this to a great extent still applies to the majority of early instruments today, even though we have available high-quality pedagogues and players who have studied at the best schools. The Czech music-education institutions are simply not interested in establishing regular departments of early music, and if some glimmer of hope in this respect does appear somewhere it rather concerns half-hearted steps towards something that west and north of our border is part and parcel of renowned music academies and conservatories. Perhaps we can blame for this the reluctance of conservative teaching staff to provide scope to something new, something they themselves do not understand much, their fear of a sort of chimerical competition, even fear of possibly losing their tenure as a result of extending school departments and faculties. A certain role in this respect must also be played by entirely groundless, and still voiced, prejudice against specialists in early music. I really am not able to specify what the actual reason is, yet the resulting situation is sad: it still holds 99% true that if a young enthusiast wants to study early music, he/she has to go abroad.

On the other hand, the popularity of early music keeps growing in this country. How do you explain this?

Over the past 10 years, the view of early music on the part of dramaturges, promoters and festival organisers has changed markedly. I think that this is largely an entirely ordinary pragmatism and awakening to the fact that early music can be sold just as well as any other genre. The music played on period instruments, or

historically informed performance, if you will, has naturally become part of the general awareness and finally has attained prestige in the Czech Republic.

On the other hand, I was surprised when in an interview you mentioned the existence of an ensemble specialised in informed early music performance in our country prior to World War II - it was news to me. What is the Czech tradition in this respect? I have always considered your generation - you, Václav Luks, Robert Hugo, Jana Semerádová and others - the "founders"...

When it comes to early music, the interwar years are shrouded in obscurity. Yet this very era can be deemed "groundbreaking". The vigorous development of musicology in Prague and Brno, the great interest in Baroque music, respectable early-music editions, putting of Baroque and older music on professional stages, enthusiasm about the sound of old instruments – all his occurred and blossomed back before WW2. At the time, the Pro Arte Antiqua ensemble recorded early music played on period instruments for renowned gramophone companies. Then the war broke out, and the subsequent dour Communism completely nipped it in the bud. A certain progress only occurred in the loosened mid-1980s. At this juncture, I feel obliged to name the modern-time founding father: Pavel Klikar and his Musica Antiqua Praha, an ensemble of seminal importance. Without Pavel's inspiration and leadership, the Czech early-music scene wouldn't be where it is today. Only later on did we, the others, board the early-music train, either wittingly or unconsciously, under Pavel Klikar's influence. Accordingly, we are actually his "children" in a way.

You've talked about the development, but what is your opinion of the current situation as regards early music? Can it be said that we are living in the golden age of informed performance, that we are currently at the peak?

I don't think there is any golden age or peak in this direction. The fact, however, is that early music and its informed performance has established itself as a regular commercial item in the field of classical music, with all the attendant advantages and disadvantages.

The term historically informed performance is often solely connected with the music spanning the period from, let's say, 1500 to 1750. Do you agree with this delimitation?

No, I don't. You simply cannot imagine what accretions of bad performance, editorial and conducting habits, as well as misunderstanding of that which the composer actually had in mind, are contained in the so-called repertoire works from the late-19th and early-20th centuries. Look at, for instance, Smetana's autograph of *My Country* and compare it with the Czech Philharmonic's performance material and the recordings made by globally renowned orchestras and conductors. Upon close inspection, you find that most of them do not comply with the composer's original score and his conceptions as to the tempos, phrasing, dynamics, orchestration even. And I won't even mention the manner of playing the individual instruments of a modern orchestra, starting with the ballast of permanent vibrato and total negation of the downbeat-upbeat hierarchy.

Can one make a living with early music in the Czech Republic?

That's a tricky question and cannot be answered concisely. It depends on specific cases...



I'll put it another way then - what is your opinion of culture funding in our country?

I can see a total lack of interest on the part of governmental institutions in anything that surpasses the limited discrimination ability of their officials. To put it simply – easy access to a subsidy for a stadium for 15 junior footballers versus zero for a chamber music series or a CD. Without underestimating the severity of the recent economic crisis, I think that its negative impact on the arts is rather overestimated and often dramatised. It's no coincidence that the directors and actors of these dramas are mainly the employees of various state-dependent cultural institutions. I read fairly recently that according to sociological research into critical situations in society, be it the periods of war or economic crises of various dimensions, demand for the arts has – paradoxically – always risen. And, consequently, the supply has always risen too, followed by increased artistic creativity. It is evidently a subconscious social mechanism. Yet this applies to artists and groups who do not ask the government for more and more subsidies for their samey performances...

You are one of the world's best viola da gamba players and you have mainly given concerts abroad. So why bother to perform in the Czech Republic at all?

If nothing else, because of my faithful audience, who attend my concerts no matter what the circumstances: come rain or shine. And also because I want my daughter to see me in action.

You perform as a soloist, you have your own ensemble, but you appear with various larger orchestras too. How do these roles differ? Are any of them dearer to you than the others?

I really like the contrast between the roles I find myself in. This keeps me musically fresh and thus inured to complacency or burnout, whose symptoms I have observed with some of my colleagues from "bricks-and-mortar" ensembles.

You perform with the finest ensembles and artists, you play the music you like - what do you consider your greatest accomplishment, what do you cherish above all?

I am delighted that without extensive advertising campaigns, investments - that is, without having run up debts, without agencies and managers - I have gained recognition for Ensemble Tourbillon. Gained recognition owing to how we play and the work we have done, not as a result of someone backing us up or receiving this or that amount of money from the state. We record for the renowned ACCENT label, which at the end of this summer will release our third CD, featuring arias for soprano and viola da gamba concertante, with Hana Blažíková (see CMQ 1/2014) in the lead role. At the end of the year, another CD of ours will be issued, one containing wonderful instrumental music by J. A. Schmierer. We have attained a certain renown, and the reviews have been great. I am really happy about it.

Petr Wagner

studied the cello at the Prague Conservatory and musicology at Charles University in Prague and the Royal Holloway University of London. He first studied the viola da gamba with Richard Boothby in London and subsequently with Jaap ter Linden at the Akademie für Alte Musik in Dresden. He rounded off his studies of the viola da gamba by receiving the prestigious Uitvoerend Musicus diploma from the Royal Conservatory of The Hague, where he studied under the guidance of Wieland Kuijken. As a soloist, chamber and basso continuo player, he has performed at numerous concert halls and festivals in Europe and elsewhere (Queen Elizabeth Hall/Southbank Early Music Series, London; Fränkischer Sommer; Stavanger Philharmonic Chamber Music Series; Teatro Carlo Felice, Genoa; Royal Danish Chamber Orchestra concert series, Copenhagen; Festival Ile de France; Festival Art et Spiritualité, Troyes; Mexico City Shakespeare Festival; Prague Spring festival; Sopron Early Music Days; Mitte Europa festival; Elbhangfest; Forum Musicum, Wrocław; Concentus Moraviae, etc.) and worked with musicians of such renown as Jacques Ogg, Andrew Parrott, Konrad Junghänel, Sirkka-Liisa Kaakinen, Shalev Ad-El, Wilbert Hazelzet, Philip Pickett, Hansjörg Albrecht, Noémi Kiss, Stephen Varcoe, Mitzi Meyerson and Jan Krejča, as well as superlative ensembles, including the New London Consort, Capella cracoviensis, Musicians of The Globe, Concerto Palatino, Orfeo Orchestra, Collegium 1704, Solamente naturali, Musica Florea, etc. In 1998 he founded Ensemble Tourbillon, focused on chamber and orchestral music of the European Baroque and early Classicism of the 17th and 18th centuries. To date, Petr Wagner has recorded almost 40 CDs, on which he is featured as a soloist or chamber player.

Selected discography:

Johann Abraham Schmierer: Zodiaci Musici. Ensemble Tourbillon / Petr Wagner.

ACCENTACC 24294 (to be released in 2015)

Arias for soprano and viola da gamba concertante / Hana Blažíková / Petr Wagner / Ensemble Tourbillon. ACCENT ACC 24284 (to be released in September 2014)

Gottfried Finger: The Complete Music for Viola da Gamba Solo. Petr Wagner - viola da gamba / Ensemble Tourbillon. ACCENTACC 24267

Roland Marais: Pieces de viole. Petr Wagner - viola da gamba / Ensemble Tourbillon.

ACCENTACC 24229.

Gottfried Finger: Sonatae, Balletti scordati, aria et variationes. Petr Wagner – viola da gamba / Ensemble Tourbillon. Arta FI 01377.

Charles Dollé: Pieces de viole. Petr Wagner - viola da gamba, Jacques Ogg - harpsichord.

Dorian Recordings DOR-93246

COMPLETE RECORDINGS OF ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK'S NINE SYMPHONIES

(1963-2014)

July 2014 saw the release of the eagerly awaited and boldly promoted complete recordings of Antonín Dvořák's nine symphonies and three instrumental concertos, a project on which the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra (CPO), under the guidance of its music director, Jiří Bělohlávek, had worked in 2012 and 2013.

Bělohlávek's erudition and reputation as a soughtafter conductor of the core Czech symphonic repertoire, with special emphasis being placed on Dvořák, Janáček, Martinů and Suk works, together with the CPO's specific performance tradition (at the birth of which stood Dvořák himself, who conducted its first concert in January 1896) were the buttresses of the project. Its indisputable artistic qualities almost overshadowed the fact that in parallel with it another two complete recordings of Dvořák's symphonic oeuvre have been implemented in various phases: those of José Serebrier (Symphonies Nos. 2, 3, 6, 7 and 9 released to date) and **Mark Bosch** (Symphonies No. 3, 6 and 7 issued so far), which at the beginning of 2014 were joined by a newly initiated project for Hännsler Classics, with **Karl Mark Chichon** conducting the Deutsche Radio Philharmonie Saarbrücken Kaiserslautern.

Even though it may be too early to speak of an outright renaissance in recording Dvořák's symphonic works, we can at least talk about a wave of increased interest in all the composer's symphonies, which with a bit of a time lag, following the great waves of interest in the 1960s and 1980s, again promises to make accessible to listeners Dvořák's symphonies dating from 1865–1893 in a compact set. But what were the fates, significance and performance qualities of the older complete recordings of Dvořák's symphonies? What of their artistic qualities has endured and still impresses discophiles in the second decade of the 21st century? And what position among them is occupied by complete recordings of Czech provenience, arrogating to themselves the right to be designated as more authentic than the recordings made by conductors and orchestras beyond the Czech lands?

It all started with Elgar

Recordings of Dvořák's symphonies had their roots in Czechoslovakia – between 1951 and 1959 the Supraphon label released studio albums featuring all nine symphonies, made by the Czech Philharmonic (Nos. 5-9) and the Prague Symphony Orchestra (Nos. 1-4) with the conductors Václav Neumann (Nos. 1, 2, 4), Václav Smetáček (No. 3), Karel Šejna (Nos. 5-7) and Václav Talich (Nos. 8 and 9). However, the history of complete Dvořák symphony sets started to be written in London, where in February 1963, following a concert performance, the prematurely deceased Hungarian conductor István Kertész (1929–1973) and the London Symphony Orchestra (LSO)





spontaneously recorded Dvořák's Eighth instead of Elgar's First, as had been planned. This recording already bore the traits of Kertész's singular approach to Dvořák's scores, including the early symphonies, strictly delivered in line with the critical edition in their original form, without deletions and revisions. Kertész's account is characterised by lack of speculation, spontaneity, improvisational seeking and brisk treatment of orchestral colours without burdens of routine. Kertész lets the first two Dvořák symphonies flow naturally, he does not overlay the juvenile nature of the composition with fast tempos, giving preference to their being slower, "Schubert-like". Owing to his tempo and sonic liberalism, the early symphonies are afforded the maturity of the late works. Kertész also proved to be a forcible musical architect (in the dynamic gradation of the first two movements of Symphony No. 3, for instance) and sound wizard, well balancing the individual groups of instruments. Perhaps merely as regards the sense of detail do Kertész's accounts fall short of some of the later recordings. Besides the discs of the three early symphonies, today's listener is also intrigued by his stylish takes on Symphonies Nos. 6 and 7, and the succinctly rhythmical delivery of the New World Symphony. Despite the handicap of the Kingsway Hall's studio acoustics, with a short reverberation, all the set's re-issues can be deemed sonically good. Kertész's recordings of the complete symphonies are supplemented by recordings of Dvořák's overtures, symphonic poems and variations, the Serenade for Winds and the Requiem.

London Symphony Orchestra, István Kertész, Decca, most recently in 2014, Decca Collectors Edition 0289 478 6459 2, ADD, Kingsway Hall, London, 1961-1966

Other landmark London recordings

Almost concurrently with Kertész's project, the **London Symphony Orchestra** was recording Dvořák's symphonies with the Polish conductor Witold Rowicki (1914-1989) for the then competing Philips label. Although, just like Kertész, he had to bear in mind the sonic and technical dispositions of the LSO, the recording possesses different qualities. When it comes to the early symphonies, Rowicki was more precise and sophisticated than Kertész in his articulation and pointing of phrases, with his tempos being more rapid. As a result, his more detailed work with the rhythm, tempos and motivic structure evinces itself in a vibrant symphonism, which is considerably abetted by the better audio quality of the recordings too. In addition to the motivic and thematic microstructure (Symphony No. 3), in terms of sound, Rowicki's delivery comes across as more complying with Dvořák's ideas (the funeral march of the second movement of Symphony No. 2.), and reveals with greater mastery the bizarre background of the early symphonic pieces (the Scherzo of Symphony No. 2), as well as their rhythmically delicate passages (the strettos in the first movement of Symphony No. 2), while respecting Dvořák's original notation. Despite giving preference to more lively tempos (Symphony No. 5), Rowicki also affords scope to slow tempos (the variation movement and the opulent marching trio of the Scherzo of Symphony No. 4). In addition to his sense of detail, it is mainly Rowicki's latent symphonic dramatism, culminating in the introduction to the first movement and the finale of Symphony No. 9, that makes the set a unique project. As regards agogics, Rowicki anticipated the contemporary interpretation of Dvořák's



symphonies, since, with the exception of the ritardando at the beginning of the finale of the New World Symphony, he worked with it economically, be it in the Scherzo of the Eighth or in the rather objective Largo of the Ninth. Rowicki's sense for proportional and dynamic balance in the micro- and macrostructure alike is most palpable in the recording of Symphony No. 6, alternating pastoral idyllism with symphonic dramatism. The accentuated secondary parts are juxtaposed with the intoxicating sound of the dynamically climactic brass plenums; plenty of minor details captivate the listener in the barcarolle serenade of the second movement (the rubato of the flute solo in its conclusion), in the robust furiant of the third movement and the spirited Haydn-like finale. Rowicki's album also features recordings of the Overtures, Opp. 61, 67 and 91-93.

