

Milan Škampa
Vítězslava Kaprálová
Martinů's Memorial To Lidice



**martinů
revisited**
2009 / 50th anniversary
of the composer's death

**International project to mark
the 50th anniversary of the composer's death
(11 December 2008 – 10 December 2010)**

"It's suffocating me, I shall explode!

That's the way music should affect its listeners."

Arthur Honegger after the premiere of Martinů's Double concerto in Basel

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Selected festivals, concerts and events

Opening concert: 11 and 12 December 2008 – Magdalena Kožená, Steve Davislim, Sir Charles Mackerras,
Czech Philharmonic Orchestra – "Three Fragments from Juliette" H. 253A (world premiere)

International Festivals: Prague Spring 2009, 2010; Moravian Autumn 2009,
Internationale Musikfesttage B. Martinů Basel 2008, 2009; Bohuslav Martinů Days Prague 2008, 2009, 2010

Concerts: Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, Prague Symphony Orchestra, Prague Philharmonia, Brno Philharmonic Orchestra,
Ostrava Philharmonic Orchestra, Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, New York Philharmonic,
BBC Symphony Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Orchestre de Paris and many others during the 2008/9/10 seasons

New productions of operas at the National Theatre in Prague, National Theatre in Brno,
Garsington Opera in Oxford, Zurich Opera

Špalíček: a dance/educational project with over 100 children from Prague primary and secondary schools
and the students of the Dance Conservatory Duncan Centre

Polička: opening of the Bohuslav Martinů Centre, 4 April 2009

Exhibition at the Czech Museum of Music in Prague: "The Martinů Phenomenon" (11 May 2009 – 26 October 2009)

And many more

All artists and events are subject to change

Join the Martinů Revisited celebrations!



Dear Readers,

I must confess that when thinking about themes for each new issue of *Czech Music Quarterly*, I try to avoid anniversaries. I'm not quite sure why, but I always have the feeling that running articles just on the basis that it's been exactly a hundred years from the death of this or that composer, or fifty years from the founding of this or that festival, is rather meretricious. Why should the calendar decide which people we should be appreciating or what is specially interesting? Doesn't it somehow suggest that we only bother to remember a person or event when the alarm clock rings? And alarm clocks are not, after all, among the more beautiful things in life. The problem is that the whole surrounding world of concert organisation, music publishing and magazines about music are very keen on anniversaries (the ringing of the alarm clock is something hard to ignore, and so it does part of the marketing for you – the attitude is understandable). And it would be rather solipsistic (and Quixotic) to try to resist the trend come what may, at any price and all the time. What is to be done? I'm offering a compromise solution here... This year in August 49 years had passed since the death of Bohuslav Martinů. If you find this a good enough reason for reading one historical study of one important piece by this composer, one article about a project designed to celebrate the "real" Bohuslav Martinů anniversaries in 2009–10, and one feature on a Czech woman composer who played some role in Martinů's life (and he in hers), please read on.

Au revoir until the next issue

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PHOTO: KAREL ŠUSTER

MILAN ŠKAMPA: ENCIRCLED BY MUSIC

To meet Milan Škampa, eighty years old and still radiating vitality, means to take a long trip (for the professor is talkative and has a tremendous stock of stories) back to times when morality was the sister of music and when despite ridiculously small fees musicians took their vocation very seriously. A yoga master and sportsman (if today more in spirit than in body), Škampa with his waggish smile may no longer practice long runs and a lack of mobility in the fingers of his left hand may have forced him to give up playing his beloved viola, but he is still actively involved in musical life both at home and abroad – as a sought-after pedagogue and member of international competitions' juries. His name is associated above all with the Smetana Quartet, an ensemble that for decades was a peerless model of quartet interpretation. He spent thirty-three years in it.

You were born in the year that Leoš Janáček died – and he is a composer that has played a central role in your life.

That's right, 1928. Some people have even claimed that I'm Janáček's son! (laughs)

If you had the chance to ask him something today, what would it be?

I would ask if I hadn't been interpreting him wrongly. He would probably give me a dressing down. He would say, "why on earth are you doing that?" in his brusque way...

You come from a musical family. Could you tell us something about your family background?

My mother Antonie Moravcová wanted to be a music teacher from the age of eleven, to benefit her nation. And at sixteen she actually did start to teach the violin, because her family had fallen on very hard times. She taught wonderfully, and my brother Mirko followed in her footsteps. Our father was officially a meteorologist, but every evening when he came home from work he would play his Schumann in our one-room flat. I was encircled by music from a baby, with people playing in mother's music school from Monday morning to Saturday night. Even before I could walk I was scraping away on a twirling stick in my cot. At three and a half I asked Little Jesus (the Czech equivalent of

Father Christmas) for a violin, and I got my wish. Only then as a four-year-old I crushed my finger in a sun chair and the resulting knob on my finger made it hard for me to play semitones – I had to make up my own peculiar fingerings. My parents had met as walkers, in love with nature and music. My father was completely different to my mother; even lighting the stove was something he approached as a scientific task. He would explain all five phases of getting the coals to burn, with my mother listening attentively, but as soon as he had left the room she would just chuck the coal in the stove and do it her own way, with a hearty laugh. This was the way both the calm and the tension in our family functioned. And this conflict between their personalities is there in me.

When you were thirteen your mother entrusted you to Ladislav Černý for your training.

Černý was a very close former fellow student of my mother's. He was very strict with his pupils and had a very sarcastic tongue, for example sending them to kitchen to get a revolver to shoot themselves with... But he was never like that with me.

What happened to you as a very young musician during the war?

From February 1945 every secondary school student in the Protectorate was supposed to go and dig trenches at the front. I spent a week desperately trying to get a recommendation to get myself into an orchestra. Orchestras were regarded as important for the Reich and so they were all overstuffed with musicians. My Professor Černý knew K.B.Jiráček, the director of radio broadcasting, and called him, saying "We've a violinist here, he's young and terrific, and plays the Beethoven's concerto." Jiráček said to tell me to come in the morning and play Beethoven. This all happened on a night when there was a frost and suddenly a bombing raid on Prague. I practised the Beethoven in a shelter, because I hadn't played him for two and a half years. The audition turned out well, and I was given a paper saying I was a soloist. I took it to the Arbeitsamt (forced labour office), but they didn't accept the soloist category, and said I had to have a place in an orchestra. I went back, depressed, and in the end I was taken on as third violinist in Vašat's old "Viennese String Band", which broadcast live twice a week right up to the 4th of May 1945. On the 5th we didn't have to play because the barricades were already up in the streets. I also had a solo broadcast on the radio once every 3 weeks.

And after the war?

After getting the school leaving certificate I applied for the Faculty of Philosophy to study musicology, and also studied at the Academy in parallel. I graduated with the Suk *Fantasia*, which is the piece I love best. After the concert Černý told me, "That's the first time I've ever heard that piece sound easy."

The Smetana Quartet was a famous ensemble even before you joined it...

I first encountered the Smetana Quartet on the podium in 1948 at an Academy of Performing Arts concert in the Rudolfinum – it was the twentieth anniversary of Janáček's death. I saw a poster advertising the quartet and decided to go along. Then I took a closer look and saw that I wouldn't have much choice in the matter anyway, since apparently I was supposed to be playing the Janáček *Sonata* at the same concert. I went to Professor Daniel and protested that there had to be some mistake – I had been avoiding the Janáček *Sonata* out of respect. "You're going to play it", Daniel answered. And he was right, after some nine days I played it from memory, and with great success.



PHOTO: KAREL ŠUSTER

After that, when the Smetana Quartet asked you to work with them, were you surprised?

I was giving concerts in Slovakia with my first wife, a pianist of genius, when a telegram arrived: Come at once, we have something interesting for you. So we went to Prague, I went to the audition in the morning; they had Antonín Dvořák's viola for me and gave it to me to play, and then asked if I didn't want to join them, as a viola player and musicological advisor.

Have you always been drawn both to practical play and to theoretical work?