London Symphony Orchestra, Witold Rowicki, Philips, most recently in 2010, Decca Collectors Edition 0289 478 2296 7, ADD, Wembley Town Hall, London, 1965, 1967, 1970-1971

Stellar moments under the Berlin sky

At the time when Rowicki was finishing his set in London, the Deutsche Grammophon Gesellschaft (DG) in Hamburg took the decision to extend its catalogue with a complete recording of Dvořák's symphonies, which was to be made by the **Berliner Philharmoniker**, conducted by **Rafael Kubelík**. Although the bulk of the Kubelík set was produced in a studio in 1972, similarly to Kertész's case, it started with a recording of Symphony No. 8 in 1966 – made with an orchestra which in terms of sonic flamboyance, technical maturity and culture of playing of the Dvořák repertoire was only rivalled

by the Wiener Philharmoniker, with whom Kubelík had recorded Dvořák compositions for Decca in the 1950s (Symphonies Nos. 7 and 9, Slavonic Dances, Cello Concerto). With the exception of the wilful treatment of repetitions, Kubelík's set cannot be found wanting for anything in conceptual terms, and in the instrumental respect it eclipses Kertész's and Rowicki's projects.

Up to the recording of Symphony No. 5, Kubelík's take is basically comparable with the other two, but the recordings of the final four symphonies are truly exceptional. Kubelík approached Dvořák's early symphonies with the courage to choose markedly slower tempos (the third movement of Symphony No. 2, for instance), extreme dynamics (Symphony No. 2), giving preference to long areas in the softest dynamics (the first movement of Symphony No. 1) and minutious agogics, often within mere bars, thus livening up the pieces' microstructure in an unprecedented manner. Rather than applying purist interpretation of the first versions, Kubelík rehabilitated the early compositions by means of precisely working with the microstructure in articulation and phrasing in a slower tempo, as is the case of the first movement of Symphony No. 4, which takes the listener aback with a sneaking spookiness. The recording of Symphony No. 4 is one of the highlights of Kubelík's set, be it the first movement, the sonically balanced second, the Scherzo with a Rienzi-like trio or the emotionally gradated finale. Kubelík's account of Symphony No. 5 simply eclipses that of all his predecessors, and successors: the colourfulness of the woodwind instruments in the first movement, the enthralling agogics of the second movement and the rhythmic pregnancy of the third and fourth movements make the recording just as unforgettable as the

exalted spiritoso with a solo timpani in the finale of Symphony No. 6, to say nothing of the pastoral nocturne of the second movement. In the case of Symphonies Nos. 5 and 6 in particular, Kubelík was rewarded by the dialogically stereophonic placement of the first and second violins. The recordings of Dvořák's three mature symphonies are a Kubelík monument indeed: the contrastive tempos and dynamics transformed the Seventh into an emotional tempest with well audible minor motifs in the violas, while the airily sounding Eighth combines naturalness with a sophisticated sonic architecture and the New World Symphony ideally alternates monumentality with symphonic dramatism and modernist rhythmicality. We would be hard pressed indeed to find anything in the other complete recordings matching the expressively exalted climax of the Largo. Kubelík's set is rightfully one of the

Berliner Philharmoniker, Rafael Kubelík, DG, most recently in 2014, Deutsche Grammophon 0289 479 2689 4, ADD, Jesus Christus Kirche, Berlin, 1966 and 1971–1973

most commercially successful and sought-after by

listeners.

The first complete Neumann recording

It took a long time before the complete analogue recordings of Dvořák's symphonies made by the Czech Philharmonic and Václav Neumann were released on CD (2012). Until that time, the set was only available on vinyl, with the technical quality of the recording being, however, better than that transferred to the CDs. No conductor spent more studio sessions with Dvořák's early symphonies than Neumann, whose three recordings of Symphony No. 1 are the fruit of seeking the ideal performance form, as well as his growing confidence in the early works - in earlier years Neumann revised them by means of omitting repetitions and also by his own retouches and reductions, a praxis he later abandoned, returning progressively to the original text (Nos. 1-3; the recordings of the First dating from 1957, 1973 and 1987, with the respective durations of 43:19, 47:31 and 51:36). Under Neumann's baton, the Czech Philharmonic delivered Dvořák's symphonies in slower tempos, with euphonic woodwinds and in a consistent shape, sonically rounded off by the splendid acoustics of the Dvořák Hall at the Rudolfinum, ruthless to inner voices and harsh towards detailed work with the motifs. Neumann's interpretational objectivity with a touch of nonchalance has both its fortes and limitations, with a prime example being

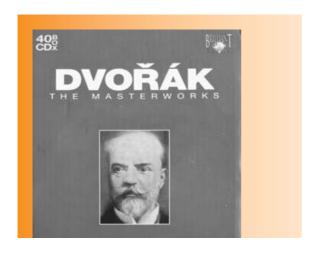


the recording of Symphony No. 4, a work calling out for contrasting tempi, ferocity and pathos (the dawdling variation movement, the not overly brazen Scherzo and the more elegiac than dramatic first movement). In his time, Neumann's account of the New World Symphony was a phenomenon, perhaps owing precisely to the conductor's noble objectivity, yet one dangerously verging on a superficial reading of Dvořák's score. Whereas Neumann's Largos in all his recordings of the Ninth are not sparing of the melancholic Czech melos, he shut the door on the monumentality, symphonic vehemence or modernist motoric energy, perhaps even at variance with the spirit of Dvořák's score. When a discophile listens to, for instance, the recording concurrently produced by Stokowski and the New Philharmonia Orchestra (1973), who by no means racked their brains with a purist reading of Dvořák's score, he/ she would be unpleasantly surprised by Neumann's coffee-lounge manner. Nevertheless, Neumann's first Dvořák set is more than a mere audio document; in the case of the middle and mature symphonies, it is rather the conductor's portrait in the Czech Philharmonic's bewitching colours.

Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, Václav Neumann, most recently in 2012, Supraphon SU 4090-2, ADD, Dvořák Hall of the Rudolfinum, Prague, 1971-1973

Dvořák in Bratislava

At the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, the conjunction between the Czech conductor **Zdeněk Košler** and the **Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra** gave rise to another complete set, for the Opus label, which produced the first of the two Slovak recordings to date of the complete Dvořák symphonies. Košler's delivery is



noteworthy as regards the swifter tempos, already discernible in the sonata movements of the early symphonies. In addition to the concise phrasing and the endeavour for precise articulation, his great forte is the art of contrast and the ability to accord the symphonies even operatically dramatic cadence (the first movement of Symphony No. 1). In Košler's account, the varied tempos of the final movements impart the scores with a special esprit, whose opposite is formed by the emotionally charged slow movements and pointed scherzos. Especially worth returning to is Košler's recording of Symphony No. 3, particularly the sprawling second movement (18:42) with a bold emotional course, poignant horns and a sonically foregrounded Wagnerian harp. Dramatically impassioned is the delivery of Symphony No. 4., as well as Symphony No. 7; precious few have grasped the latter's gloominess and slinking portentousness, primarily in the first movement (12:42), as adroitly as Košler did. Besides accentuating the Wagnerian inspirations (Symphonies Nos. 3 and 4), Košler's curt phrasing in the first movement of Symphony No. 7 too would seem to transgress the Czech performance tradition. Alongside the very slow deep strings introduction to the Scherzo of Symphony No. 5, the recording of Symphony No. 7 could serve as the conductor's visiting card: the monumentality and wistful melancholia of the second movement, the glum Scherzo and the splendidly intensified finale even overshadow Košler's recording of Symphony No. 6, never mechanically primitive in Brahms-like gradations and sonically akin to organ registers. The shortcoming of Košler's set is its mediocre sound quality, one inconsiderate to detail. Košler's complete recording of Dvořák's symphonies, not hyped in marketing yet made available in re-releases, has an interesting counterpart in the Dvořák cycle the conductor performed in the 1960s with the Wiener Symphoniker, whose master tapes gather dust in the ORF archive.

Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra, Zdeněk Košler, most recently in 2003, Brilliant Classics 92396, ADD, Concert Hall of the Slovak Philharmonic, Bratislava, 1973–1980

An Austrian take on Dvořák in Berlin

Four years after Neumann's set was completed, East Germany's VEB Deutsche Schallplatten Berlin addressed Otmar Suitner, chief conductor of the Staatsoper Unter den Linden, with the offer to record Dvořák's symphonies with the Staatskapelle **Berlin**. The early symphonies benefited from Suitner's everyday experience as an opera conductor: with the exception of the Third, which, surprisingly, he does not burden with Wagnerian reminiscences, he opts for objectively fast tempos, does not shy away from extreme dynamism in the orchestra's cultivated sonic performance, builds up tension by means of pauses, markedly shades the instrument groups and does not favour high strings. Suitner's experience with opera may also have given rise to his sense of natural tempos and cantability (the second movement of Symphony No. 1) and smooth gradation of long sections and pointing of the final movements, prime examples being the spirited finale of Symphony No. 1 or the piccolo full-stop of Symphony No. 2, which can be considered the apex of Suitner's set. Operatic dramatism facilitated the forcible reading of the score of Symphony No. 4, nervous, heroic, tension-filled, in the first movement with a sense for each minor flourish and a lyrical contrast of the secondary theme, with a nimble Scherzo and unrestrained finale with transparent timpani.

The difference between the quality of Neumann's and Suitner's sets can be demonstrated using the example of the variation movement of Symphony No. 4, which in terms of tempo (12:57) is similar to Neumann yet is imbued with dynamic contrast by Suitner, with each variation being fondly attended to. The sonically slender recording of Symphony No. 5 is of a fairly run-of-the-mill nature, which, however, cannot be said about the recording of Symphony No. 6, which owing to the transparency of its sound and clear leading of parts surpasses many other recordings. Suitner's tendency not to perform Dvořák scherzos primarily as dance movements but rather as Beethovenian, rhythmically pregnant scherzos is not only manifested in the Sixth.



The highlight of Suitner's set is the recording of Symphony No. 8, which was once among his most sought-after works: evidently no other conductor interpreted the recitative introduction to the first movement as esoterically and sensitively as Suitner did. Limber tempos, a transparent sound, metallic brass instruments against a superlative woodwind group lighten Dvořák's at places ethereal score, which in the trio of the third movement was even granted an old-world tinge. Suitner treats repetitions very arbitrarily, yet when they appear in the first movement of the New World Symphony, it is rather a manifestation of his endeavour to read Dvořák's score as correctly as possible, either with respect to the notation or the tempo and dynamics. The sonically pellucid and tempo-objective New World Symphony rounds off Suitner's recording of the symphonies, which in terms of performance and sound I would deem the most consistent of all the Dvořák symphony sets released to date. Staatskapelle Berlin, Otmar Suitner, VEB Deutsche Schallplatten Berlin, most recently in 2005, Edel Classics 0002782CCC, ADD, Staatsoper Unter den Linden, Berlin, 1977-1982

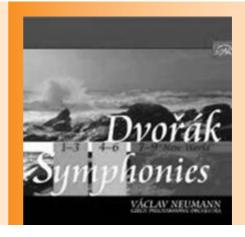
The third batch of London recordings

In parallel with Suitner, the **Orchestra Philharmonia**, conducted by **Andrew Davis**, was recording for the RCA Red Seal label the third set of complete Dvořák symphonies to be produced in the UK. Although Davis's orchestra had traditionally been ranked lower than the London Symphony and Philharmonic, when it comes to the Dvořák set, they delivered a respectable performance with surprising peaks. One such apex is the recording of Symphony No. 2, which,

unlike Davis's accounts of Symphonies Nos. 1 and 3, surpasses the standard. If the First is borne in a more serious than dramatic spirit and is more impassioned than symphonically vibrant, and while the Third, delivered in calm tempos, cannot compete with the older recordings, the Second bears witness to the conductor's being captivated by the difficult score, which he paid loving care to: the lyrical charge of the first movement, with the musical current brought to standstills, the elegiac second movement, the grand-scale Scherzo (14:08) with a not overly contrastive trio, and the vigorous finale with an adroit piccolo full stop can perhaps only be rivalled, for the time being, by the latest recording made by José Serebrier. Symphony No. 4 is built on a contrast between the broad emotional themes and the brazen sound of the brass instruments in the first, third and fourth movements. Symphony No. 5, save for the finale with permanently changing agogics, is a wide-breath song, while Symphony No. 6 is one of the adornments of the set, primarily owing to its careful articulation, phrasing and the bucolic solos of the woodwinds (the first movement), smooth gradations, delicate rubato in the flute solo in the conclusion of the second movement and an almost bizarre finale.

Top-notch too are the recordings of the mature symphonies: the menacingly beginning and naturally flowing Seventh and the dynamically balanced account of the Eighth. Symphony No. 7 enthrals the listener with the perfectly prepared entry of the horn solo in the second movement, the irregular rhythm of the timpani, as well as the overwhelming final gradation; the most remarkable features of Symphony No. 8 are the pointed tempos and a more objective rhythm without agogics. The high quality of Davis's set is perhaps only reduced by





the recording of the New World Symphony, with its ponderous monumentality, absence of repetitions in the first movement (Davis generally approaches repetitions wilfully) and a Scherzo without pointed rhythm. Yet one of the most powerful moments of the complete recording is indisputably the Largo of Symphony No. 9.

Philharmonia Orchestra, Andrew Davis, most recently in 2005, 82876-70830-2, RCA Red Seal, ADD, Henry Wood Hall / Abbey Road Studios / EMI Studios, London, 1979-1982

Breaking no new ground

It pains me to say, but the second set of complete Dvořák symphonies made by the **Czech** Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of Václav **Neumann**, for many years the one and only commercially available, contains so many technical and performance discrepancies that it should perhaps have fallen into oblivion. Upon careful listening to the first three symphonies, you will be unpleasantly taken aback by their unnatural sound and the piercing high tones of the violins and trumpets. Neumann's second set was evidently negatively affected by the drawn-out recording period, which resulted in a disparate sonic and technical quality of the recordings of the early and the better-known symphonies of the middle and mature phases. Whereas the accounts of the early symphonies serve as an unflattering example of the conductor's and the orchestra's work in the second half of the 1980s, the older and more lively recordings of the other symphonies bear witness to a shift in performance practice, to the benefit of Symphony No. 4 at least, more compact in terms of tempo and rhythm, a piece delivered with both

vigour and lyrical languishment. While Neumann's accounts of the middle three symphonies can be compared with other recordings, when it comes to the interpretation and the technical quality of the recordings of the last three symphonies (an unpleasant cut in the trio of the Scherzo in Symphony No. 7), these disqualify Neumann's readings of Dvořák's scores, even in comparison with his last recordings (for a Japanese label) dating from the 1990s. Neumann's second set blithely neglects detail, is dominated by an omnipresent legato, occasionally unduly fast tempos (the first movement of Symphony No. 8) and robust sound. Nevertheless, these recordings too contain quite a few impressive passages permeated with Czech melodic feel, in the slow movements in particular. Neumann's New World Symphony comes across as surprisingly cold in emotional terms, lax, uniform, devoid of conflict. When discophiles listen to the recordings concurrently made in Vienna by Georg Solti (1984) or Lorin Maazel (1983), they will be astonished by the interpretational possibilities of Dvořák's scores of his late symphonies. Neumann's Dvořák digital-era creations are at least partially rehabilitated by the conductor's last recordings, dating from the first half of the 1990s.

Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, Václav Neumann, Supraphon, most recently in 2003, SU 3706-2036, DDD, Dvořák Hall of the Rudolfinum, Prague, 1981-1987

(to be completed in the next issue)

A Dvořák Song "Marathon" in Ostrava

In my four decades as a musicologist specializing in the life and work of Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904) I have rarely if ever experienced such a successful tribute to the composer's genius – successful both educationally and in terms of pure musical enjoyment – as that presented on 1 May 2014 (exactly 110 years after his death) by his namesake theatre in the northeastern Czech city of Ostrava. It was a "marathon" performance in one afternoon and evening of ninety-three songs for single voice and piano constituting virtually Dvořák's entire preserved output in this genre.



OTO: MARTIN POPEI

Róbert Pechanec (piano), Jaroslav Březina (tenor)

The event was the brainchild of Martin Jemelka, a native of Ostrava teaching at Ostrava Technical University (but during the present academic year serving a residence at the Friedrich Schiller University in Jena, Germany) - a social historian with an avid secondary interest and broad knowledge in the field of classical music and especially Dvořák, known for his radio programs and for frequent articles published, for example, here in the Czech Musical Quarterly. The artists - soprano Pavla Vykopalová, tenor Jaroslav Březina, baritone Tomáš Král, bass Jan Martiník (all from the Czech Republic) and mezzo-soprano Jana Kurucová (from Slovakia), accompanied at the piano by Martin Kasík, Alexandr Starý (both from the Czech Republic) and Róbert Pechanec (from Slovakia) delivered renditions that ranged from respectable to superb, especially considering that each of them was performing some or even all of the assigned songs for the first time, moreover under the pressure of a live nationwide broadcast on Czech Radio.

Perhaps in no other genre of his oeuvre did Dvořák come so close to consistent artistic success as in song. Despite his reputation as mainly an instrumental composer, in which field he indeed left us numerous masterpieces for orchestra and for chamber ensemble, those categories of his output have a higher portion of truly weak works than his songs, which are almost uniformly inspired. And songs played an especially important role in the development of his career. In the first two concerts known to have included music by Dvořák (not counting the school graduation concert in 1859 where he played his own organ pieces), the works of his performed were songs: in 1871 his Vzpomínání (Remembrance - the fifth of his five preserved songs to words by Eliška Krásnohorská, entered as a group in Jarmil Burghauser's chronological catalogue of Dvořák's works as B. 23), and in 1872 another of his Krásnohorská songs, Proto (The Reason - B. 23, No. 2), together with the ballad Sirotek (The Orphan - B. 24) to a folk text as published by Karel Jaromír Erben. The first pieces by Dvořák to be published, in 1873, were also songs: his settings of six poems from the Dvůr Králové Manuscript, B. 30. And a year later it was those same six songs, among the many works (including chamber and orchestral music) he submitted with a successful application for a state grant for poor but talented artists, that most favourably impressed the jury in Vienna. After another decade, when Dvořák scored unimagined triumphs during his first visit to England in 1884 presenting his works in three concerts, the only pieces to be performed in more than one of those concerts were songs - two selections from his Zigeunermelodien (Gypsy Melodies), B. 104 - and in each

case No. 4 of that group, Als die alte Mutter (Songs My Mother Taught Me), had to be repeated by demand. Dvořák then went on to compose many more superb songs, including those now considered by many the highpoint of his output in the genre, the ten Biblické písně (Biblical Songs), B. 185.

Yet today Dvořák's songs are on the whole relatively neglected, and a surprisingly large percentage of them virtually or entirely unknown to the music-loving public. In part this results from his above-mentioned reputation as primarily an instrumental composer (a reputation quite false in my opinion, arisen from various misguided habits of thought that could be the topic of a whole study). In part it also reflects a neglect of songs in general in modern times, not only in the case of Dvořák. Whereas works like songs requiring a small number of performers once offered people the only possibility for enjoying music in the privacy of their homes, modern recording and reproduction technologies bring operas and symphonies into those homes and listeners can enjoy these more spectacular manifestations of musical art without even rising from their armchairs. If they limit themselves to those genres, however, they are missing out on innumerable musical gems in the form of songs, whose intimacy and subtlety cannot be matched with larger performing forces. And this is certainly the case with Dvořák.

I suspected that even for me, an enthusiastic Dvořák devotée, hearing all his songs in a "marathon" might be a bit much. But I was mistaken. And all the audience members I spoke with at the event, plus all of the several more who later told me they had heard it in on radio, agreed it was a thoroughly wonderful experience - an experience of exquisite poetic expression in music, surprisingly diverse in style (matching the diversity of the texts Dvořák set, ranging from folk texts to texts by leading poets of his time to texts from the Bible) - and moreover an experience of songs which in some cases even we "connoisseurs" had never had the opportunity to hear or, in many more cases, had rarely if ever heard performed so beautifully. Six of the items on the program (both songs of B. 13 as well as Nos. 3 and 4 of B. 123 and the individual songs B. 194 and B. 204) had never been recorded, and another ten had been recorded only by relatively little-known singers on two remarkable compacts discs - by Milada Čechalová alternating with Stanislav Předota accompanied by Adam Skoumal recorded and released in 1995, and

by Alexandra Berti accompanied by Vojtěch Spurný recorded 2003 and released 2012 – compact discs which, while praiseworthy for their pioneering "discoveries" of Dvořák songs, were in all cases surpassed in quality of performance by the renditions we heard in Ostrava.

The songs were distributed into four hour-long segments separated by half-hour breaks, and presented almost exactly in chronological order of composition. Almost all were performed in the language in which Dvořák composed them, i.e. mostly in Czech but with a considerable number in German.

The marathon came very close to achieving its aim of presenting Dvořák's entire output in the genre. We heard all but one of his seventy-eight songs (not counting later revisions) for which complete musical texts are available, omitting only the above-mentioned Vzpomínání (Remembrance), B. 23, No. 5, which according to Burghauser's catalogue and the critical edition of Dvořák's Krásnohorská songs from 1959 is known only as a fragment accounting for half the given poem; the presenters of the marathon were not familiar with a photograph of a complete manuscript by Dvořák discovered recently and not yet publicized in any way. Dvořák's revisions of songs (in six cases double revisions), often differing so radically from the originals and from each other that we can consider them essentially new songs to the same texts, all pertain to his early cycle called Cypřiše (Cypresses), B. 11. If counted separately they increase the roster of his completed songs by another eighteen, of which we heard fourteen in the marathon. Also performed were two of Dvořák's three songs that, as far as anyone knows, are indeed preserved only as fragments, apparently never completed by the composer. These were Rozmarýna (Rosemary), B. 24bis and Zpěv z Lešetínského kováře (Song from The Blacksmith of Lešetín), B. 204; in both cases repeats of Dvořák's music were used to round out the settings of the given poems. The fragment omitted was the last of the Večerní písně (Evening Songs), B. 61, No. 12, which has never been published and on whose autograph manuscript Dvořák marked "slabá" (weak).

Thirty-four of the ninety-three items on the program, then, consisted of the *Cypress* songs and revised forms thereof. Dvořák originally composed these songs in 1865 as a cycle: a complete setting of a group of eighteen poems called *Písně* (Songs) in Gustav Pfleger-Moravský's poetry collection *Cypřiše* (Cypresses). They

are confessions of a man frustrated in love. (The analogy to Schubert's *Die Winterreise* and Schumann's *Dichterliebe* is clear.) According to information revealed after Dvořák's death by his pupil and son-in-law Josef Suk, this was our composer's own situation around that time in his life, when he fell in love with his piano pupil Josefina Čermáková, sister of his future wife Anna; sensing no reciprocal interest on her part, he lacked the courage even to tell her of his feelings. Indeed, when listening to these songs one senses not only immense talent and originality on the part of the twenty-three-year-old composer but also such a measure of inspiration as can arise, one imagines, only from personal involvement.

As far as we know Dvořák never even attempted to have his Cypress songs performed publicly or published in their original form, the main reason being defects in declamation of the sung text - melodies that sometimes distribute metric accents and lengths of syllables contrary to the way the words would normally be spoken. The milieu in which Dvořák lived, dominated by a strong wave of Czech nationalism striving to reverse centuries of suppression of Czech culture in favour of German, was hypersensitive to this problem, stressing that Czech songs should sound Czech, i.e. they should copy the distinctive natural rhythm of the Czech language. It was mainly for this reason, evidently, that Dvořák later revised twelve of these songs, and six of those even twice, yielding versions that eliminate most of the problems in declamation - but that also sacrifice some of the beauty of the originals. Until recent decades the original songs lay totally neglected. Now, however, we have no less than three complete recordings - but none of them made by native Czech speakers!2 Nor until the marathon had the original songs ever been performed live by any Czech, apart from scattered very small selections. Thus the Ostrava performance, by Jaroslav Březina and Tomáš Král in alternation, offered the first opportunity to hear how a singer intimately familiar with the language might ameliorate the faults in declamation by subtle adjustments of accent and note lengths. Indeed, this could be observed to some extent. But alas the singers and pianist Róbert Pechanec, due to some logistical failure, did not receive the reliable edition of the songs by Andreas Frese published by Bärenreiter just last year, and had to work with the only previous edition, from 2006 (whose publisher I shall mercifully not mention), containing innumerable gross errors such as an ugly doubled

¹ Besides these revised versions in the form of songs to the same texts, Dvořák also used the music of one of the original Cypress songs in two of his operas with different words, quoted another one of them in two of his piano pieces, and arranged twelve of them for string quartet without words. This was music he could not get out of his head!

² Only six of the original songs were recorded on the above-mentioned CD by the Czech soprano Alexandra Berti.



Martin Kasík (piano), Jana Kurucová (mezzo-soprano)

leading tone already in the opening piano introduction (not present in Dvořák's manuscript) and, what is even worse, erroneous passages that are impossible to perform as printed, causing both the singers and the pianist great vexation and spoiling their appetite for these songs. Also somewhat unfortunate was the decision - also influenced, it might be said, by logistical considerations - to have the songs sung by a tenor and a baritone in seemingly random alternation. This was based on a list of the songs Dvořák made in which he himself so assigned them, but which was probably intended only as an aid in extracting subsets of the songs to form smaller cycles (as he in fact did, though not strictly along the lines indicated in this list). In fact all the songs can be sung by a tenor, and as noted above their texts apparently constitute the confession of a single man unhappy in love. All in all, then, the marathon did not give the original songs quite a fair chance to prove their worth. They are tentatively scheduled for performance in 2015 in the Dvořák Prague Festival, where we may hope for better results. Even in Ostrava they were beautiful, but they formed a relatively lacklustre beginning to the marathon compared with almost everything that followed.

It was apparently in 1882 or shortly before that Dvořák made his first revised forms of some of the Cypress songs, reworking six of them and then choosing four of those for further substantial revisions published that year by Emanuel Starý in Prague as Čtyři písně (Four Songs), Op. 2, reissued by Novello in London as part of a larger collection in 1887. In Burghauser's catalogue we find these two groups of six and four songs listed somewhat confusingly under the joint double number 123–124: apparently Burghauser felt unsure whether to consider them separate works, but we shall do so here for the sake of clarity. In Ostrava Pavla Vykopalová and Róbert Pechanec performed all four songs of B. 124 (= Op. 2) as well as the two of B. 123, namely Nos. 3 and 4, that do not have counterparts in B. 124.

We may assume the four songs B. 124 were performed during Dvořák's lifetime following their publication in Prague and London, but scholars have not succeeded in registering any specific performance; reviews of concerts in England, for example, often mention that songs by Dvořák were performed without specifying which ones. Today we have a number of recordings of B. 124, and yet these songs remain relatively unknown. For the two songs from B. 123

performed in Ostrava, not published in Dvořák's lifetime, that performance is indeed likely to have been the first ever; nor have the songs of B. 123 ever been recorded in this form. The lovely renditions of these songs in Ostrava offered not only pure musical pleasure but very instructive comparison of the gains and losses of these revised forms as opposed to the original songs.

Relatively well known, by comparison, are Dvořák's eight Písně milostné (Love Songs) of 1888, B. 160, published by Simrock in Berlin in 1889 as Op. 83, comprising revisions of eight of the original Cypress songs not included in B. 124; two of these are further revisions of Nos. 3 and 4 from B. 123. I myself, having heard all of the Písně milostné many times, was not expecting any special treat when we arrived at this item in the program. Little did I know that their rendition by Jana Kurucová (whose art I had not yet encountered) with pianist Martin Kasík would surpass perhaps any I had ever heard, either live or on recordings - a truly moving and memorable experience. All of Kurucová's performances during the marathon were enhanced by strong visual expression including ample use of the hands and arms gesticulations which for some might seem too theatrical in a song recital but for me were a perfectly natural aid in conveying the songs' emotional message.

But let us return to the chronological ordering of the songs in the marathon. The original Cypress songs, opening the first of the marathon's four rounds, were followed by Dvořák's settings, also from 1865, of two poems by Adolf Heyduk, B. 13, specified on the composer's manuscript as songs for baritone. Amazingly, that manuscript has never been published! Nor had these songs ever been recorded or, as far as we know, performed at all prior to the Ostrava rendition by Tomáš Král, again accompanied by pianist Róbert Pechanec as were all songs in the first round. These two unusually short pieces constitute more of a curiosity than a valuable work of art, having perhaps been intended as part of some larger whole that never materialized: both of them end inconclusively on the dominant of A minor.

Then the real feast of the marathon commenced, with the first four of Dvořák's exquisite songs from 1871 to poems by Eliška Krásnohorská, B. 23, Nos. 1-4, sung by Jana Kurucová. Starting at this point in Dvořák's output all his songs have much improved declamation of the words as compared with his first efforts from 1865. All five of his Krásnohorská songs (see above

concerning the fifth, Vzpomínání) are little-known today, and one of them, Proto (The Reason, B. 23, No. 2) was the first of the ten songs in the marathon to which we can otherwise listen only on the above-mentioned two compact discs as sung by Milada Čechalová, Stanislav Předota and/or Alexandra Berti³ – all of them songs either never performed in concert to our knowledge before the Ostrava marathon or not within living memory.

Following the Krásnohorská songs we heard already another two items otherwise known today only from those two pioneering CDs, namely settings of folk texts as published by Karel Jaromír Erben, sung in Ostrava by Pavla Vykopalová: Sirotek (The Orphan), B. 24 and Rozmarýna (Rosemary), B. 24bis,4 both apparently from ca. 1871. As far as we know the second of these had never been performed in concert, probably for the reason that Dvořák left it as an unfinished fragment, stopping just before the end of the sixth of the poem's eleven stanzas. Dvořák used essentially the same music for stanzas 1-3 and 4-6; our performers made their way to the end of the poem by repeating that music another two times - which would probably not have been Dvořák's procedure but which nevertheless succeeded in rounding out a song of quite extraordinary charm.