My dissertation was on the publication of Suk's violin pieces. I was attracted to the Smetana Quartet not just by that viola of Dvořák's, which has a marvellously mysterious tone, but also as a musicologist.

What made the Smetana Quartet exceptional?

The peculiarity of the Smetana Quartet's style was that we based our approach on trying for the most precise possible expression of the composer's ideas, which means that fifty years ago we were among the mere handful of ensembles striving for authenticity of interpretation. The Smetana Quartet was the least romantic among the comparable quartets, the Janáček and the Vlach. Our style differed above all in the interpretation of Janáček. Back then this could look like excessive precision and objectivity.

We also played from memory, which made for better contact between the players. Recently I've been recommending this to young ensembles. I have had around forty under my care and there are some that quite clearly play better without note parts.

But doesn't playing from memory mean a smaller repertoire?

Restricting the repertoire suited me. I wouldn't be able just to play pieces through in the way I see most ensembles doing it.



How long did it take for you as a soloist to settle down with the other three players?

Two days after I agreed to join we had the first rehearsal and the first concert abroad two months later; it was in Munich in the Herkulessaal. One of the first pieces that we performed was Janáček's *First Quartet*. When I joined, the Smetana Quartet had already played it a hundred and sixty times and the final total number of times we played a Janáček quartet including the years after I joined was 1462!

So this was as it were a fateful piece for you...

I altered the way that the Smetana Quartet interpreted both the string quartets, but especially the first. This had been rather in the shadow of the second quartet "*Intimate Letters*", probably because most of the literature claimed that it had very little connection with Tolstoy's *Kreutzer Sonata*. I started with comparative work, studying all Janáček's opera scores and piano excerpts long into the night, looking for the decisive melodic steps until I managed to identify the fit between the motifs of the quartet and words, which is something fundamental with Janáček.

And the connection with Tolstoy's "Kreutzer Sonata"?

Janáček's first question to every performer was, "Have you read 'The Kreutzer Sonata'?" From the one existing review of the premiere of the *Trio* on the same subject in 1909, I know that it included a reading from the *Kreutzer Sonata* and that Janáček himself appeared on the platform.

Which era in the life of the Smetana Quartet do you remember most fondly?

The long years when we worked very intensively, five hours a day. You can't imagine how long we spent each day working on intonation! We had our own very well worked out constitution, which was higher than the laws of the



The Smetana Quartet

socialist republic. It included equality of votes, but complete democracy was impossible: when the votes were two to two, the founder of the quartet, cellist Antonín Kohout had the decisive voice. He decided when a piece was ready for public performance.

We didn't make a lot of money – we worked under the heading of the Czech Philharmonic, from which we had fifteen concerts every year, with the rest of our concerts organised by Pragokoncert [monopolistic state agency]. As an illustration, in 1957 the violinist David Oistrakh was paid for a single concert what our whole quartet together earned for thirty concerts.

But as the youngest member it was you who dissolved the quartet after thirty-three years...

Our problems with age and bodies wearing out were increasing, and so although I was the youngest I said we should just play at home. We couldn't waste away. Lubo Kostecký had a hearing problem with high notes, and I had a problem with a finger – they operated on it and I left the hospital prematurely so that the quartet wouldn't have to cancel a concert in Berlin. Only the finger bent in a strange way that I liked at first because I was able to stretch the hand more, but then it stopped obeying me. Fortunately we recorded our last concert, digitally – it was in Brno. In the season before we said farewell to Japan, where we had been going for thirty years and where we were something like national artists. They still invite me to Osaka for the quartet competition.

How do you explain the success that young Czech quartets are having in the world today?

Czech quartet music has a high standing in European culture. The roots of this phenomenon can be traced back to times of Mozart, when in Bohemia the string quartet became very popular genre for home music-making, and it was also attractive for composers. This process culminated in the exquisite works of



Smetana and Dvořák. And then there was the outstanding Czech Quartet, and great pedagogues, such as Karel Pravoslav Sádlo, and his pupil Antonín Kohout. It wasn't just a matter of the music but of their attitudes to life in general. These people were exceptionally moral and just.

Twenty years ago when the Škampa Quartet [recently one of the most renowned Czech string quartets] was formed, I entrusted it to the care of Kohout for a year, so that he could imbue the players with his concept of quartet sound and sense of unity. By the way, I shouldn't forget to say that Antonín Kohout was trained in music and humanity by my mother. K.P. Sádlo sent his fourteen-year-old pupil Antonín Kohout to us; one day he knocked on our door. This was in 1933. He worked with us intensively for at least six years; he played a trio with us with my father at the piano, later a quartet was founded...

What are you doing these days?

Janáček is still keeping me busy. Not only he was a unique composer, his works are a puzzle for editors. We owe him proper critical editions of his two string quartets – mine have been ready for a couple of years.

Prof. Milan Škampa (born 4th June 1928 in Prague)

From the age of four he learned to play the violin, first with his mother as teacher, and later as a private student with the viola player Ladislav Černý. After leaving grammar school he studied musicology and aesthetics at Charles University in the years 1947–51 and concurrently violin at the Music Faculty of the Prague Academy of Performing Arts with professors Alexandr Plocek and František Daniel. He graduated with distinction in 1951 with a concert in the Dvořák Hall of the Rudolfinum and in the Smetana Hall of the Municipal House, where he performed Suk's Fantasia with the Prague Symphony Orchestra conducted by Václav Smetáček.



Milan Škampa with the Pavel Haas Quartet

At 16 he became a soloist for Czech Radio (1945–56), and after winning a series of Czechoslovak violin competitions he became laureate of the international violin competitions in Berlin (1951) and Warsaw (1955). He played as a soloist with leading Czech orchestras, and premiered many new pieces, such as the violin concerto by Vladimír Sommer. The major turning-point in his career came in 1956, when he became viola player of the Smetana Quartet, a chamber ensemble of the Czech Philharmonic, and remained so for 33 years and more than 3,400 concerts in 54 countries of the world. For several decades the Smetana Quartet was one of the world's best quartets and became famous above all for outstanding interpretation of the quartets of Ludwig van Beethoven (1564 public performances), and W.A. Mozart (982 performances) as well as being peerless performers and promoters of the works of Czech composers – especially the quartets of Smetana (1737 perf.), Janáček (1462 perf.) and Dvořák (1194 perf.).

He made more than 120 recordings with the Smetana Quartet. He can boast the first digital recording in the world (1972 Tokyo, DENON); in 1985 he completed the first digitally recorded complete set of Beethoven string quartets published as the first CD complete set (DENON/Supraphon). The Smetana Quartet's last performance, in 1989 at the Prague Spring Festival, was also recorded. His solo discography includes concertante works by W.A. Mozart a B. Martinů.

Professor Škampa has been teaching at the Music Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague since 1951. He is regularly invited to Italy to the Scuola di Musica di Fiesole in Florence, where in 2002 he co-founded the European Academy of String Quartets. Since 1980 he has regularly led master classes for string quartet, piano trio, viola, and violin in many countries and is one of the musicians most in demand as jury members for major international competitions throughout the world.

He has trained many pupils and ensembles (The Škampa Quartet, The Pavel Haas Quartet among others). He publishes specialist studies, especially on Leoš Janáček. It was his task to prepare note materials for the Smetana Quartet, for example the string quartets of Bedřich Smetana. His reconstruction of Janáček's First String Quartet, "inspired by Tolstoy's Kreutzer Sonata", has become the standard version for the performance of the work.

FRANCE CONQUERS JANÁČEK

The music of Leoš Janáček has never had an easy time in French musical life. Granted, the Moravian Teachers' Choir Association first brought Janáček's choral music to France in a successful tour in 1908 at a time when Janáček had not yet been admitted to the hall of fame even in his homeland, and the composer took pleasure from the fact that his opera *Jenufa* was staged in France in his lifetime. On the other hand, decades had to pass before this chance foreigner became a guest composer with rights of permanent residence in the repertoire of French opera houses and concert halls.

If Janáček's name and works were eventually to gain a place in the broader consciousness of French music culture, this was due not just to his growing reputation outside France, especially in the German and English speaking world, but also to powerful impulses from within the domestic cultural milieu – musical, literary and musicological. The composer and conductor Pierre Boulez paid tribute to Janáček's works with his ambitious interpretations especially of the *Glagolitic Mass* and *From the House of the Dead*. Mi-

lan Kundera made Janáček the theme of brilliant essays, and Guy Erismann, who died recently, devoted himself to Janáček not only as a music historian and musicologist, but for many years as the leading figure in the *Mouvement Janáček* society, which is currently a very active and visible association on a broad front. In this new atmosphere of budding interest in Janáček, the time was ripe for a project designed to unify and develop current knowledge of the Janáček phenomenon. The idea was born soon after the double Janáček jubilee of 2004. At the beginning what was planned was just a smaller project designed to culminate in 2006 with the presentation and first performance of a critical edition of Janáček's *String Quintet No. 2 "Intimate Letters"* using the viola d'amore as originally intended by the composer (Bärenreiter announced that it would be the publisher). This project failed to get off the ground and so the initiative, conceived and constantly promoted by Lenka Stránská, a Czech musicologist based in Paris, moved to the university sphere. It resulted after thorough consultation and preparations in the birth of the international musicological colloquium, **Leoš Janáček, Culture européenne et création** (3rd – 5th of April 2008), with important attendant efforts to link academic knowledge to performance and bring together individuals in a professional community. On the eve of the colloquium, in the hall of the famous Conservatoire national supérieur de musique et de danse de Paris, there was a performance of Janáček's last quartet in the critical edition to which Miroslav Srnka and Lenka Stránská provided the appropriate explanations. The symposium, under the aegis of the Czech ambassador Mr. Pavel Fischer, took place over three days, starting at the Czech Embassy. The first culminated in a social event at which



Pierre Boulez with Pavel Fišer, Czech ambassador to France, and Mrs. Lemaire, the sponsor of the colloquium. Left: author of present article, Eva Drlíková

the great artistic service that the composer and conductor Pierre Boulez had done for Janáček's work in France was recognised from the Czech side by the ambassador and the Leoš Janáček Foundation. Pierre Boulez felt enormously honoured and moved at the presentation of a Janáček Commemorative medal and a laudation emphasising the role of this today eighty-year-old artist in furthering the understanding and appreciation of Janáček in a country that is still a great epicentre of artistic creation. Testimony to Janáček's original contribution to the development of 20th-century music was eloquently provided by a performance of his *Fairy Tale* (with the original 4th movement), by Martin Sedlák and Jean-Francois Ballèvre.

The two and a half days of colloquium sessions (with French, English and German as the working languages), mapped new views of the special position of Janáček's work in the music of the turn of the 19th century and the period of the rise of modernism, and posed new questions. The organisers (Sorbonne

Paris IV; the centre for research Patrimoines et langages Musicaux, the Grimoire group; Université F. Rabelais in Tours; the research group Historie des représentations; the musicological institute of Masaryk University in Brno), and the co-organisers (including the Leoš Janáček Foundation and Editio Bärenreiter) were striving to bring together the latest knowledge from outside and also to present the French share in current Janáček studies. The colloquium programme was divided into a number of themes: Contexts and Parallels; Chamber Music; Non-Musical Works: Literature, Theory, Collecting; Aesthetics and Musical Language; New Perspectives on the Dramatic Works; Editions of the Work and their Rationale; and the Reception of Janáček's Music in France.

The introduction to the colloquium, i.e. an updated report on the present state of research was entrusted to Theo Hirsbrunner, Mikuláš Bek and Jakob Knaus. While the first two speakers considered Janáček in the context of European development of music,

Knaus focused on the Czech Lands, where he traced the reception of Janáček in Prague and in the period 1903 – 1924. There then followed individual sections with the attention of the participants focusing on new themes or *déjà vu* explored anew and newly understood. While also the older and better known scholars in Janáček research presented new (and old-new) themes, the second line of new concepts and questions applied to earlier material was generally pursued by the younger generation: Kerstin Lücker, Lenka Stránská, Miroslav Srnka, Marion Recknagel, Lukas Hasselböck, Tiina Vainiomäki. An excellent orientation in the Czech cultural milieu and the Czech language, on which of course Janáček worked intensively, undoubtedly contributed to the persuasiveness of their new ways of seeing the composer and his work.

What have been the benefits of the Paris Colloquium for Czech Janáček scholarship?

1. The gratifying confirmation that Janáček and his work are major and timeless themes for musicologists (and not only musicologists) even beyond the border divisions of European cultural experience.

2. The realisation that the newly awakened interest in Janáček's work in its integral wholeness in the domestic professional community unconditionally requires "output", at the very least in the form of standard editions.

3. The discovery that rather than on the French academic sphere represented at the colloquium, wider and deeper knowledge and appreciation of Janáček's movement depends on Janáček associations or just Janáček sections of larger music communities, whose representatives offered detailed information about their activities. With only a certain hyperbole we can say that the size and profile of the growing Janáček lobby is in these people's hands and we need to meet them halfway in their tireless curiosity, search for information and dissemination of information.

A Czech participant at the colloquium can only suggest its conclusions and benefits for the non-Czech side:

1. The language barrier is a continuing problem and will remain so as long as we are communicating facts, background and research results through a mediating language. Deformations caused by this necessity are evident and the results are confusing (as Bernard Banoun showed in textbook style in his paper).



2. The previous obscure (in France surviving) classification of Janáček as a strikingly "folkloristic" composer, has definitely had its day. New facets of his individuality are being discovered. For example thanks to the demonstration of his way of recording his "collection" of folk songs and speech melodies (papers by Jarmila Procházková and Michael Beckerman) Janáček's approach has turned out to be very progressive: methodologically and at the creative level – artistically and intellectually.

3. Janáček has ceased to be a Czech phenomenon and from simply a composer has become a figure embodying composer, writer and theorist in one. (At the colloquium three different views of Janáček's theoretical work were given: Lücker, Drlíková, Vainiomäki).

The Janáček International Colloquium will have a sequel in the first days of October in Brno. After the first spring breeze we can be sure that the autumn wing will bring much more than a "storm in a glass of water", as the Czechs put it.

THE VOICE OF AN ARTIST

THE LIFE AND MUSIC OF VÍTĚZSLAVA KAPRÁLOVÁ

While in most composers' lives the first twenty-five years are generally a period of creative development, there have been artists who produced music at a very young age that is remarkably mature and refined in both form and technique. In the realm of Czech music, Vítězslava Kaprálová represents such an artist. During her lifetime, Kaprálová came to be regarded as one of the most promising composers of her generation. A highly accomplished musician despite her youth, she was also a trailblazer for women. She was the first woman to graduate from Brno State Conservatory's composition and conducting class, the first woman to receive the prestigious *Smetana Award* for composition, the first woman to lead the Czech Philharmonic, and one of the first women to conduct the BBC Orchestra. Among her teachers were some of the most prominent European composers and conductors of the time.¹



Vítězslava Kaprálová was born on January 24, 1915 in Brno, the provincial capital of Moravia that was then still a part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. She was an only child who grew up in a musical family: her mother, Vítězslava Kaprálová (1890–1973), née Uhlířová, was a classically trained singer; her father, Václav Kaprál (1889–1947), was a composer, writer, music critic, and teacher who had studied with Janáček.

Kaprálová started composing at the age of nine, under the guidance of her father. At 15, she entered the Brno Conservatory where she studied composition with Vilém Petrželka and conducting with Vilém Steinman and Zdeněk Chalabala. Her creative output at the Conservatory included an early yet already accomplished piano cycle *Five Pieces for Piano*, two violin pieces *Legend* and *Burlesque*, a piano sonata *So-*

Kaprálová after the premiere of her Piano Concerto in Brno on June 17, 1935. Photograph: V. Kláška, Brno, 1935. First published in Pražák, 1949. This print was provided courtesy of Božena Tůmová and the Kapralova Society.

nata appassionata, and *Piano Concerto in D minor*, Kaprálová's first work for large orchestra.