In the marathon's second round pianist Pechanec turned over the keyboard to Martin Kasík, accompanying Kurucová, Vykopalová, Březina, and Martiník in another twenty-one songs from relatively early in Dvořák's career, ca. 1872-76: four settings of texts taken from Serbian folk songs, B. 29, the abovementioned settings of six poems from the Dvůr Králové Manuscript, B. 30 and eleven settings of poems from Vítězslav Hálek's Večerní písně (Evening Songs), B. 60. Every one of these songs is a gem in its own way. All were published during the composer's lifetime and presumably performed, but in most cases - quite amazingly - Burghauser's catalogue shows the premiere performance as being unknown. Nor am I myself aware of any concert performances before those in Ostrava, and none of the songs in this group can be said to be well known today. As concerns recordings, the last five songs in this group, Nos. 7-11 of the Večerní písně, are available only on the above-mentioned CD from 1995 offering a quality of performance that was far exceeded in Ostrava, in this case by Jaroslav Březina. All the performances in this second round of the marathon were fine, and the overall experience was that of a revelation.

In the third round, with Róbert Pechanec returning to the keyboard, we heard songs composed from 1878 through 1886 and finally encountered at least some that are well known today, namely the four songs to

³ Proto recorded only by Čechalová.

⁴ Sirotek recorded by Čechalová and Berti, Rozmarýna only by Čechalová.

⁵ B. 142, No. 1 recorded both by Čechalová and by Berti, B. 142, No. 2 only by



Left to right: Alexandr Starý, Jan Martiník, Jana Kurucová, Tomáš Král, Pavla Vykopalová

folk texts from Bohemia and Slovácko called Vnárodním tónu (In Folk Tone), B. 146 and especially the seven Zigeunermelodien (Gypsy Melodies) to poems by Adolf Heyduk, B. 104. But these familiar songs, too, came as revelations. Today the Zigeunermelodien are usually performed in Czech rather than in the language in which Dvořák composed them - German - and if sung in German then usually in a German translation from Czech made specially (without explanation) for the 1955 critical edition; that edition does not include the significantly different German translations made by Heyduk himself for Dvořák, to which the composer write his melodies and which were published in the original Simrock edition in 1880. In Ostrava we heard wonderful performances by Jaroslav Březina of the seven Zigeunermelodien with their original German texts. In the case of the songs *V národním tónu* the revelation consisted simply in their breathtakingly beautiful, heartrending rendition by Kurucová. Less exhilarating was the opening of this round with three little-known songs (sung by Tomáš Král) to texts of Greek folk songs that Dvořák set in Czech translation, B. 84b, which to this listener constitute, along with his two early Heyduk songs from 1865, the 'exception that proves the rule': songs by Dvořák that are less than inspired. The same cannot be said of the remaining two songs in this round, however: lovely settings of German translations of Czech folk texts, B. 142, not published until after Dvořák's death, as far as we know never

performed in concert before the Ostrava marathon and available in recorded form only (once more) on the two above-mentioned pioneering CDs from 1995 and 2012⁵ in performances which again were greatly exceeded by the Ostrava renditions, in this case by Pavla Vykopalová. These were the only songs in the marathon not performed in the language in which Dvořák composed them: Vykopalová sang in Czech. Also in this round were the six songs discussed above, B. 123/124, revised from the early cycle *Cypresses*.

The fourth and last round brought us Dvořák's most mature compositions in the genre of song, composed from 1887 to 1901. First we heard another cycle composed to a German text but usually performed in Czech, this time sounding in the original in a fine rendition by Pavla Vykopalová with pianist Martin Kasík: the four songs to poems by Otilie Malybrok-Stieler, B. 157, of which Dvořák later quoted the first, Last mich allein (Leave Me Alone) in his Cello Concerto in B minor. Then came the eight lovely Písně milostné (Love Songs) revised from the early cycle Cypresses as described above. As the marathon approached its conclusion we were treated to two more real rarities: songs that have never been recorded and that, as far as we know, had never been performed in concert. The brief and simple but exquisitely tender *Ukolébavka* (Lullaby), B. 194 to a text by F. L. Jelínek, composed for publication in a magazine and never published

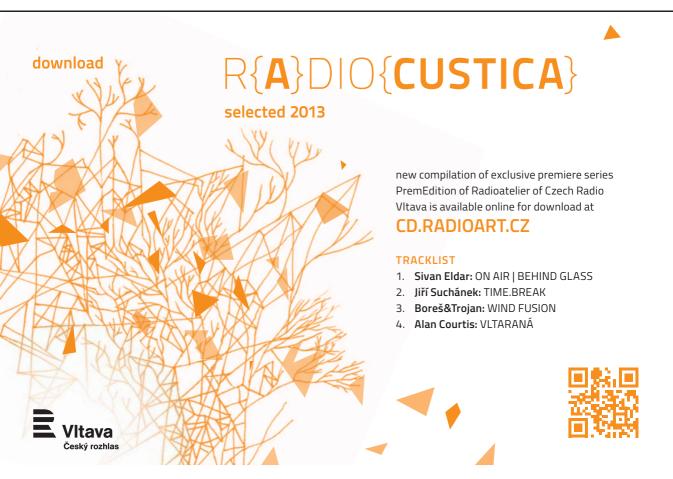
in any other form to this day, was rendered in perfect keeping with its style by Kurucová and Kasík. Then Kasík accompanied Tomáš Král in the Zpěv z Lešetínského kováře (Song from The Blacksmith of Lešetín), B. 204 – Dvořák's setting of the first five out of eight stanzas comprising the fourth Zpěv (Song) in an epic poem by Svatopluk Čech, left as a fragment. We heard this song as completed by Josef Suk for posthumous publication by Simrock in 1911 – again, the only publication of this little work to date – using repetitions of Dvořák's music from the first, third, and fifth stanzas in reverse order to create an arch form, as accords more-or-less with the structure and mood of the text. The result cannot be called one of Dvořák's better efforts in the genre, but is not without its charm and was certainly worth hearing.

Martin Kasík, who accompanied all the songs in the final round up to this point, now turned over the keyboard to our third and last pianist, Alexandr Starý, for the culmination of the marathon: a moving rendition by Jan Martiník of Dvořák's ten settings of texts selected from the Psalms titled *Biblické písně* (Biblical Songs), B. 185. One might have hoped for more dynamic shading in the direction of the pp that Dvořák prescribed in many places. Even so Martiník's

rendition with his chocolaty voice, rich and caressing yet always clear as a bell, formed a very satisfying conclusion to the whole event.

The aural delights of the marathon were complemented by a modest but very fitting stage design proposed by Martin Jemelka and realized by David Bazika, suggesting a salon in someone's home wherein singers participating in a given round sat on a couch listening to their colleagues when not performing themselves, and also by an ample program book including full texts of all the songs performed plus three informative and engaging essays: an overall survey of Dvořák's output in the genre of song by Ondřej Šupka, a convincing refutation by Jan Kachlík of Dvořák's image as a composer having no feeling for the texts of his vocal works or for the arts apart from music, and a history of Dvořák's songs in sound recordings by Martin Jemelka.

The marathon attracted an audience that was not small, but not as large as merited by the quality of the event. Worthwhile would be a repeat at some point in the future, be it again in Ostrava, perhaps in Prague, or in some other major cultural centre.



MUSICA RUDOLPHINA A project of international co-operation in musicological research

In the history of the Czech lands, there are two significant periods that have attracted the attention not only of historians but also of specialists in the social sciences and other academic disciplines. Both periods have become synonymous with the names of remarkable monarchs who assumed the Bohemian throne, became Roman Emperors and, for several decades, significantly influenced the development of Czech culture and scholarship.

The first is Charles IV of Luxembourg (1316-1378), who went down in European history as, for instance, the founder of the first university in Central Europe (Prague's Charles University), the initiator of the construction of Prague's New Town, Charles Bridge and Karlštejn castle, as well as the financial supporter of myriad works of art and architecture. The second is Habsburg Emperor Rudolf II (1552-1612), elected King of Bohemia in 1576, and responsible for moving the Imperial court from Prague to Vienna for good in 1581. Although an inconsistent politician, he was famed as an extraordinarily educated man, a great patron of the arts, collector of paintings and other works, creator of a "cabinet of curiosities", polyglot, connoisseur of literature and the arts, supporter of alchemists and devotee of the occult sciences. It is in large part thanks to Rudolf, in particular his decision to transfer the Imperial



Martino Rota (c1520-1583): Emperor Rudolf II. (1577?)



Part of the team of Musica Rudolphina with students

and Royal courts to the city permanently, that Prague became one of Europe's main centres of culture and the arts at the turn of the 16th and the 17th centuries. In this rich environment, music flourished as a natural part of both courtly and urban culture.

Fulgeant caesaris astra

The Musica Rudolphina international research cooperation of musicologists was launched in 2012 to mark the 400th anniversary of the death of Emperor Rudolf II. The initiators of the idea drew upon the notion that the reign of this monarch-not only Holy Roman Emperor and King of Bohemia but also King of Hungary and Croatia, and Archduke of Austria-was one of the climactic eras in the development of European culture, scholarship and the arts, including music. They also bore in mind that the musicological research relating to Rudolf II's court has to date been fragmented, driven by the interest and labour of individuals. And since it seemed unlikely that any patronage by a significant institution would be forthcoming in the near future, as has been the case in art history, for instance, the team members decided to co-ordinate the pursuits of individual scholars on their own, so as to form a basis for systematic research centred on musical culture during the reign of Rudolf II. The project builds upon the following conceptions and principles:

Musica Rudolphina takes a de-centered approach
to collaboration, creating a forum and hub for
musicologists who, in addition to other musicological,
pedagogical and performance-related activities, study
the music and musical culture linked with the court

Rudolphus der ander von Gottes Gnaden Romifcher Rapfer/Ronig ju Bigern und Behaim/Cefterijon ju Defterield/Berbog



Georg Lang: Emperor Rudolf II.

of Emperor Rudolf II. While the contributing musicologists work at their home institutions in various countries in Europe and beyond, the actively co-operate through the exchange of information, the manner of its publishing and co-ordination of reserach activities. Participation in the project is completely voluntary, unpaid, and the number of participants is not limited.

- The Musica Rudolphina project transcends the borders of a single country, thus paralleling the the wide scope of the cultural and artistic activities pursued by Emperor Rudolf II and the members of his court. For obvious reasons, the project's centre of gravity is Prague, the city in which Emperor Rudolf II lived for the longest period of his life.
- The *Musica Rudolphina* project aims to provide a comprehensive account of the musical culture at the court of Rudolf II, including its overreach into the urban milieus of the countries that formed part of the empire ruled over by Rudolf II.
- The Musica Rudolphina project pursues the ambitious objective of collecting, inventorising and, as fas as copyright permit, making accessible on its website all major printed and manuscript sources and literature, including the published editions of sheet music and recordings, pertaining to the topic of musical culture under Rudolf II.
- Moreover, as the world of scholarly publishing is notoriously slow, the project provides up-to-date information relating to the activities of its collaborators and the main focus of their research as it pertains to the scope of *Musica Rudolphina*.
- The project participants strive to initiate new and tangible academic endeavours relating to the topic of musical culture during the reign of Rudolf II, primarily through their own research, editorial activities and performances, but also involving students in seminars at school, universities, and other institutions where the collaborators work.
- The team promotes interdisciplinary cooperation by collaborating with other experts and specialists in kindred socio-scientific and historical disciplines.

Musica noster amor

The project is led by an international team of specialists. Current members are listed alphabetically below:

Mgr. Jan Bata, Ph.D. (Association for Central European Cultural Studies, Prague / Institute of Musicology of the Faculty of Arts of Charles University) - a specialist in musical culture in Renaissance Bohemia, especially music in Prague in the 16th and beginning of the 17th centuries.

doc. PhDr. Petr Daněk, Ph.D (Association for Central European Cultural Studies, Prague / University of Performing Arts, Bratislava) – an expert in the musical culture of Renaissance Bohemia, primarily the music at the court of Emperor Rudolf II in Prague, and prints of polyphonic music and music theory from 1500 to 1630. He is also a music performer.

M. A. Ferran Escrivà-Llorca (Universitat Politécnica de Valencia) – a specialist in the Borja family, notably Juan de Borja who was Philip II's ambassador to Spain in the early 1580s, music inventories and collections dating from the 16th and 17th centuries, musical relations between the Holy Roman Empire and Spain, and musical patronage.

BA Klement Grabnar (Muzikološki inštitut, Znanstvenoraziskovalni center Slovenske akademije znanosti in umetnosti, Ljublana) – an expert in Rudolfine parody masses in the music collection of Bishop Tomaž Hren (SI-Lnr Mss 339–343).

Prof. Dr. Markus Grassl (Institut für Analyse, Theorie und Geschichte der Musik – Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Wien) – a scholar with a focus on early instrumental music, the reception and performance of early music in the 20th century and the history of 20th-century Austrian music.

Erika Supria Honisch, Ph.D. (State University of New York—Stony Brook) – a scholar specializing in the Rudolfine court, and co-organiser of international panels on music in Renaissance Bohemia; she is currently working on a project dealing with music between the two poles of Habsburg Europe (Spain and the Holy Roman Empire) in the 16th and 17th centuries, and a book preliminarily titled *Moving Music in the Heart of Europe*, 1555–1648.

PhDr. Martin Horyna, Ph. D. (Department of Music Education, Faculty of Education of South Bohemia University in České Budějovice) – author of a number of articles and books dedicated to music and music theory, with his main interests centering on music theory and polyphonic music from Czech sources from the 14th to 17th centuries.

Prof. PhDr. Marta Hulíková, Ph. D. (Department of Musicology, Faculty of Arts of Komenský University in Bratislava) – a specialist in the histories of early modern musical culture, specifically in the 16th and 17th centuries in the territory of present-day Slovakia and within the wider Central European space.

Gábr Kiss, C. Sc. (Zenetudományi Intézet, Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont, Budapest)

- a specialist in the analysis of the medieval melodic repertoire of Mass Ordinaries from the territory of Hungary, which he places within the context of the Central European tradition. He has compiled a complete catalogue of Central European melodies for the Mass Ordinary.

PhDr. Jiří K. Kroupa (Association for Central European Cultural Studies, Prague) – an authority on the textual (literary) component of period music and exploration of the musical culture during the reign of Rudolf II within a wider cultural-historical context (prosopography, book printing, hymnology, musical activities of the Prague Jesuits).

Christian Thomas Leitmeir, Ph. D. (School of Music, Bangor University, Wales) – specialist in medieval music theory, musical palaeography and philology and 16th-century sacred music, with a special focus in Central and Eastern Central Europe. He is author of several articles on South German, Bohemian, Silesian and Polish music and published a monograph on the composer Jacobus de Kerle, Imperial chaplain in Prague under Rudolf II.