In 1935, Kaprálová graduated from the Brno Conservatory at the top of her class with the piano concerto that she conducted herself at its premiere in Brno. It was her first public appearance as conductor and she made quite an impression upon the curious, and at first skeptical, audience.² After the graduation, she spent the summer at her family retreat in the village of Tři Studně, where she sketched her first and only string quartet, an ingenious work that "blends something of the spirit of Janáček's *Intimate Letters* with a free chromaticism reminiscent of Berg's op. 3."³

In the fall of 1935 Kaprálová moved to Prague, where she hoped to advance her technical skills at the Prague Conservatory. She was accepted into the prestigious masterclasses of the leading Czech composer Vítězslav Novák and the conductor Václav Talich, and her music was soon heard at the concerts of the two most important societies of contemporary music in Prague in the 1930s: Přítomnost and Umělecká Beseda. During her "Prague" period Kaprálová experimented with impressionistic and expressionistic idioms and wrote some of her most striking music, including the critically acclaimed songs *Forever* and *Waving Farewell*, and her best known piano work *April Preludes*.



In June 1937 Kaprálová graduated from the Prague Conservatory with a composition for large orchestra, the *Military Sinfonieta*. Composed at a time of political unrest in her homeland, it was chosen by the National Women's Council to be premiered at their annual gala concert in the presence of Edvard Beneš, president of the Czechoslovak Republic, to whom the work was dedicated. The premiere took place at Lucerna Hall in Prague on November 26, 1937. The orchestra was the Czech Philharmonic, the conductor – Kaprálová. Witnesses recall how highly unusual it was for the Czech Philharmonic to perform under the baton of such a young conductor, especially when that conductor happened to be a woman. The players were

skeptical at first, but Kaprálová's professionalism and her energetic gestures were persuasive arguments even for such experienced players. After the first few bars of the score, she won over the hundred-piece orchestra completely.⁴ In October 1937, a month before the premiere of her *Military Sinfonieta*, Kaprálová moved to Paris to study conducting with Charles Munch at the Ecole normale de musique. She originally planned to study with Felix Weingartner in Vienna, but after meeting with Paris-based Bohuslav Martinů during his short visit to Prague in April that year, she decided instead to seek a government scholarship to study in France. Paris was to broaden Kaprálová's intellectual horizons. The city's musical life in general, and the

concerts of La Société de la Musique Contemporaine (Triton) in particular were immensely important for her artistic development. Here she heard the latest works of Bartók, Stravinsky, Schoenberg, Prokofiev, Milhaud, Honegger, Martinů, and later also saw her own works performed. She was particularly attracted to Stravinsky, and her *Suita rustica* from 1938, a large orchestral work commissioned by Universal Edition (Lon-

don), is a personal tribute to his Petruschka. Of course, among the new impulses and influences that helped develop Kaprálová's voice, a particularly important one was the music of Bohuslav Martinů, with whom she studied composition privately. Their initial teacher-student relationship gradually changed into a relationship of two colleagues, albeit one senior to the other, who spent hours discussing and arguing the tenets of

music theory and analyzing each other's works. Kaprálová's remarkable *Partita for Piano and String Orchestra* represents an entirely new direction in Kaprálová's output and can be considered a direct result of those discussions.

Kaprálová's charismatic personality, her beauty, and immense passion for life inspired the aging Martinů. His *Tre ricercari*, and especially the intimate *String Quartet No. 5*⁵ and the powerful

Kaprálová with her friends in July 1938 at her family's country retreat in Tři Studně. From left to right, standing: an unknown man, Zdenka Duchoslavová, Bohuslav Martinů, Zdeněk Duchoslav (child), Vítězlava Kaprálová, Pavla Kříčková, Petr Kříčka, and Jaroslav Kříčka. Sitting: unknown. Photograph: Oldřich Duchoslav. Reproduced courtesy of the Duchoslav Family and the Kapralova Society. First published in The Kapralova Society Journal 2 (2004): 11.





Kaprálová with Charles Munch and her classmates in January 1938 (Kaprálová sits next to Munch, fourth from the left). Photograph provided courtesy of Kaprálová's estate (Josef Kaprál) and the Kapralova Society. Previously published in Macek, 1958.

Double Concerto reveal some of the strong emotions stirred in him by Kaprálová.⁶ But Martinů also had an enormous respect for her music and did not hesitate to open a few important doors for her. For example, in May 1938 he recommended to one of his publishers, Michel Dillard of La Sirène Editions Musicales, to accept Kaprálová's *Variations sur le carillon de l'église Saint-Etienne du Mont* – a remarkable work for piano solo that she had composed a few months earlier. Although Kaprálová was not new to pub-

lishing, since by then several of her works had been published in Czechoslovakia, this was her first international recognition. Martinů also had great faith in her abilities as a conductor – so much so that he had her conduct a performance of his *Harpsichord Concerto* in Paris, on June 2, 1938, with Marcelle de Lacour as soloist.

Two weeks later Kaprálová arrived in London for the 1938 ISCM Festival as one of the four finalists who were selected by the festival international jury to represent

contemporary Czech music.⁷ She conducted her *Military Sinfonietta* as the Festival's opening work at Queen's Hall on June 17. Her performance created quite a bit of excitement, and both her composition and performance earned her respect and applause from the BBC Orchestra, the audience, and the critics.⁸ She received excellent reviews in dailies and journals covering the event, including *Time Magazine* and *Musical Opinion*.⁹ After two such eventful semesters abroad, Kaprálová was eager to return home for the summer

holidays. She could not know that this was to be her last visit to her homeland. When she returned to Paris in January 1939, the world she knew was already disintegrating. In February she composed her last work for violin and piano, *Elegy*, to commemorate the life and work of beloved Czech writer Karel Čapek. A month later, on March 15, German soldiers marched in the streets of Prague. Three days after the forceful annexation of her country, Kaprálová, emotionally exhausted, began working on her *Concertino for Violin, Clarinet and Orchestra*. Clearly a statement of a sober mind, this dark, despairing work¹⁰ contrasts sharply with Kaprálová's energetic Military Sinfonietta, composed only two years earlier, still so full of youthful optimism.

Separated by war from her loved ones, Kaprálová was now looking to Martinů for all of her emotional support. The two began – seriously for a while – planning their future together, as far from vulnerable Europe as possible.

But nothing came of the plans, as Martinů was unable to leave his wife, and Kaprálová spent the summer alone in Augerville la Rivière. She returned to Paris in September but left again to spend a couple of weeks with the Martinůs in their home at Vieux Moulin, bringing with her a friend she met a few months earlier among the young Czechs on stipend in Paris. The friend was her future husband, Jiří Mucha.¹¹

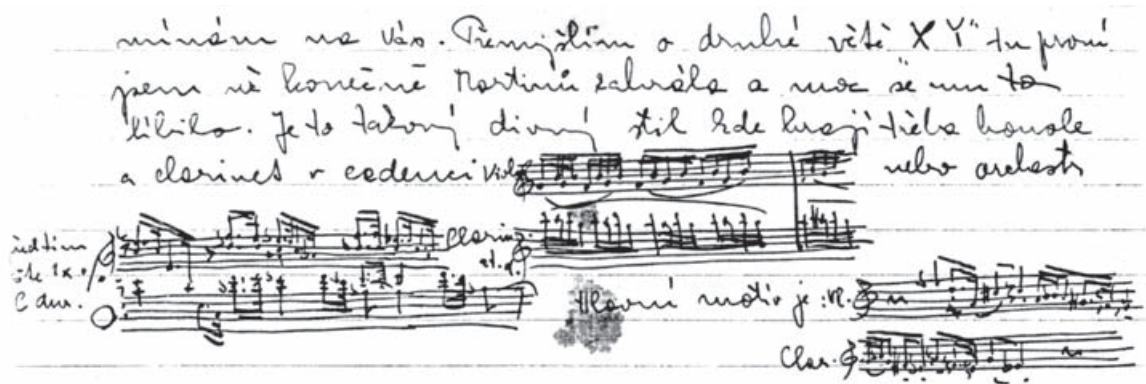
That fall, Paris began preparing for war. Kaprálová now lived with Mucha and a few mutual friends in a sort of bohemian commune in the city's Quartier Latin.