Mgr. Vladimír Maňas, Ph. D . (Institute of Musicology, Faculty of Arts of Masaryk University in Brno) – a specialist in the cultural history of early-modern Moravia. He focuses on the musical life in Moravian cities at the turn of the 16th and 17th centuries. He has participated in research projects devoted to lay fraternities in early modern Moravia.

Prof. Stanislav Tuksar, Ph. D. (Muzička akademija Sveučilište u Zagrebu) – professor of musicology, music aesthetics and history of Croatian and European music at the Academy of Music in Zagreb, he has given lectures at 23 universities worldwide. He is the author, editor and translator of 23 books and 180 studies on topics ranging from music history to aesthetics and sociology of music.

Mgr. Michaela Žáčková Rossi (Association for Central European Cultural Studies, Prague / Florence) - scholar with a focus on the musical culture at the court of Rudolf II, specifically the information that can be gleaned from court payment records. On the basis of studying period administrative sources, she has paved the way for new understandings of the structure and operation of the Imperial musical personnel.

Praga festivans

To date, the association's main public platform has been appearances at specialist forums, starting with the international interdisciplinary conference marking the 400th anniversary of the death of Emperor Rudolf II, entitled *Rudolfine Kutná Hora*, which took place at the Central Bohemia Gallery in Kutná Hora from 11 to 13 June 2012. The papers presented at the conference will be published in a special issue of the *Antiqua Cuthna* yearbook, in a co-operation between the State District Archive in Kutná Hora and Prague's KLP – Koniasch Latin Press.

The researchers first got together outside of the Czech Republic in the context of the the 40th Annual Medieval & Renaissance Music Conference in Nottingham, England, on 8 - 11 July 2012. Within the panel Revisiting Rudolf II, convened by Erika Honisch and Christian Thomas Leitmeir, the following papers were presented: Jan Bata: Between Court and City: Rudolphine Musicians within Prague Congregations ca. 1600; Michaela Žáčková Rossi: The Musicians at the Court of Rudolph II (1576-1612) in the Imperial Account Books; Vladimír Maňas: Rudolfine Musicians and the Court of Karl von Liechtenstein; Christian Thomas Leitmeir: Da pacem Domine: The Desire for Peace in Rudolfine Music; Erika Honisch: 'We Sing, We Drink, We Eat': Motets and Popular Devotion in Rudolfine Bohemia; and Emiliano Ricciardi: The Musical Reception of Torquato Tasso's Rime in Rudolfine Prague.

A year later, at the 41st Annual Medieval-Renaissance Music Conference in Certaldo, Italy, from 4 to 7 July 2013 a follow-up panel entitled Musica Rudolphina was implemented with the participation of the members of the expanded Musica Rudolphina team that had been established by the end of 2012. The following papers were presented within the panel: Michaela Žáčková Rossi: The Musical Kinships at the Court of Rudolph II; Ferran Escrivà-Llorca: Juan de Borja's Musical Activities in Prague; Petr Daněk: Die heüser bey und hinder St. Thomas khloster; Jan Bata: Praga festivans. Music and Festivities in Rudolphine Prague; Jiří K. Kroupa: Per musica ad erotica: Fiction and Reality in the Social Life at the Turn of the 16th and 17th Centuries. In addition to actively participating in conferences (there have been subsequent forums in Bratislava, Dubrovnik and Venice), the team members have represented the project in joint articles in specialist periodicals.

Harmonices mundi

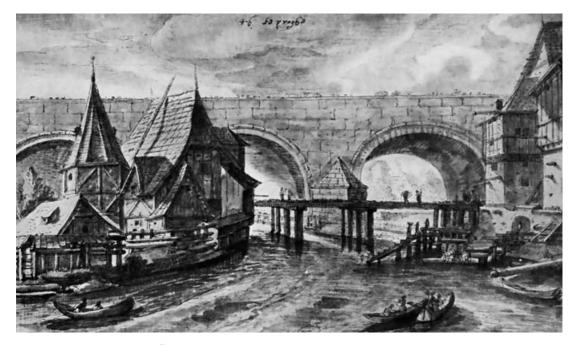
A significant and ongoing product of the project is a website (www.bibemus.org/musicarudolphina) which brings together information vital for research into Rudolfine topics. The website, freely accessible to professionals and non-professionals alike, allows for the continuous addition of new information and findings. It aims not only to provide information but also strives to be a substantial and, as much as possible, comprehensive source of full-text versions of the available musicological literature relating to the topic, as well as editions and facsimiles of music, visual and documentary sources.

The website is maintained in two languages (English and Czech). For ease of navigation, it is divided into several thematic areas, according to the type of the team member's activities and interests. The Home page introduces users to the project, familiarises them with the association's mission and make-up. The **News** page provides chronologically organised information about all the activities connected with the work of the team members, at the same time drawing attention to interesting papers, exhibitions, concerts and publications pertaining to the main topic of the activity. The **People** page comprises the profiles of the individual researchers, their specialist areas, and relevant publications. It is continuously updated and, wherever possible, furnished with a simple fulltext search prolink. The Projects section lists the projects on which the association's members are currently working. The **Publications** page provides up-to-date information about books and critical editions relating to the topic of music during the reign of Rudolf II, original texts and music editions by the association's members and

their collaborators, including university students. The **Bibliography** section presents books, studies and articles dedicated to the development and form of musical culture at the court of Emperor Rudolf II. For the time being, the bibliography is selective, yet the list continues to be updated and supplemented with other titles, with the aim to include all the relevant publications issued from the earliest stages of research into the topic right up to the present day. Conceived in a similar manner is the **Discography** section, which gives a chronological summary of all the LPs, MCs and CDs featuring works dating from Rudolf II's era that have been released to date. An important section of the website, one frequently used by researchers, is Links, which provides prolinks to professional institutions with a similar focus, specialised music ensembles and relevant internet portals, as well as digital facsimiles of significant literature, manuscripts, prints and musical iconography. A new link is currently being prepared which will map Editions of pieces by Rudolfine composers, from the first modern editions dating from the mid-19th century to the present time.

De nova stella

The project also encompasses active collaboration on the part of students of musicology. Within the *Seminar* of High Renaissance and Early Baroque Music, which for over



Pieter Stevens (c1567-c1624): On the Čertovka under Charles bridge (1603-1607)

Charles Luython: Selectissimarum sacrarum cantionum sex vocibus ... fasciculus primus, Prague: Georgius Nigrinus 1603, title page of Sextus

two decades has been led by Petr Daněk at the Institute of Musicology of the Faculty of Arts of Charles University in Prague, the participants have written a large quantity of seminar papers and diploma theses dealing with partial themes pertaining to the musical culture in the era of Rudolf II, with a number of them having been published. At the present time, the topic is being intensively treated by Šárka Hálečková, who has focused on Charles Luython's madrigals, while Jan Bilwachs has specialised in the same composer's motets. The relation between music and dance at the court of Rudolf II is the research subject

of Hana Tillmanová. Of late, two extensive theses have been written: in 2013, Michaela Dobošová analysed Christoph Demantius's Tympanum militare collection, dedicated to Emperor Rudolf II, and she is now continuing in her doctoral studies, dealing with German composers living and working in Bohemia at the time of Rudolf II. In her master's degree thesis (2014), Petra Jakoubková focused on music prints in Bohemia during the reign of Rudolf II using the example of Georgius Nigrinus workshop activity, and she intends to pursue this topic within her doctoral studies. The musical elements in the life of the Sodality of Our Lady, established in 1575 within the Jesuit College of the Saint Clement Church in Prague, are the subject of research undertaken by **Jiří K. Kroupa**, who is now preparing for publication the congregation's Latin manuscript commemorative book dating from 1575-1621.

Cum gratia et privilegio Imperiali

This year, the KLP - Koniasch Latin Press, with which the Musica Rudolphina project has closely collaborated, is scheduled to publish no fewer than three books written by the team members. Michaela Žáčková Rossi has created a manual comprising a list of all the musicians who served at the imperial court during the more than 35 years of Rudolf II's reign. On the basis of exploration of the imperial accounting ledgers, currently deposited in Vienna, the author compiled an index of about 300 persons who, in various functions, formed the court's musical entourage. The publication will elucidate the periods of time when the particular musicians were in Prague, thus also identifying which works were actually created in Rudolfine Prague and which were not. Given the frequent migration of Renaissance



musicians between Habsburg and other courts, the necessity to specify the music production inspired by the Rudolfine milieu is especially urgent. Jan Bata has prepared a book focused on the music performed in Prague's Old Town in the 16th and early 17th centuries, with the main subject of his research being the musical culture during the time of Rudolf II's reign. Petr Daněk has written the publication titled Tisky vícehlasé hudby v Čechách (Prints of Polyphonic Music in Bohemia), which besides partial studies of music books printed during Rudolf II's era contains an extensive list of prints of vocal polyphony, music theory, tablatures and early monody which have been preserved in the territory of the Czech lands. Owing to the fact that the stock of prints dating from c.1500–1630 is still undergoing various transformations in light of new discoveries, losses, dislocations, etc., the online catalogue has been continuously updated and is currently available in a trial version with fulltext search on the website of the Association for Central European Cultural Studies in the Staré hudební tisky (Old Music Prints) section. At the present time, it also files prints that are deposited in Moravia, which has laid the foundations for a synoptic list of the voluminous stock of sources of Czech provenience, with which it is possible to work on an international scale too. The catalogue's online version will be supplemented with a visual component rendering the source, or part thereof, in its entirety.

Ex officina typographica Koniasch Latin Press

The whole project is closely linked with the activities pursued by two other Prague-based agencies: the Association for Central European Cultural Studies, and the KLP - Koniasch Latin Press.

The Association for Central European Cultural Studies was established in 1993 as a non-governmental, non-profit institution whose initial main aim was to support research into Baroque culture in the Czech lands. In the wake of the organisational changes in 2002, the Association's profile was redefined and its operation expanded to include a wide spectrum of cultural-historical research (with the emphasis being placed on spiritual culture, i.e. the history of written texts, music and visual arts relating to religious activity) within the chronological scope ranging from the outset of Czech statehood until the end of the 19th century, within a wider Central European context. As a consequence of the training and personal and institutional affiliations of its personnel (the late Jaromír Černý, Petr Daněk, Martin Horyna, Jan Baťa, Michaela Žáčková Rossi, Jan Kouba, Lukáš Matoušek, Jana Vozková, Jana Spáčilová, Miloslav Študent, etc.), exploration of musical culture in the Czech lands has become one of the pillars of the Association's research activities that has given rise to independent publications (see above) and partial studies published in the reviewed electronic periodical Clavibus unitis. It has also opend up the possibility to systematically build up the Association's specialised library and expand it, above all, with expert titles that are not available elsewhere in the Czech Republic. This institutional background serves as a basis for Musica Rudolphina, a project whose significance and international links transcend the traditionally inward-looking Czech milieu.

Nunc primum in lucem editum

The publishing platform for the aforementioned activities is the KLP - Koniasch Latin Press, which since its establishment in 1993 has primarily focused on original specialist literature within a wider scope of historically oriented humanities (editions, history of letters, music and visual arts). Titles pertaining to the history of musical culture in the Czech lands have been published within the broadly conceived edition *Clavis monumentorum musicorum Regni Bohemiae* [CMMRB] in three partial series: A (music editions, A4 format), B (editions of music theoretical works, B5 format) and S (Subsidia, B5 format).

The research co-operation within the *Musica Rudolphina* project has taken on increasingly international dimensions. Christian Thomas Leitmeir and Erika Honisch recently (April 2014) invited their colleagues to participate in a large-scale project that is part of a series dedicated to musical culture in medieval and early modern Europe. In a volume specially dedicated to music in Rudolphine Prague, the world's leading experts have been assigned the task of treating this topic in a lucid manner, which would bring it line with the approaches taken by researchers working in other disciplines: the imperial court, the topography

of Prague, its clerical institutions, music patronage, repertoire and extant sources, situated within Central European musical and social contexts.

The Musica Rudolphina project aims to help all those interested in studying the musical culture at the court of Emperor Rudolf II and society in the Czech lands prior to the watershed Battle of White Mountain in 1620, while at the same time striving to serve as a centre of systematic research into the subject at a time when throughout Europe access to support and financing for historical musicological exploration has become difficult. We consider the chosen path one to be both productive and full of potential as the international community of scholars faces up to this unfavourable state of affairs and while continuing to pursue further research into the vital domains and eras of human culture.

Important contacts and links:

www.acecs.cz/index.php?f_idx=3 www.udu.cas.cz/studia-rudolphina/ www.acecs.cz/index.php?f_idx=6, the catalogue is conceived as an independent electronic publication under ISBN 978-80-87773-14-7.

The periodical **Clavibus unitis** has been published since 2012: www.acecs.cz/index.php?f_idx=4.

For the list of seminar and diploma theses until 2010, see: Petr Daněk, Partes rozličných autorův starých aneb výsledky práce semináře renesanční a raně barokní music na UK FF v Praze (1991-2010), Papers and theses from the Seminar in Renaissance and Early Baroque Music at the Charles University Faculty of Arts in Prague (1991-2010), in: Musicologia brunensia 45, 2010, 1-2, pp. 77-94.

Titles issued to date:

Jan Baťa (ed.), Codex Cuttenbergensis / Kutnohorský kodex, Prague: KLP, 2008 [= CMMRB, Series A, Vol. I], ISBN 978-80-86791-21-0.

Jan Bata – Jiří K. Kroupa – Lenka Mráčková, *Littera NIGRO* scripta manet. In honorem Jaromír Černý, Prague: KLP, 2009 [= CMMRB, Series S, Vol. II], ISBN 978-80-86791-50-0.

Petr Daněk, Repertory of the Rare Printed Musical Books now in the Czech Republic, I: 1500-1630, Prague: Koniasch Latin Press, 2014, ISBN 978-80-87773-13-0.

Michaela Žáčková Rossi, The Musicians at the Court of Rudolph II. The Musical Entourage of Rudolph II (1576-1612) Reconstructed from the Imperial Accounting Ledgers, Prague: Koniasch Latin Press, 2014, ISBN 978-80-87773-03-1.

Jan Bata, Hudební kultura Prahy 1526–1620. Situace, prameny, instituce. I. Staré Město, Prague: Koniasch Latin Press, 2014, ISBN 978-80-87773-15-4.

Martin Horyna – Jiří K. Kroupa (eds.), Ženevský žaltář v českých pramenech (1587–1620). Kritická edice, Prague: KLP, 2014, [= CMMRB, Series A, Vol. V], ISBN 978-80-87773-16-1, forthcoming.

PETR CÍGLER scientist & musician

Petr Cigler is a truly impressive

top-notch precious



The titles of your pieces, as well as the comments on them, regularly reveal inspiration by the natural sciences. For me in person, some of your compositions have the magic of Verne stories. At the same time, you are the last one who could be suspected of being naïve when it comes to approaching science, hence we can hardly pin on you the accusation of applying the dusty props of hoary modernism, which so liked to crystallise, ionise, or eventually "Mandelbrotise" and who knows what not. So what is it actually like in your case? When composing, do you aim to come about some music through analogy of a certain natural process or rather create a musical metaphor of some natural action or phenomenon? Or is it totally otherwise?

Cígler the composer does like to have a bit of a rest from Cígler the scientist. But this doesn't anyhow change the fact that my pieces do refer to some natural phenomena or directly make use of them. You should, however, take it more as a reflection of my naturalistic education and enthusiasm for nature (in a wider context, from botany to physics) than as a wilful fixation on the inexhaustible source of a sort of, inconceivable for other people, alchemistic inspiration. When I think about it, my direct references most often contain links to physical processes. They project into my scores either directly - in a mathematically transformed form into pitches, their relationships or anything else - or as an inspirational range or direct source of musical material. Serving as an example of the first case is my recent composition for ensemble Über das farbige Licht der Doppelsterne, whereby I imagined that a playing celesta or some string instruments were flying by me and my ear just wondered what unexpected connections may arise as a result of the Doppler shift in dependence on the speed of their flight. I calculated the situation, and a skilful analyst may easily detect it in the composition, yet it forms a small fragment of the musical material. The rest is totally different notes, which have no connection with it whatsoever and occurred to me independently. As for the second case, you can perhaps remember how I once invited you around so as to confirm or disprove whether someone else could hear the resonance of the tiles in my bathroom on the frequencies identical with those heard by me. We arrived at the conclusion that it was general, and I eventually set up from the resonance pitches the basis of the microtonal series for clarinet solo Qui.

I do remember the bathroom. Your compositions quite often revolve around a certain acoustic phenomenon that you, however, always aesthetise in a way of your own, it is never "ready-made" music. Would you be able to define your purely musical fascinations?

There are many things that fascinate me in music, but you won't find them in my pieces. Therefore, when composing I have no choice but to seek new material, new techniques, which occasionally evoke in me a stimulating, somewhat pioneering feeling. Specifically, I have a steady penchant for more complex rhythmic patterns and their layering in various ways and developing by means of mathematical progressions. I often work with tuning and retuning of instruments and their groups; I would probably be hard pressed to eschew microtones and deformations of tonal chords. I am interested in phenomena connected with motoricity, automaticity of playing. I am not even going to refer to indulgence in the sound timbre, since this is what perhaps every composer has been interested in over the past at least one hundred years.

Yesterday (5 May 2014), your new composition for the Berg Orchestra was premiered, one that links up to your 11-year-old piece Vzorky z Měsíce (Samples from the Moon). I think that it quite clearly revealed how significant it was for you to play the horn with the then Agon Orchestra, which specialised in, among other things, the American post-minimalists and at the time was the home ensemble of the composer Martin Smolka. Where have you advanced since then as a composer in comparison with this background, what did you emerge from? What impact did playing the horn have on you, an instrument that - perhaps it can be said this way - is in more intimate contact with the acoustic reality than many others?

You have discerned quite precisely that *Daily Patterns* is in a way hindsight. At the time, I embraced minimalism, but in a harsher, more dissonant and energetic form. I played with Agon occasionally and was a great fan of the music they performed at concerts. When it comes to the American minimalists, the composers around Bang on a Can or Iannis Xenakis, I perceived it as a musical buttress in the high performance requirements I seek from musicians. I still cannot forbear this seemingly unnecessary demandingness, since I want to experiment together with the musicians, and I expect them to enjoy it. For years I played the horn in a wind quintet and other ensembles, so I could closely see and hear how individual instruments and their players behave. Inevitably, this experience projects into my compositions; the wind instrument players in particular encounter a host of challenges. As for the brass instruments, I have become especially fond of consistent application of different harmonic series, whereby the players perform entire melodies using a single fingering. To date, none my compositions has dispensed with this technique, and it is highly unlikely that any future ones will dispense with it either. But back to

the shifts in my musical language. You have made me think about it: I have noticed that I have somewhat softened my sound; I now use fewer aggressive dissonances and I also take greater heed of the technical aspect of compositions. Almost all of my older pieces are at the border of performability and technical feasibility. Today, I am a little bit more pragmatic and strive to write compositions in such a manner that would make it possible for them to be played by someone else besides the instrumentalists I work with at the time. But I can't decide whether this is to their benefit or not...

Another thing that virtually none of your pieces has lacked is some theatrical or visual action. What impels you to it? Do you feel the necessity to transcend the limitations of "pure" music?

I enjoy actions on the stage, since they make it possible for me to get the listeners into the moment of surprise,

which can hardly be provided to them by the music itself. It is a musical extension that can be carried out by the musicians themselves, without actors and theatre. A few examples: a shot from a pistol seen by everyone lifted and poised has a far more powerful acoustic and emotive accent than any drumbeat, as in Probudte se! (Wake Up!). Bedazzling the audience with intense contre-jour light prevents them from noticing the ensemble, who during the time when the music is played in the dark enter unobserved and whose sound suddenly emanates from a place different to where you would expect it (Entropic Symphony). Lead cooled down to -200°C in liquid nitrogen sounds like any other metal, yet when heated up its sound transforms, with its metallic character gradually withering away (Samples from the Moon). As for the actual manipulation with sound, I use, for instance, static distribution of players or their groups in space so that, owing to their being at a sufficient distance, they begin coming across as acoustically distinguishable units. Then it is possible



Über das farbige Licht der Doppelsterne (2012), excerpt



manner to that in a studio with electro-acoustic material - I have a sort of live instrumental stereo (quadraphonic even) sound. In similar groupings, rotations, various movements and spatial sound pulsations are available as a new compositional parameter. If I employ a motion action, it already usually transcends mere work with the sound. Qui, a piece for solo clarinet, is a kind of ritual, whereby the performer shifts between the individual standpoints, thus "feeling out" the acoustic space in which he/she moves. In *Echolocations* for five percussionists, the soloist moves synchronously or in the opposite direction to the spatio-temporarily determined rotation of sounds, which are generated by four statically distributed players. The audience sits geometrically inside the whole process, thus being able to perceive the relationship between the statically

to work with an instrumental ensemble in a similar

So we are back again to sound. What about electronic music, does it allure you?

- the running soloist.

generated rotation and the physical messenger of sound

Yes, it does, but rather as a part of a composition for acoustic instruments or voice, where I need different sounds. So far, I have only pondered a purely electronic piece marginally. Not long ago, I was urged to create a work of this type by a friend who's really into electronic music. But I think he will have to wait for a while.

On the subject of technology, does the computer help you with composing?

I compose with a pencil, writing on music paper. This, today almost ancient, technique has proved for me to be far the best of all those available. It forces me to write in the cleanest form possible - I can't stand erasing, rewriting, deleting. I have to think more about the chords and time, and then composing is much more interesting than playing back notes in some program. So the computer only helps me indirectly, by means of, for instance, an engraver that uses the computer to create the neat score from my draft, and extracts the parts. In the case of the composition Fokusace (Focusations) for solo percussion, which I wrote for Tomáš Ondrůšek in the "Xenakis" graphic notation, I long ruminated over whether to write the final score by hand or somehow digitally. It was eventually resolved by means of MS Excel, in which I worked out a simple method of notation of little balls as a formalised type of chart. And MS Excel also helps me with compositions that contain some mathematically expressible structure relating to, say, calculation of and relations between pitches. It has served well for checking various microtonal transpositions, the development of rhythmic patterns or determining the durations of sections I want to have in certain ratios.

What role is then played by some type of constructivist "preparation" in your compositions? As a listener, I would guess that your pieces have a sort of pre-prepared skeleton which you rather arbitrarily flesh out...

When I start a composition, it is of the utmost importance to clarify two things: what material to use and, above all, what the composition will look like as a whole. By this I mean its proportions, macro-form and inner structure, duration, the feeling it evokes in me or the feeling I want to get close to. As for the selection of the actual material, it involves dusting off old and processing new notes; I need melodies, sounds, chords, rhythms and mathematical structures of varying degrees of sophistication. I draw up a sketch and get down to detailed composing and instrumentation. A large quantity of ideas only enter a composition while I am writing, they simply emerge and grow into the score. Another important role is played by errors, of which I inadvertently make a lot. But before I erase or correct them, I try to gauge whether they might ultimately sound better than my original conception. Sometimes this is the case and I am enraptured. After all, quite a lot of my material has its origin in slips, out-of-tune playing and all kinds of howling. I only want the musicians to deliver it in a defined form.

If I understand your scientific work correctly, it straddles discovery and invention. When composing, do you sometimes experience the feeling that ideas - in the widest sense of the word - are basically divided into discoveries and inventions? I know it's difficult to define... But the border between discovery and invention in today's natural sciences too is not entirely clear-cut, or is it?

Not only have I experienced that feeling but, as you describe it, from my viewpoint it is the practical reality of every creation. In science, some connections virtually fall into our lap occasionally, for instance, as a by-product of a seemingly more significant project. We discover new principles, get to know more about how nature works. But we have to approach some problems like engineers from the very beginning. We design and build a functional system, in my case, one made out of atoms and ions. Within this parallel, I could view composition as a sort of gradual inventing and testing out of new musical principles and relations. But I would not get far without minor and greater discoveries, which occur somewhat unexpectedly and, sometimes, almost expectedly. I wouldn't, however, term these discoveries as ideas, they are rather observations that spring up uncertainly - on the basis of observation or simple coincidence. From

an unusual colour in the instrumentation or rhythm, which functions unexpectedly not only in the context of a particular composition but also in the subconscious, up to, say, harmony resulting from unintentional leaning on the keyboard. They mean a lot to me and often serve as the pillar when seeking musical material. On the other hand, discoveries/observations seldom appear out of nowhere, without one having explored something. I think that owing precisely to the increased attention necessary for intercepting them - since they crop up unexpectedly - composing cannot be reduced to its basal technological or associative substance, thus the composer does not only draw upon his professional experience and basic ideas. Carrying out and including minor discoveries/observations results in composing going beyond the engineering routine, beyond the production of music for a certain function that is known or given in advance.

What are your plans for your future as a composer and scientist? What have you in store for us?

My scientific future to a great extent depends on what grants I succeed in obtaining this year. Sometimes I am shocked by how similar this is to the sphere of music. Even though my financial security does not depend on my music production, I have found out that the project style of today's culture can markedly influence that which I write. Last year, for instance, I promised a piece for the Moens ensemble, yet its being performed was conditioned on some sort of grant. And the grant was only allotted for this year, hence I will write it in the summer and it will be premiered in the autumn. As regards the plans for the next few years, I'm really looking forward to the piano trio commissioned from me by the Dresden-based ensemble Elole Klaviertrio for the Ostrava Days 2015 festival, and I will also be composing an opera for the New Opera Days Ostrava 2016 festival.

Petr Cígler (b. 1978), chemist and composer. At the present time, he heads the Synthetic Nanochemistry team at the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, within which he researches into new therapeutics and diagnostic methods for medicine. As a horn player, he has premiered numerous pieces by Czech and foreign composers and in the previous decade of the 21st century he significantly participated in the activities of the Czech contemporary composed music scene. He is a self-taught composer. Cígler's pieces have been performed at or commissioned for Ostrava Days, the Exposition of New Music, Prague Spring and many other festivals. His composition Probud'te se! (Wake Up!) was featured on a CD-sampler of the magazine HisVoice (4/2007), Entropic Symphony was released on the Ostrava Days 2011 festival CD.

"ALWAYS SEEKING TRUTH BOTH IN LIFE AND ART." THE JANÁČEK SCHOOL OF COMPOSITION

(continued from the previous issue)

Of all Janáček's pupils, Jaroslav Kvapil (1892–1958) was the most popular in his time. Perhaps it was owing to the fact that his music was listener-friendly, perhaps it was due to the wide range of his musical interests and activities: he was not only a composer but also a superb conductor, pianist and pedagogue. After failing his entrance exams for the Prague Conservatory, he decided to study composition with Janáček at the Organ School in Brno. He further extended his education in Leipzig, taking lessons from the famous Max Reger. Already prior to the outbreak of World War I, Kvapil was extremely active in both Brno and Olomouc as a teacher and concert artist. He spent WWI fighting on the Italian and Russian fronts. After returning home he reassumed his teaching job at the Organ School and a year later was appointed professor at the Brno Conservatory. Following F. Vach's departure, Kvapil also served as chorus masters of the Beseda brněnská (Brno Society), where he stayed for a long time, thus contributing to the development of Moravian musical culture: he frequently performed Janáček's cantatas (in 1927 he gave the premiere of the *Glagolitic Mass*),

Dvořák and Novák pieces, as well as music by contemporary Czech, Moravian and foreign composers, and he also presented the Czech premiere of Bach's St. Matthew Passion. After World War II, Kvapil worked for 10 years as professor of composition at the Janáček Academy of Music and Performing Arts, where, as well as at the conservatory, he nurtured a number of distinguished figures of the "second avant-garde" generation (F. Suchý, F. Schäfer, J. Podešva, G. Křivinka, M. Ištvan, C. Kohoutek). Kvapil's compositional technique reveals his being influenced by Reger's rationalism, as well as spontaneous musicality. Unlike the rational Petrželka and the lyrical Kaprál, he was the one of Janáček's three most significant pupils primarily relying on inexhaustible melodic invention, natural musical intuition, inspiration and improvisation. His compositions indicate his fierce vivacity, and he was probably the best of the three when it came to mastering grand forms. In his music, Kvapil reflected momentous historical events: to mark Czechoslovak statehood in 1918, he wrote the cantata Lví srdce (Coeur de Lion), during the Nazi occupation he created the symphonic variations Z těžkých dob, (Hard Times) and after the liberation (1945) the joyous Vítězná symfonie (Triumphant Symphony). Following the Communist putsch in 1948, he embraced the conventional music style. The core of Kvapil's oeuvre is made up of symphonic and chamber works. He wrote piano pieces (the variation Lví silou (Lion's Strength), three sonatas), four violin sonatas, a cello sonata, a piano trio, six string quartets and other chamber compositions. The most remarkable of his orchestral works include a piano concerto, two violin concertos, four symphonies and the symphonic variations \mathcal{Z} těžkých dob. Noteworthy too are his cantatas (Píseň o čase, který umírá/Song of Dying Time), choruses and songs, many of them settings of Jiří Wolker's and Petr Bezruč's verse. In 1943, he completed the opera Pohádka máje (A May Tale), based on Vilém Mrštík's novel, which in the 1920s was considered a kitschy anachronism - well, the paths taken by the avant-garde are wayward indeed...