Mucha worked for the weekly *Československý boj*, an official publication of Czechs and Slovaks in exile, for which Kaprálová wrote concert reviews and articles on various musical subjects. He was also involved in a regular broadcast to occupied Czechoslovakia, and soon found an opportunity for Kaprálová to participate; as a result, on the Christmas Day of 1939, his program featured

Kaprálová's miniature *Prélude de Noël*, her last extant orchestral work.

The year 1940 began promisingly with the great success of Kaprálová's *April Preludes*, performed by Rudolf Firkušný on January 28 at Triton. That winter and spring Kaprálová worked on a number of commissions, including some incidental music on which she collaborated with Martinů. By March Mucha was no longer in Paris. Like many other young Czechs in exile, he volunteered to be conscripted for army service in Agde, Southern France. As Kaprálová was growing restless in Paris, he returned in April for a few days. They married on April 23. Five days after her wedding Kaprálová composed a song, *Letter*, which was to be her last composition in a genre in which perhaps she excelled most.¹²

In early May, around the same time Kaprálová was finishing her very last work, *Ritournelle pour violoncelle et piano*, she suffered the first symptoms of the illness that was to kill her.¹³ On May 9 she



Fragment autograph:

From Kaprálová's letter to parents, dated in Rouen, April 11, 1939, concerning her *Concertino*, op. 21. The letter was provided courtesy of Kaprálová's estate and the Kapralova Society.



Sonata appassionata, op. 6 (2nd movement, 4th Variation), of 1933. Kaprálová's autograph provided courtesy of Kaprálová's estate (Josef Kaprál) and the Kapralova Society.

was briefly hospitalized in Vaugirard Hospital, on May 20 she was evacuated from Paris to a small university hospital in Montpellier, and on June 16, 1940 – the day France fell – Kaprálová died, at the age of 25.

In 1946, the foremost scholarly institution in the country, the Czech Academy of Sciences and

Arts, acknowledged Kaprálová's distinct contribution to Czech Music by awarding her a membership in memoriam. She was only one of ten women out of more than 640 domestic members who were elected to the Academy since its inception in 1890, and the only woman musician.¹⁴ In 1947, Martinů was asked to contribute

to a small volume of reminiscences about the composer. He wrote:

“The loss to our music is greater than we might think. I know it, because I was there when she was transforming into an artist... I was not her teacher per se – I was more of an advisor – and I can say that only rarely have I had the

opportunity to encounter such genuine talent and such confidence in the task she wanted to – and was to – accomplish. (...) It was a pleasure to discuss musical problems with her. In fact, I was learning along with her and it was a great joy as well as an experience to see the fight between the soul and the material again. (...) Only rarely have I met someone with such a sharp sense for envisioning the work before it was written down. If you find someone who (...) actually fully understands how the parts of the whole relate to each other, whose primary interest is the whole, then you know that you have encountered a first-class artist – and that was the very case with Vitulka.¹⁵”

Vítězslava Kaprálová was a remarkable voice in Czech music of the first half of the 20th century. Her compositions reveal a great originality and a mature mastery of form and contemporary musical language. After several decades of undeserved neglect, her music, sounding as bold and fresh as it did during her lifetime, is now inspiring a whole new generation of performers and listeners. The time is long overdue.

In her short life, Kaprálová composed over forty compositions in a variety of genres. Particularly well represented in Kaprálová's creative output are her outstanding songs that have been considered one of the late climaxes of Czech art song.¹⁶ Together with the composer's sophisticated and highly original works for solo piano, they have remained the most vital part of the Kaprálová repertoire. Kaprálová's orchestral works are lesser known, and, with a few notable exceptions, have yet

to be discovered. The orchestral catalog is strong and includes two orchestral songs, two piano concertos, a sinfonietta, a symphonic ballad-cantata, a concertino, a ballet-suite for large orchestra, and a couple of minor classics for chamber orchestra. Relatively least represented in Kaprálová's compositional output is chamber music, but the compositions she did produce in this medium are among her most remarkable, from the early string quartet to her last opus – the ritornel for cello and piano.

Although quite a few of Kaprálová's compositions were published during her lifetime¹⁷ and several more published and even recorded after her death,¹⁸ it was only in the late 1990s that any concentrated efforts were made to systematically publish and release Kaprálová's works. The founding of the Kapralova Society in 1998 has played a seminal role in this revival of interest in Kaprálová's music. The same year a first profile CD featuring some of the very best of Kaprálová's offering was released by Studio Matouš in Prague, on the impetus and with the assistance of the Society.¹⁹ A Supraphon recording of Kaprálová's art songs followed in 2003,²⁰ a result of the dedicated efforts of Timothy Cheek, Associate Professor of Voice at the University of Michigan School of Music, and the financial support of the University and the Society. In 2008, a third all-Kaprálová release, this time by Koch Records in New York, closed a gap in the Kaprálová catalog of chamber music and piano recordings.²¹ This project too was encouraged and financially assisted by the Society.

Most important among the projects the Society encouraged and assisted over the past decade,

however, has been the Kaprálová Edition – a joint effort of the Society and its publishing partners (Czech Radio Publishing House, Editio Baerenreiter Prague, and Amos Editio) to make available in print Kaprálová's music. To date, more than half of Kaprálová's compositions have been published, often in a first, critical edition. While the Czech Radio and Baerenreiter have taken a primary interest in Kaprálová's orchestral catalog,²² Amos Editio has focused on publishing Kaprálová's vocal, piano, and chamber music.²³ The publisher's greatest achievement to date has been their complete, critical edition of Kaprálová's songs, edited by Timothy Cheek; an exemplary publication that excludes professionalism and dedication of its production editor Věroslav Němec.

Besides helping to publish Kaprálová's music so that it is available to both performers and the music loving public, the Society also encourages and financially assists important premieres of the composer's music.²⁴ Finally, the Society has been playing a key role in promoting and advancing knowledge about the composer by assisting scholarly research, publishing an online periodical, *The Kapralova Society Journal*, and maintaining a website, www.kapralova.org.

1 Vítězslav Novák, Bohuslav Martinů, Václav Talich, and Charles Munch. She also had the brief privilege to study with Nadia Boulanger, in the spring of 1940.

2 Jiří Macek, *Vítězslava Kaprálová* (Prague: Svaz Čs. skladatelů, 1958), pp. 52–53.

3 Calum MacDonald, “Kaprálová,” *Tempo* 214 (October 2000): 60.

4 Jiří Macek, *Vítězslava Kaprálová* (Prague: Svaz Čs. skladatelů, 1958), pp. 133–34.

5 The original 12-page autograph sketch contains a number of whimsical cartoons in the composer's hand expressing his thoughts about Kaprálová.

6 In his letter dated February 25, 1958, Martinů admitted to his first biographer Miloš Šafránek: "[T]he Double Concerto [has], of course, a very private character, but only I know about that and all other conjectures are only [smoke]screen." *Miloš Šafránek, Bohuslav Martinů: His Life and Works* (London: Allan Wingate, 1962), p. 184.

7 The other three were Viktor Ullmann, Iša Krejčí, and Václav Bartoš.

8 Bohuslav Martinů, "Mezinárodní festival v Londýně," *Lidové noviny*, June 28, 1938, 7.

9 The reviewer for *Musical Opinion* was Havergal Brian. He wrote: "The first work played and broadcast at the recent festival, a *Military Sinfonietta*, by Miss Vítězslava Kaprálová of Czechoslovakia, proved an amazing piece of orchestral writing: it was also of logical and well balanced design." In: Havergal Brian, "The Nature of Modern Music. Contemporary Music Festival," *Musical Opinion* (July 1938): 858. The success of Kaprálová's music at this prestigious international event is all the more so remarkable when we realize that participating composers also included Bartók, Britten, Copland, Hindemith, Messiaen, and Webern.

10 Just before the last two measures of the autograph sketch of her Concertino, Kaprálová scribbled the following two references: *Psalm 57 and Job 30, 26* ("Yet when I hoped for good, evil came; when I looked for light, then came darkness").

11 Jiří Mucha, (1915–1991), Czech writer, son of the art-nouveau painter Alfons Mucha. His autobiography, published in Prague in 1988, is centred on the years Mucha spent in Paris before the war, his relationship with Kaprálová, and her clandestine affair with Bohuslav Martinů.

12 The words by Petr Křička, written as a letter from a man to his lover who has just rejected him, are paraphrased and recorded in French translation by Kaprálová on the back of the song manuscript as follows: *You said "no". So be it... It was fate that separated us. I regret it but see that you are happy – and accept it. I do not judge who is to blame, whose loss is bigger. Yesterday there were two paths, today there is just one. Who knows? Perhaps, you will return one day. The Lord God is a great artist and His intentions unfath-*

omable... Perhaps this was meant to be Kaprálová's farewell to her love relationship with Martinů and a closure she desperately needed in order to move on with her life; yet, the poem seems to leave the door open to other possibilities.

The autograph of Letter has been published in: *Jiří Mucha, Podivné lásky* (Prague: Mladá fronta, 1988), pp. 389–392.

13 While Kaprálová is generally believed to have died of tuberculosis miliaris, the symptoms that she manifested never quite fitted this official diagnosis.

14 Derek Sayer, *The Coasts of Bohemia* (Princeton University Press, 1998), p. 343.

15 "Bohuslav Martinů," in *Vítězslava Kaprálová: Studie a vzpomínky*, ed. Přemysl Pražák (Prague: HMUB, 1949), pp. 122–25.

"Vitulka" is a diminutive form of the name Vítězslava.

16 Timothy Cheek, "Navždy (Forever) Kaprálová: Reevaluating Czech composer Vítězslava Kaprálová through her thirty songs," *The Kapralova Society Journal 2* (Fall 2005): 1–6.

17 *Burlesque*, op. 3/2 (1933), *Groteskní* (Grotesque) *Passacaglia*, op. 9/3 (1936), *Jablko s klína* (Apple from the Lap), op. 10 (1938), *Military Sinfonietta*, op. 11 (1938), *Dubnová preludia* (April Preludes), op. 13 (1938), and *Variations sur le carillon de l'église Saint-Etienne du Mont*, op. 16 (1938).

18 *Waving Farewell*, op. 14 (1947), *Partita*, op. 20 (1948), *Forever*, op. 12 (1949), and *Potpoliš*, op. 17 (1976). In 1947, Ultraphon released two of the four *April Preludes* (*Allegro ma non troppo* and *Andante Semplice*); in 1957, Gramofonové závody recorded *Military Sinfonietta*; and in 1975, Supraphon released *April Preludes*, *Waving Farewell*, *Suita rustica*, and *Partita*.

19 The disc features Kaprálová's *String Quartet*, op. 8, *Military Sinfonietta*, op. 11, *April Preludes*, op. 13, *Waving Farewell*, op. 14 (orchestral version), *Partita*, op. 20, and *Ritornel for Cello and Piano*, op. 25.

20 The disc features the following song cycles: *Dvě písně* (Two Songs), op. 4, *Jiskry z popele* (Sparks from Ashes), op. 5, *Jablko s klína* (Apple from the Lap), op. 10, *Navždy* (Forever), op. 12, *Sbohem a šáteček* (Waving Farewell), op. 14, *Vteřiny* (Seconds), op. 18, *Zpíváno dálky* (Sung into the Distance), op. 22, and several other songs, including the composer's last song *Dopis* (Letter), of 1940, and *Leden* (January), of 1933, for soprano/tenor, flute, two violins, violoncello, and piano. The latter is a remarkable but up until its world premiere by faculty

members at the University of Michigan in 2003, an entirely unknown work composed by Kaprálová.

21 The disc features her piano works *Sonata appassionata*, op. 6, *April Preludes*, op. 13, *Variations sur le carillon de l'église Saint-Etienne du Mont*, op. 16, *Little Song*, and Kaprálová's three piano and violin pieces: *Legend and Burlesque*, op. 3, and *Elegy* (1939). Six of the seven compositions are premiere CD recordings.

22 The Czech Radio has so far published Kaprálová's *Prélude de Noël* (1st edition), *Partita*, op. 20 (2nd edition), and *Military Sinfonietta*, op. 11 (3rd edition). Editio Baerenreiter has made available the composer's *Concertino for Violin, Clarinet and Orchestra*, op. 21, and *Deux ritournelles pour violoncelle et piano*, op. 25, both opuses in a first edition.

23 Since 2003, Amos Editio has published Kaprálová's childhood compositions, and, in partnership with the Society, a first complete, critical edition of Kaprálová's art songs for voice and piano, a first, urtext edition of her song *Leden* (January) for soprano/tenor, flute, two violins, violoncello, and piano, and a first, critical edition of *Sonata appassionata*, op. 6, for piano. The Publisher is currently producing a first complete, critical edition of the composer's works for violin and piano; this project has also been encouraged and financially assisted by the Society.

24 The most recent example is the 2007 world premiere of Kaprálová's symphonic ballad-cantata *Ilena*, op. 15, *for soli, mixed chorus, orchestra, and reciter*, a project of the Janáček Academy of Performing Arts, Faculty of Music, in Brno.

About the author:

Karla Hartl is founder and chair of the *Kapralova Society*, a music society based in Toronto, Canada, dedicated to building awareness of women's contributions to musical life and to support projects that make available, in print and on compact discs, Kaprálová's music. A graduate of Charles University in Prague and the University of Toronto, Hartl has worked as Program Consultant for Status of Women Canada and more recently as Arts Consultant for the Department of Canadian Heritage. Her research on Kaprálová has been published in *Tempo* (Cambridge University Press), *VivaVoce* (Frau und Musik), *Czech Music* (Dvořák Society for Czech and Slovak Music), *Journal of the International Alliance for Women in Music*, the *Kapralova Society Journal*, and on www.kapralova.org.

MARTINŮ REVISITED THE REDISCOVERY OF A MANY-SIDED CZECH COMPOSER OF THE 20TH CENTURY

Fifty years on from the death of a composer is often a crucial test period for the durability of his work. The last living direct relatives, close friends and musical associates of the composer are departing from the scene and the work has to fend for itself “alone”. In the case of Bohuslav Martinů (and a small number of other composers) the music is passing the test, and is by no means “alone”. Thanks in part to the concentrated efforts of the Bohuslav Martinů Foundation and Institute, interest in the work of this composer is growing. Not that his compositions are yet being played as often as he and they deserve. Especially abroad, performances tend to be scattered and “one-off” occasions, which from the point of view of listeners fail to create a much needed continuity in presentation of his works. Some areas of his music – principally his stage works – are far less known than they ought to be, given their importance both in Bohuslav Martinů’s oeuvre and European music history. The 50th anniversary of the composer’s death is an ideal opportunity for the systematic promotion of Martinů and his internationally momentous legacy.

Two important jubilees provide the frame of the international project Martinů Revisited, which has been initiated by the Bohuslav Martinů Institute. The start of the project marks the already mentioned 50th anniversary of the death of the composer, who died on the 28th of August 1959 in Liestal in Switzerland, while the project will end two years from now with celebrations of the 120th anniversary

of his birth (on the 8th of December 1890 in Polička). Three years ago the Bohuslav Martinů Institute with the support of the Bohuslav Martinů Foundation approached Czech and foreign orchestras, opera houses, festivals and other concert organisers to draw their attention to these important anniversaries. The world-wide response to this appeal was one of the reasons why Karel Schwarzenberg, the Czech Minister of

martinů revisited

2009 / 50th anniversary
of the composer's death

Foreign Affairs, was asked to become the patron of the entire project. Meanwhile the government of the Czech Republic expressed its backing for the project, calling Martinů Revisited the most important cultural project of the Czech presidency of the European Union in the first half of 2009; obviously a composer who lived much of his life in several different European countries (France, Switzerland, Italy) and in the USA, has great potential as a Czech yet internationally unifying symbol.