Janáček's evidently staunchest disciple, **Osvald Chlubna** (1893-1971), best known today for his



PHOTOS BY COURTESY OF MORAVIAN MUSEUM, DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY OF MUSIC

7aroslav Kvapil

arrangements of the Maestro's works, remained faithful to modernist principles. He began writing music while studying at the Czech Technical University, yet he only studied composition as Janáček's pupil at the Organ School and in his master class. Chlubna was not a professional musician - until 1953 he earned his living as a bank clerk, but he also taught at the Organ School and, later on, at the Brno Conservatory and the Janáček Academy of Music and Performing Arts. In addition, he held a number of musicorganisation posts. Chlubna was a diligent, intellectual composer. He amply applied Janáček's teaching, was a champion of his theory of harmony, yet as a composer he pursued a markedly different path, absorbing the influences of Strauss's instrumentation and Debussy's impressive colourfulness. His music, above all at the beginning, featured the Romantic "hurt-feelings" subjectivism, with palpable traits of Impressionism, as well as constructivist tendencies. After World



Jaroslav Kvapil, Jaroslav Křička, members of the Alois Hába Quartet (1950)

War II, he would ultimately arrive at a synthesis of these trends. Initially, he found an ideal literary source in Czech symbolism (Otokar Březina), characterised by mysticism and gloomy meditativeness, in the 1920s he turned to poems by Wolker and the then extremely popular Rabindranath Tagore. During the time of the Nazi occupation, Chlubna focused his attention on the history of the Czech reformist Hussite movement and also sought solace in nature. In the wake of WWII, similarly to other artists, he found inspiration in traditional folk music and simplified his expression, writing hymns (Chvalozpěvy osvobozené / Liberated Hymns) and folk-influenced pieces (Zbojnická rapsódie / Brigand Rhapsody). After Janáček, he was the second most productive Moravian opera composer, yet his works of this genre have fallen to oblivion and are not performed today. Until the 1960s, Chlubna's permanent theme was nature (the symphony *Ze strání, hor a lesů* / From Hillsides, Mountains and Woods). His pieces possess a notable formal structure, they are venturesome as regards harmony, with colourful and inventive instrumentation, as well as a penchant for programme music, being the most vital traits of Chlubna's style. Of significance are his instrumentations of Janáček's works (the third version of the opera Śárka) and completion of the symphony *The Danube*.

Chlubna's oeuvre is extensive indeed: it includes a violin and cello sonata, four string quartets, symphonic poems and overtures. In 1924 he composed his *Sinfonietta*, a genre typical for Czech music of the 1920s (the period of the crisis of the traditional symphony). He also

created the Suite for String Orchestra, Song Suite and three symphonies. Dating from the 1950s is his mature cycle of symphonic poems and cantatas To je má zem (It Is My Country). Chlubna wrote a piano, cello and violin concerto, and numerous songs. His operas include Catullus's Revenge, based on Jaroslav Vrchlický's comedy; Alladine and Palomides, after Maurice Maeterlinck's play; and The Cradle, based on Alois Jirásek's comedy. Whereas Janáček set Svatopluk Čech's ballad The Fiddler's Child as a symphonic poem, Chlubna transfigured it into a cantata. In his music, he also professed his love for his native city of Brno, in which he spent his whole life (Brno Symphony, the orchestral piece Brno Porches and Frescos, and Brno Fountains, from the cycle To je má

Břetislav Bakala (1897–1958) was best known as a conductor and arranger of Janáček's works, his own musical oeuvre is neither ample nor particularly inspired. He studied with Janáček at the Organ School in Brno and in his master class in 1922/23.

Bakala's life and work are linked with Brno. In the 1920s, he worked there as a repetiteur and Kapellmeister at the National Theatre; after spending a short time in the USA, from 1926 to 1929 he was a pianist and conductor of the Czechoslovak Radio Orchestra in Brno, between 1929 and 1931 he served as a conductor at the National Theatre. In 1931 he returned to Czechoslovak Radio, where he was later named chief conductor of its Symphony Orchestra, with which he performed numerous new pieces, mainly penned by Moravian composers. On 1 January 1956 he became artistic director and chief conductor of the newly established Brno State Philharmonic. Bakala was above all known for performing Janáček's music and as one of the founders of the Janáček interpretational tradition. In all likelihood, he began composing in 1913; in his choruses, chamber and orchestral works, as well as folksong arrangements, in stylistic terms he drew upon Suk, Novák and Janáček in particular. The apices of his oeuvre are represented by the two string quartets (the first bearing the traits of Suk's influence, the second more in the Janáček spirit). Bakala also arranged plenty of music by other composers, mainly Janáček himself.

Josef Černík (1880–1969) is today known as a collector of South Moravian folk music, while his own works have been forgotten. After completing his studies at the Organ School in Brno, he further honed his compositional skills in Prague with Vítězslav Novák and, at the very beginning of the 1920s, again in Brno in Janáček's master class. Alongside František Míťa Hradil, Černík was the pupil of Janáček's who in his own creations most inclined to his teacher, some even call them epigones in this respect. Just like Janáček, Černík too was immensely interested in folk music, yet he drew upon it far more directly: all his works were markedly influenced by folklore, or he directly exploited the folk material. He wrote and arranged songs in particular, but also cantatas, chamber music (the string quartet Ze slovenských niv / From Slovak Meadows) and orchestral pieces (he created the composition Na věčnost / For Ever in 1928 to mark Janáček's death). A prolific writer, Černík mainly dealt with folk music, Janáček's theory of speech melodies, the methodology of ethnography and music education.

According to connoisseurs, when it comes to style **František Míťa Hradil** (1898–1980) was the closest to Janáček of all his pupils. In the early 1920s, he completed Janáček's master class. He spent most of his life in the North Moravian industrial city of Ostrava, whose musical culture he enhanced through his artistic, organisational and edification activities.

Although, for understandable reasons, Hradil did not have much time left over for composing, he did manage to create a relatively large volume of music, which is, however, forgotten today (during the previous political regime, his choruses were still part of the repertoire of leading Czech ensembles). Hradil wrote piano and chamber pieces, numerous songs and choruses, yet the most



Osvald Chlubna, Břetislav Bakala, Karel Bundálek and others, around 1950



The committee of The Club of Moravian Composers, March 1943

remarkable are his orchestral works, above all, two symphonic poems dating from the 1920s, Za Ostravicí (Behind Ostravice, based on Petr Bezruč's verse) and Football-Match, the first-ever large sports-inspired orchestral piece (!), which, regrettably, has been lost. Following the Communist coup in 1948, Hradil was among the first composers to focus on the new topics (Zpěv míru/Song of Peace).

At the present time, the legacy of **Pavel Haas** (1899-1944) is paid the greatest attention from among the music created by Janáček's pupils, and, to a certain extent, rightly so. His string quartets in particular have been performed by the superlative Pavel Haas Quartet. Pavel was the elder brother of Hugo Haas, a popular film comedian in interwar Czechoslovakia. Born in Brno into the family of a Jewish shoemaker, he studied at the local conservatory with Kunc and Petrželka, and at the turn of 1921/1922 completed Janáček's master school (he evidently had a good relationship with his teacher). Since he had to help his father in the family shop, he did not have much

time for composing, yet he engaged in Brno musical life back in the early 1920s. During the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia era, Pavel Haas attempted to flee the Nazis on several occasions, but in 1941 he was deported to the Theresienstadt camp and ultimately Auschwitz, where he died in a gas chamber. Together with Viktor Ullman, Hans Krása, Gideon Klein and Karel Ančerl, he was one of the main cultural figures in the Theresienstadt ghetto, where, among other things, he wrote one of his finest compositions, *Four Songs to Chinese Poetry*.

Haas's musical language reflects his being strongly influenced by Janáček (characteristic melodies and chords, terse ideas, the principle of melodic-rhythmic ostinato, etc.). He embraced the French interwar avantgarde (Les Six in particular), jazz, positively reflected modernism, even civilism (the second quartet), and his music also contains Jewish and Moravian folk elements. Inherent to Haas's thinking (not only musical) is irony, which is most striking in his mature opera *The Charlatan* (1936).



Břetislav Bakala, František Kudláček, B. Holub, O. Vávra, Jaroslav Kvapil, 1920's

Haas's most notable works include the Suite for Piano and the Suite for Oboe and Piano, three superb string quartets (the first, in one movement, is a study piece, but already reveals great talent; the second, titled From the Monkey Mountains, employs percussion), a wind quintet (at the time a "rediscovered" genre), a number of orchestral works (Scherzo triste) and a host of songs (Chinese Songs, Fata morgana). The Carnival for male chorus is the closest to the period poeticism, which is, by the way, also palpable in the second quartet, reflecting the wide popularity of hiking at the time. Excellent too is the nimble-witted Overture for Radio. After the Janáček fashion, Haas also arranged South Moravian folk songs. In addition, he composed cantatas (*Psalm 29*) and created several pieces of incidental music (e.g. for Karel Čapek's play RUR). Similarly to Mozart, he failed to complete his Requiem. He also wrote scores for films, mainly those in which his brother Hugo appeared (Life Is a Dog, The Little Pet, Mother-Hen). Haas's oeuvre ranks among the apices of Czech 20th-century music.

Milan Harašta (1919-1946) cannot be considered a direct pupil of Janáček's (when the Maestro died, he was just eight years old), yet he absorbed his style indirectly, since he studied with Václav Kaprál. He was extremely gifted, attempting to write music at the tender age of four, first conducting when he was 16. Harašta studied composition at the Brno Conservatory with Kaprál, yet further development of his talent was prevented by his contracting tuberculosis, worsened by forced labour during World War II and dire living conditions. He above all composed orchestral music (two symphonies dating from the 1940s, the splendid *Poloniny Dances*, the "musical trifles" Cocktails and the Suite) and also created the opera Nikola Šuhaj, based on Ivan Olbracht's novel.

Josef Blatný (1891-1980) was the son of the musician Vojtěch Blatný, the brother of the writer Lev and the father of the composer Pavel. Faithful to Janáček's legacy, he, unlike the others, did not further hone his skills with Vítězslav Novák and other masters but pursued his own path, drawing upon organ practice, which he dexterously combined with new expressional means. When it comes to Janáček, he above all adopted his interest in extended compositional possibilities in harmony, musical expressiveness, etc., yet, on the other hand, Janáček's acute sense of drama was alien to him. Blatný was one of the first and most acclaimed Czech composers of instructive pieces for piano and other instruments, while the rest of his works are not overly known. He was also an excellent organ improviser. An introvert, he mainly tended towards contemplative lyricism, smaller forms and chamber music. His oeuvre is relatively extensive, including piano, instructive, organ and chamber pieces, as well as the Sinfonia brevis for string orchestra, a number of songs and choruses, more than a hundred motets and other church compositions, and the cantata *La saletta*. His notable oratorio *Lotr na pravici* (The Rogue on the Right Side), written in the 1950s to the Catholic writer Jaroslav Durych's text, has yet to be performed (Durych was deemed unacceptable by the former Communist regime). The only Blatný work that has been recorded is the Overtura seria (by Czech Radio, 1982).

We must at least make passing reference to **Bohumil Kyselka** (1890–1915), the son of Františka Kyselková, a collector of folk songs and Janáček's associate, and according to his contemporaries a highly talented composer, who died at the age of 25 during World War I. A few of his pieces, revealing a promising artist and evidently influenced considerably by Janáček's style, have been preserved as autographs. The influence of Janáček's music is also evident in the works of another composer who would never realise his potential, **Hugo Klement Mrázek**, whose life too was cut short by WWI.

Let us now, after a cursory glance at the names, dates and works, give a brief summary. The major figures of the Janáček school can be considered three composers: Kaprál, Kvapil and Petrželka - not only with regard to the immanent quality of their music but also in terms of the influence they had. From today's viewpoint, the most singular of the entire group appears to be Haas, yet Petrželka's pieces too would warrant frequent performance (let us say, instead of the obligatory Martinů music). What, then, is the common denominator of the compositional styles of Janáček's pupils? Evidently the linkage to Janáček and Vítězslav Novák (perhaps even in the sense of a sort of Janáček-Novák synthesis), application of Moravian folk music (occasionally in a more sophisticated manner than in the case of Novák) and, first and foremost, an essential position in the history of Moravian music, particularly in the tumultuous period of the first half of the 20th century.

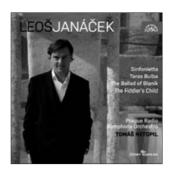
Let us also mention a few works worthy of performing. When it comes to Kunc, these include the *Song of Youth*, while the torsos Život dělníkův (The Worker's Life) and Paní z námoří (Lady from the Seaside) would deserve to be completed. All Kaprál's piano pieces should be played, including the seemingly marginal ones, as should his quartets. As regards Petrželka, definitely deserving to be performed are the *Relay*, Mikuláš the Sailor (notable not only owing to the use of quarter-tones, jazz orchestra and Sprechgesang), occasionally heard too should be his string quartets, while his opera Pavel the Miner should at least be staged

of Chlubna's works - given that presenting some of his operas is practically unfeasible - at least the cycle It Is My Country, from among Kvapil's some of his symphonies or a piano concerto. Blatný's oratorio The Rogue on the Right Side should be heard too, as should Harašta's Poloniny Dances and Hradil's symphonic poem Behind Ostravice. Haas's music is sporadically played (which is good), yet the opera *The Charlatan* deserves to be staged on a regular basis. A festival of quartets created by each member of the group would definitely be interesting! Works by composers of the Janáček school (regardless of whether such an entity can be deemed to exist) should, however, be the subject of proper research and each of the artists is worthy of being dedicated a modern monograph, their works should be published within critical editions and recorded, and, most significantly, performed, at least as historical rarities. What's more, the entire Janáček school topic should be comprehensively evaluated, either within a special conference (this debt has been partially paid off by the international musicology colloquium in Brno in 2012), or in the form of a monograph. After all, it is one of the major phenomena of modern Czech music. In conclusion, let us add that a number of young Brno-based musicologists have gradually been focusing on this issue: Pavel Haas's string quartets, work and life are being researched into by Martin Čurda, the Club of Moravian Composers and Kvapil's oeuvre are devoted to by Jan Karafiát, Břetislav Bakala is dealt with by Libuše Janáčková, and Vilém Petrželka by the present author.

occasionally by small theatres. In the case

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Music from Eighteenth-Century Prague

Zelenka - Tůma

Collegium 1704, Václav Luks - Artistic Director. Text: Eng., Ger., Fr., Czech. Recorded: 2013. Released: 2014. TT: 56:01. DDD. 1 CD Supraphon SU 4160-2.

upraphon's Music from Eighteenth-Century Prague series has rolled out one remarkable album after another. The reviewed CD, bearing the subtitle "Bohemian Disciples of Johann Joseph Fux", was launched on 31 January at the Břevnov Monastery in Prague, at the opening concert of this year's edition of Collegium 1704's Music Bridge Prague-Dresden cycle. The ensemble presented the same pieces of sacred music by Jan Dismas Zelenka and František Ignác Antonín Tůma that are included on the CD - Zelenka's Marian antiphons Sub tuum praesidium I-III ZWV 157 and Sanctus et Agnus Dei ZWV 34 and ZWV 36, alongside Tůma's Stabat mater in G minor. The concert programme was extended by three Antonio Caldara motets, whereas the CD also features the Sonata in F for two violins and basso continuo written by Zelenka and Tůma's contemporary Johann Georg Orschler (Orsler), as performed by Helena Zemanová and Jana Chytilová. Orschler's tranquil church composition serves on the CD as a (well-chosen) dividing line between two contemplative areas and two different styles of rendition of a liturgical text, Tůma's and Zelenka's. This is the first time that the Sonata, and Zelenka's Sanctus et Agnus Dei for that matter, has been released on CD. As has always been the case of the Music in Eighteenth-Century Prague series, the disc is a significant accomplishment. The necessity of systematic releasing of Zelenka's works on CD certainly need not be emphasised, and František Ignác Antonín Tůma was one of the most distinguished musicians from the Czech lands to gain

recognition at the Imperial Court in Vienna (his oeuvre is still waiting to be re-discovered, although in his time it was highly acclaimed -Stabat mater in G minor was performed deep into the 19th century). And when it comes to Orschler, he too was a significant figure in music history - a native of Wroclaw (which at the time was a territory under the rule of the Crown of Bohemia), who lived in Vienna and Prague, and later on primarily worked in the services of Moravian aristocracy, mainly the Collalto and Liechtenstein families, he is currently mainly known for his instrumental pieces, yet he also wrote oratorios. Besides their origin, another common denominator of the three musicians is their being pupils in Vienna of the Imperial Kapellmeister Johann Joseph Fux, one of the greatest musical authorities of the 18th century, whose work Gradus ad Parnassum was widely used as a textbook of composition and counterpoint for many decades. (Fux himself played an important role in Czech music history with his opera Costanza e Fortezza, whose performance in 1723 opened the path to permanent staging of operas in Prague). The recording is of a high artistic and technical quality, with the participating artists all being outstanding specialists the conductor Václav Luks, the ensembles Collegium 1704 and Collegium vocale 1704, made up of Hana Blažíková (soprano), Kamila Mazalová and Marta Fadljevičová (alto). Václav Čížek and Čeněk Svoboda (tenor), Tomáš Král and Jaromír Nosek (bass). The CD is furnished with a booklet containing a superlative accompanying text by Václav Kapsa, one of the leading Czech connoisseurs of 18th-century music, translated into three languages (English, German and French). Also translated are the original Latin texts of Zelenka's and Tůma's compositions. Basic information about Collegium 1704 and Václav Luks is included as well. In the final analysis, the CD is yet another title that should find its place in the collections of all those interested in the music of Jan Dismas Zelenka and his contemporaries or indeed the development of the movement for historically informed performance of early music in our country.

Michaela Freemanová

Leoš Janáček

Sinfonietta, Taras Bulba, The Ballad of Blanik, The Fiddler's Child

Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra, Band of the Castle Guards and Police of the Czech Republic, Tomáš Netopil - conductor. Text: Eng., Ger., Fr., Czech. Recorded: June, Sept. 2013, Rudolfinum, Prague. Released: 2013. TT: 68:31. DDD. 1 CD Supraphon SU 4131-2.

utting together four grand Janáček orchestral pieces written between 1913 and 1926 on a single disc (coproduced by Supraphon and Czech Radio) is a praiseworthy dramaturgic accomplishment in its own right. The works bear witness to the composer's different creative inspirations - from the social motif of the symphonic poem The Fiddler's Child, based on Svatopluk Čech's verse, through Janáček's Russophilia in the setting of Gogol's novella Taras Bulba, the musical expression of the Czech legend of the knights of Blaník, based on Jaroslav Vrchlický's poetry, to the famous Sinfonietta, in whose case, as the Janáček connoisseur Jiří Zahrádka points out in the booklet, it is still not clear whether it was written to commission or independently as a contribution to the National Festival of the Sokol sports and gymnastics movement. The pieces also provide a picture of Janáček's mature compositional technique and singular instrumentation, which vary in dependence on their subjects. Equal credit for the wellbalanced, precisely nuanced sound, rhythmic accuracy and transparent colours of the instrument sections of Janáček's scores goes to the conductor Tomáš Netopil, the orchestra's members (Petr Zdvihal's luminous violin solo in The Fiddler's Child, the faultless brass section - brazen or soft, depending on that which is required), the recording director Jiří





Gemrot and the sound engineer Jan Lžičař. The compositions are not sequenced on the CD chronologically, which is evidently a dramaturgic intention. The impassioned fanfares of the jubilant Sinfonietta are followed by the gloomy atmosphere of The Fiddler's Child, ensued by The Ballad of Blaník, breathing the eeriness of old myths, while the final Taras Bulba interconnects everything, with the patriotic pathos reoccurring. In a way, the disc comes across as a kind of symphonic form, in which The Fiddler's Child comprises the middle movement.

Vlasta Reittererová

Veronika Böhmová

Stravinsky: Le chant du rossignol / Prokofiev: Sonata No. 8

Veronika Böhmová - piano. Producer: Matouš Vlčinský. Text: Eng., Ger., Fr., Czech. Recorded: Sept., Oct. 2013, Martinů Hall, Academy of Music, Prague. Released: 2014. TT: 69:05. DDD. 1 CD Supraphon SU 4148-2.

he young Czech pianist Veronika Böhmová has garnered accolades at dozens of Czech and international competitions and has given numerous acclaimed concerts both at home and abroad. This spring, Supraphon released her debut CD. Just like the artist herself, the album's repertoire is unconventional and singular indeed. The disc opens with Igor Stravinsky's symphonic poem Le chant du rossignol, arranged for solo piano by the composer himself. Whereas the original orchestral version is regularly performed at concerts, the one for piano is familiar to precious few listeners. One of the reasons why pianists tend to eschew this piece is its extreme technical difficulty. The CD also features two cycles of etudes, which too have seldom been played on concert stages: Stravinsky's Four Etudes,

Op. 7, dating from 1908, and Sergey Prokofiev's Four Etudes, Op. 2, written a year previously. The ideational apex of the album can be deemed Prokofiev's celebrated Sonata No. 8 in B flat major, Op. 84. Veronika Böhmová has negotiated this technically challenging repertoire with the utmost dexterity. Under her fingers, the first movement of the "unplayable" Le chant du rossignol transforms into fascinating, colourful, breathtaking fireworks. The next two movements are slow, yet in them too the pianist enchants the listener with numerous wondrous sound effects. Although on many occasions I thought that two, or even three, hands cannot suffice to perform the work, Veronika Böhmová delivers it throughout with an incredible lightness and airiness. And she applies the selfsame lightness and airiness when playing the two virtuoso etude cycles, and even the exceptionally challenging Prokofiev Sonata. Yet the pianist deserves admiration not only owing to her splendid and fluent technique but also - perhaps in particular - purity and lucidity of expression, which in combination with a gentle sensitivity, irresistible sense of humour, respect for solid rhythmic pulsation and impeccable sense of timbre and architecture makes this CD a true little gem. Piano connoisseurs should definitely embrace this recording.

Věroslav Němec

Zdeněk Šesták

Choral Works Vladimír Doležal - tenor, Roman

Janál - baritone, Radovan Lukavský - recitation, Prague Radio Choir, Kühn Mixed Choir, Milan Malý, Lubomír Mátl, Pavel Kühn - chorus masters. Text: Eng., Czech. Recorded: 1977-1996, Prague Radio Studios; 1997, Martinů Hall, Lichtenstein Palace, Prague. Released: 2013. TT: 129:06. ADD, DDD. 2 CDs Radioservis CRo682-2.

features older and newer recordings of his choral cycles and cantatas. The first disc presents his oldest (1971) cycle of mixed choruses a capella, Hommage á Apollinaire, revealing the composer's affection for chanson, as well as Apollinaire's Renaissance inspiration. The texts, either in the French original or translations by Czech poets (Seifert, Kundera, Čapek, etc.), are sung by the Prague Radio Choir with astonishing flexibility, high and pure sopranos and male vocals replete with emotions in deep tones accompanying the lead melodic line. The three-part cycle Pushkin Vigils (1978) is one of Šesták's most popular choral works. In short, terse even, themes, the music comes across as both playful and poignant, always in line with the text. The extensive cycle Portrait of Konstantin Biebl, completed in 1974, is made up of eleven original treatments of various historical musical forms and styles. Part X, titled Cognition, its compositional apex, introduces the excited final idea in the form of passacaglia. In Part XI, Vision, female and male voices masterfully blend in the fugue finale. The second CD is dedicated to the sacred works Zdeněk Šesták began writing during the era of "Normalisation". although anticipating that in all likelihood they would not be performed. Modern vocal polyphony excels in the first cantata, In Deo speravit cor meum (1976), written to texts of Lent psalms. The second cantata, Canticum poeticum de Adalberto sancto ad verba libri missalis, K. H. Mácha et J. Jelen, is a celebration of the Czech patron St. Adalbert, composed to Latin texts, Karel Hynek Mácha's and Josef Jelen's poems and accompanied by the unforgettable narration of the actor Radovan Lukavský. The solo parts are splendidly delivered by the tenor Vladimír Doležal and the baritone Roman Janál. The work, written in 1996, is permeated with humility, devotion and the undying

light of hope. The last piece on the CD,

the Christmas cantata Laetentur coeli et

he album dedicated to the Czech

composer Zdeněk Šesták's choral works



exsultet terra, expresses the composer's joy at the Nativity of the Lord by means of a jubilant counterpoint in contemporary tonality. The exalted conclusion with the triumphal Alleluia invites spiritual sublimation and tranquillity. The 2-CD set comprising choral works by one of the most renowned contemporary Czech composers serves to draw our attention to his mastery, imbued with spiritual wealth, offered to the listener not only as beautiful music but also as succour and stimulation.

Marta Tužilová

Jan Dismas Zelenka

Gaude laetare, Missa Sanctissimae Trinitatis

Gabriela Eibenová - soprano, Carlos

Mena - alto, Makoto Sakurada, Václav Čížek - tenor, Roman Hoza baritone, Lisandro Abadie, Marián Krejčík - bass, Ensemble Inégal, Prague Baroque Soloists, conductor: Adam Viktora. Text: Cz., Eng., Ger., Fr. Recorded: March 2012, Church of the Holy Saviour, Prague. Released: 2012. TT: 66:10. DDD. 1 CD NIBIRU 01572231.

t is to be welcomed that Jan Dismas Zelenka (1679–1745) has become a fully appreciated composer with a firm position in the history of music and has been performed at concerts in the Czech Republic, as well as featured on recordings (although there could be more such CDs). One of the ardent champions of his music is Ensemble Inégal, headed by its artistic director, Adam Viktora, who in collaboration with the Prague Baroque Soloists and seven solo singers have recorded Zelenka's Missa Sanctissimae Trinitatis and, in world premiere, the motet Gaude laetare. The latter, consisting of two



arias, demonstrating the increasingly Galant style of composing, connected with a recitative, is sung by the Japanese tenor Makoto Sakurada, possessing a moderate yet flexible voice of a pleasant timbre, who in addition to early music also performs opera. Zelenka's late masses stand out in terms of their scale and means applied. The Missa Sanctissimae Trinitatis requires a modest instrumentation, without brass instruments but with oboes, flutes and a chalumeau. A wonderful piece, combining contrastive cantabile and lyrical, contrapuntal, motoric, dramatic and other areas. Zelenka's fascinating setting serves to emphasise the words of the liturgical text in various manners. According to Professor Wolfgang Horn, a Zelenka specialist at Regensburg University, who is the author of the accompanying text, the work is a "forceful expression of a dimension both human and humane". Surprising too is that the Gloria is in a minor key and has a gloomy atmosphere. Adam Viktora invited to perform the mass soloists whose voices suit each other, even though they are mostly employed in smaller areas, often alternating with the choir, who play a major role. The performers strive to produce a rounded sound, highlight contrasts, and bring to bear ample experience and stylistic proficiency, yet in places the recording comes across as that of a live performance - in my opinion, the preparation could have been more thorough. The CD centres on Zelenka, but it is a pity that the booklet fails to provide information about the singers and instrumentalists. This magnificent recording is yet another contribution of Ensemble Inégal to rediscovering the late-Baroque master.

Jana Slimáčková

Maurice Ravel Piano Trio in A minor

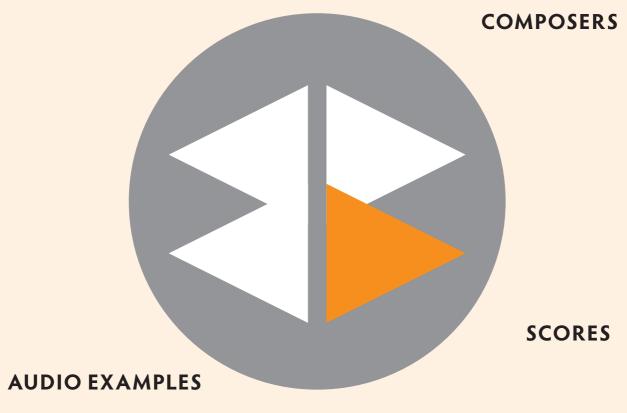
Dmitry Shostakovich Piano Trio No. 1 in C minor, Op. 8; Piano Trio No. 2 in E minor, Op. 67

Smetana Trio
Jitka Čechová - piano,
Jiří Vodička - violin,
Jan Páleníček - cello.
Text: Eng., Ger., Fr., Czech.
Recorded: 9, Dec. 2013, Studio
Martínek, Prague. Released: 2014.
TT: 68:11. DDD. 1 CD Supraphon
SU 4145-2.

ven though the **Smetana Trio** primarily focus on performing Romantic pieces, their latest CD features works by two towering figures of 20th-century music: Maurice Ravel and Dmitry Shostakovich. The disc is the very first recorded by the ensemble in the new line-up (the year before last, the violinist Jana Vonášková-Nováková was replaced by Jiří Vodička). There is not the slightest doubt that the colourfulness and emotiveness of Ravel's Piano Trio in A minor, as well as the two Shostakovich trios, perfectly agree with the Smetana Trio's "romantic" nature. As performed by the ensemble, Ravel's craftily lighthearted, slightly melancholic music revels in countless colours, enchants the listener with airiness. Gallic charm and panache. fascinates with remarkable sensitivity, which mostly merely vents itself in tender oscillations yet now and then surprises with unexpected intensity. The Shostakovich trios - No. 1 in C minor, Op. 8 and, particularly, No. 2 in E minor, Op. 67 - may lack the Ravelean impressionistic improvidence, yet, on the other hand, they contain an amazing scale of forcible mood variations: from romantically risen emotions or dark pensiveness through dance-like lightness to wit and sarcasm, many a time with a taint of unconcealed bitterness. On this recording, the two pieces metamorphose into action-packed films, with each shot, each gesture, opening before the audience new, covert and disconcerting meanings and the Smetana Trio maintain the tension right up to the final second. All the ensemble members are famed for exquisite instrumental technique, peerless sensation for chamber music and fabulous interplay, owing to which they faultlessly perform both the most technically demanding passages and the most delicate agogic nuances. In a nutshell: this CD shows the Smetana Trio in tiptop condition and I am absolutely certain that everyone who puts this engrossing and suggestive recording on will listen to it until the final tone has died away.

Věroslav Němec

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