The word “revisited” in the project title has more than one possible meaning. It has been chosen partly to emphasise the fact that Martinů has already been discovered more than once. He was first discovered in France in the 1930s, and then again in the USA where he fled from the war. In the last years of his life, however, he found himself in a difficult political and cultural situation. As the Iron Curtain came down between West and East, Martinů became almost overnight a foreigner in both, while in music this was the period of the rapid rise of the “Darmstadt avant-garde” which unfairly condemned all Neo-Classical music as the artistic counterpart to political totalitarianism. As a result, not just the music of Bohuslav Martinů, but also that of his most important contemporaries such as Albert Roussel, Arthur Honegger, Francis Poulenc, Darius Milhaud and others virtually vanished from concert podiums and have returned only since the end of the 20th century. Another perspective in need of revision is the view held by many of the composer’s Czech contemporaries that Martinů was not in a Czech composer in the real sense of the term, but an international composer (in the 1950s this

meant to be labelled “cosmopolitan”, and hostile to the people by the communist regime). The most striking expression of this view was probably the once widespread quip that Martinů is a “Czech dumpling in French sauce”. Anyone who quotes and passes on this view – despite Špalíček, regardless of the music of *The Miracles of Mary*, the lyricism of the slow movement of the 1st Concerto for Cello and Orchestra and other superb Martinů pieces – has unknowingly accepted the dangerously over-simplifying official aesthetic of the 1950s.

After an initial complete ban on his music in his homeland following the Communist coup in February 1948 (despite very frequent performances in the years 1945–48, it entirely disappeared from the repertoire of the Czech Philharmonic for the next five years!), Martinů started to be re-discovered from the mid-1950s. This was a time when rigid Stalinism was finally starting to relax on the political level and when Bohuslav Martinů’s *The Opening of the Wells* blazed like a meteor and performers in his homeland fell in love with it instantly. Even so, in his native country contact with the music of Bohuslav Martinů remained limited mainly to works based on Bohemian and Moravian folk poetry, while his symphonies and above all his sacred music was ignored for ideological reasons. Not only the music scene abroad, but the Czech Republic too has plenty to (re)discover in the rich and profound work of Bohuslav Martinů!

At the opening concerts of the Martinů Revisited on the 11th and 12th of December 2008 the famous Czech mezzo soprano Magdalena Kožená with the Australian tenor Steve Davislim and the Czech Philharmonic conducted by Sir Charles Mackerras will present the world premiere of



Martinů in Jan Zrzavý's Paris atelier (1924)

Three Fragments from the Opera Juliette (Dream Book), H. 253A. The composer's autograph of the piano arrangement of this central work by Bohuslav Martinů was purchased by the Bohuslav Martinů Foundation through the Institute several years ago from a German collector, while an autograph of the score emerged in the course of work on a printed edition of the work at the DILIA publishing house. Other major events of the project will include the next two years of the Prague Spring International Music Festival, which particularly for

2009 has chosen the music of Bohuslav Martinů and its European and world context as the central theme of the programme. Also important will be new productions of the operas and ballets of Bohuslav Martinů in Prague, Brno, Bratislava, Nice, Aix-en-Provence, Zurich, Lucerne, Munich, Rostock, London, Oxford, Garsington and elsewhere. Major festivals not only in the Czech Republic but also in Switzerland (Basle), France (Aix en Provence), Hungary (Budapest), England and the USA will all devote special attention to the music of Bohuslav Martinů in

his jubilee years. Among the orchestras that will be including important Martinů works in their repertoire in this period are the BBC Symphony Orchestra, the London Philharmonic Orchestra, Orquestra Sinfônica do Estado de São Paulo, the Berliner Philharmoniker, the Wiener Philharmoniker, Wiener Symphoniker, the New York Philharmonic, the Norrköping Symphony Orchestra, the Basler Kammerorchester and many others. All the Czech orchestras and opera companies are planning to include more works by Bohuslav Martinů in the 2009/10 season or even – like the Czech Philharmonic – to make them the main theme of the season. The National Museum is organising a large exhibition on the composer's life and work. The Prague and Brno National Theatre opera companies are planning productions of his major stage works. Important events are also in preparation abroad, especially in Switzerland, France, Hungary, England and the USA. Czech Centres and the City of Prague are the official partners of the project, while Czech Television and Czech Radio are the main media partners alongside music and general periodicals. The initiator and programme advisor of the project is the Director of the B. Martinů Institute in Prague, Aleš Březina, while Lucie Berná is now its international co-ordinator (up to June 2008 it was Martin Bonhard). The Czech side of the project is co-ordinated by Lenka Dohnalová at the Institute of Art – Theatre Institute. The soprano Gabriela Beňačková, the harpsichordist Zuzana Růžicková and the violinist Josef Suk have agreed to be members of the honorary committee. One of the high points of the Czech side of the project will be a music education project in June 2009 – *Špalíček* as presented by students from the Duncan Centre Conservatory, 160 children from Prague primary and secondary schools and the Prague Philharmonia conducted by Jakub Hrůša.

Prestigious international music recording companies are preparing a series of new titles to mark the Martinů anniversaries – here let

us at least mention the complete recording of the composer's music for solo violin including the double concertos from the Hyperion Records (B. Matoušek, Christopher Hogwood, Czech Philharmonic), and new recordings from Supraphon, Praga Digitals, Naxos and other labels. Many music publishers in the Czech Republic, Germany, Austria, France, England and the USA will be publishing new editions of the works of Martinů, e.g. *Three Fragments from the Opera Juliette* from the DILIA Agency, the piano *Marionettes I-III* from Editio Bärenreiter, the famous *Kitchen Revue* edited by Christopher Hogwood for the Editions Leduc, and others. After a gap of some years new books on the work of this Czech classic of 20th-century music will be coming out. In 2007 the Schott publishing house in Mainz brought out the second revised edition of the Catalogue of the Works of Bohuslav Martinů compiled by Harry Halbreich, which reflects the present state of knowledge about the composer. In 2009 Michael Crump's analytical book about Martinů's symphonies is to be published, while in the same year the same publisher, Toccata Press in London, intends to publish an English version of Iša Popelka's *Dopisy domů / Letters Home* translated by Ralph Slayton. An international musicological congress to be held as part of the Prague Spring Festival in 2009 by the B. Martinů Institute in collaboration with the department of musicology at Zurich University will be reviving (after a short break) the tradition of regular May festivals organised by the B. Martinů Institute, while other symposia are planned in Dresden and Vienna. The closing concert of the whole project will be given by the Czech Philharmonic in December 2010 again as part of the Bohuslav Martinů Days festival.

A project as extensive as Martinů Revisited is naturally constantly developing and changing and so for up-to-date information I recommend the occasional visit to the Martinů Revisited web-site at www.martinu.cz.

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THE OPEN APPROACH OF JIŘÍ KADEŘÁBEK



Composer Jiří Kadeřábek is an essentially creative man of many talents, wide interests and the unusual ability to keep aiming beyond himself. Never content to stick with what he has achieved, he is more willing than most to keep striking out into uncharted territory. It may be a bit of a cliché to say that someone is one of those young composers about whom we shall definitely be hearing a lot more. But I am certain that in Jiří Kadeřábek's case, it is fully justified.

Tell us something about the path that took you from your first "opus" pieces to your interests today.

First and foremost, I don't feel I really have any "opus pieces." On the contrary, I'm still waiting for something like that to come, and for my music to be in perfect accord with my idea of my music. That idea is itself developing, of course, but some parts of it stay the same. It's impossible to describe it in detail in words, but I can say that it includes the perfect application and mutual harmony of elements taken from music of different genres and non-musical sounds, freedom from dependency on overly explicit formal arrangement of a piece (parts, blocks, sections), and emancipation from a certain "concert" form of composition, possibly even the purely musical form.

Could you be a little more specific about your ideas - the adoption of elements from different genres could mean all kinds of things, as could an attempt to go beyond the format of the standard concert. What does it mean in your case?

From childhood I've had a quite intense active interest in art, and in writing play and film scripts,



and I even sometimes got as far as realising some of these projects with friends. As time went by, my work narrowed down to music of its own accord, which suits me best and it's probably my strongest side. But for all that, the idea of a more comprehensive approach has essentially stayed with me, and in my head I automatically work with music in a graphic way, using the methods of film editing and being very concerned with the dramatic or rather the psychological side of music – as if the different elements of a piece were characters on the stage. So using elements from music of different genres, whether in the form of direct quotes or in the form of particular principles and techniques, is just a further expansion and refinement of this

“open” approach, just like the use of all kinds of non-musical sounds, directly or indirectly – in this case mainly through spectral analysis. In my mind's eye I often see my pieces as polygons with internal side mirrors that make it possible to look at each side again and again but always from a different perspective. This is not just about purely musical relationships, but also about everything that is happening on the podium at a concert, i.e. the theatrical element too. Often when composing I quite spontaneously integrate certain theatrical, eccentric aspects into my music and it isn't unusual for me to make certain art objects related to the compositions when I'm in process of writing them – but the art objects I keep to myself.

Keeping for a moment to the field of autonomous, let's say "art" music, is there any level (technological, aesthetic, conceptual, philosophical...) that on the contrary doesn't tempt you or interest you?

I think, or at least I hope, that at the moment I don't need to define myself in an a priori negative way as against any other approach. In the past I've found too often that such definitions have in fact only meant a rejection of my own creative direction – an uncompromising look in the mirror. In 2005 when I was on a scholarship in Paris, I saw Andy Warhol's paintings in the Centre Pompidou, and they struck me as a matter of empty gesture just for effect, probably all the more so because of the great contrast with the music at the IRCAM concerts several floors below, although even at that point I was finding something sterile and as if it were canned. Four months ago, in the Palazzo Reale in Milan, I encountered some Warhol works again and just gazed at them open-mouthed. This time I felt exactly what I was actually trying to capture in my compositions. Otherwise I can say that generally I'm not tempted or interested by what I've already tried out and what I have already been through enough, i.e. the purely intuitive, spontaneous method of composing in particular. But even that may only mean that this approach is waiting for me in the future!

Without going into too much technical detail, could you tell us about the not entirely intuitive and not entirely spontaneous methods that your last answer implies?

If we leave aside the use of modality and dodecaphonic rows in my earlier pieces, which I abandoned quite quickly, this primarily refers to using computers in the creative process. From my first contact with computers (which was, by the way, quite belated, only eight years ago), I felt that here was something that interested me a lot. What appealed to me most were chance processes, the possibility of easy and precise permutations, and the exact connection of detail with the whole structure of a piece. Initially, I carried out these operations exclusively using notation programmes, simply because I didn't know anything else. But back then, I also registered an unfortunate change in my entire way of musical thinking – my compositions started to show the traditional disfiguring signs of music written on computer without a sufficient awareness of the problems and possibilities. I started to think again about the real nature of my musical ideas and about what I really wanted from the computer. Then I sorted the problems out, or at least I think so. Some years later quite a different chapter opened, thanks to my interest in IRCAM, and close exploration of concrete technologies and

The image shows a musical score for a string quartet. The tempo is marked as 104. The score is divided into four measures, each with a different time signature: 2/4, 3/4, 5/4, and 4/4. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings (f, ff, p, pp). Below the score, there are four black rectangular boxes labeled 'sample12', 'sample13', 'sample14', and 'sample15'.

109

A. Sx.

Glk.

Xyl.
Bgs

Gls.
Cymb.
Tam-t.
Sn. dr.
Tom-t.

Trgl.
L. dr.
B. dr.
Vce

Bongos

pp

ff

f

109

A. Sx.

Glk.

Xyl.
Bgs

Gls.
Cymb.
Tam-t.
Sn. dr.
Tom-t.

Trgl.
L. dr.
B. dr.
Vce

slap tone

mf

ff

ppp

mp

Xylophone

ff

Voice
sing naturally,
using the same pitch in the sax.

fp

>ppp

- tra - - - - -

Coltrascension

La Riemersione di Venezia

130

Vla.

Vc.

Tr.

ca 24"

1"

12"

slow gliss.

mp

f

mp

f

mf

ff

simile ad lib.
higher, louder and faster gradually

cut

slow gliss.

f

mp

f

mf

ff

mf

simile ad lib.
higher, louder and faster gradually

cut

track05

(<)

(<)

144

♩ = 96

Vla.

Vc.

Tr.

f

mf

pizz.

arco

pizz.

arco

pizz.

arco

pizz.

arco

"organ chord"

pieces that exploit them. IRCAM software allowed me to start using much more sophisticated methods to do all the mathematical operations, and to some extent to integrate heterogeneous elements of style or genre (especially when the integration is not explicit, but for example just a matter of a melodic or dynamic outline, mode of developing a theme and so on). I then became very excited by computer spectral analysis and the possibility of applying its results in compositions. I felt that now I had a real chance to build on my lifelong interest in non-musical, natural sounds and even in a certain sense on the music of Leoš Janáček. That sounds a bit presumptuous, I know, but up to that time the question of how to absorb the legacy of a man who was my first and probably still greatest model as a composer was something that stuck to me like a tick.

You will have to somehow find a way of parting company with Janáček...

However much it always causes smiles, especially among Janáček performers who stress the rawness, authenticity and strong emotionality of his music, I insist on seeing Janáček as one of the predecessors of the so-called spectral music. His way of treating sound (in the context of the customs of the time, obviously), his unerring feeling for its inception, course and ending, which is evident above all in his later orchestral and operatic works, shows that he had a strong interest in sound and acoustics and had superb analytical abilities. This is also clear from some of the legendary unplayable passages in his parts, which in my view imitate natural sounds or are at least strongly inspired by them – take a look at some of his commentaries such as, “play it like the wind!” I don’t want to get into hypotheses over “what would Janáček have done if he had had today’s technical resources?”, but I do believe that one can achieve a certain meaningful continuity by using these resources together with the principles of Janáček’s creative ideals. Obviously mere adoption of the characteristic marks or techniques of his music can’t lead to any good results but just to repeating what already exists and in perfect form.

We have touched on something that is very debatable in my view. Isn’t this “mimetic” approach peculiar to some spectral music concepts (I mean the analysis of recorded sounds and their instrumental re-synthesis) really just sophisticated kitsch? Isn’t it like painting a sunset from a holiday snap?

For me at the moment, it’s a way of creating natural-sounding harmonies, even if they are sometimes quite complex, using microtones and making the



combination of electronics with live instruments convincing (both elements can have the same origin and one can work with them in the same way). In any case, here we are talking about methods – whether a piece is, in the end, good as a whole is a question of something quite different, but your sensitive, anti-romantic ear definitely wouldn't want to hear it. By the way, painting a sunset from a holiday snap doesn't necessarily mean anything low-quality, in my book.

It seems to me as if what is going on here is an attempt to find some objective rationalisation for something I believe is purely aesthetic, a matter of style – I'm referring to that "naturalness" (figurative or literal) of harmonies. Even more, some moral criteria seem to be being introduced here – the notion implies the existence of some "unnatural" harmonies that then have negative ethical connotations. What makes a harmony "natural" in your ears, what does it mean and what is its value? Could you give a few examples of the kinds of sound you use in the role of "model" and what happens to them in your music?

It is a fact that the harmonies derived from spectral analysis sound familiar, and actually consonant. If you listen to *Le Partage des Eaux* by Tristan Murail, for example, where the technology of spectral analysis and re-synthesis of sounds from nature is exploited richly and almost exclusively, you just cannot deny these qualities – among others, obviously. But that doesn't imply any general criterion of value! After all, nobody is going to reproach Louis Andriessen for his dissonances and criticise the "unnaturalness" of his harmonies...

As far as my most recent pieces are concerned, what is behind them is an idea, usually non-musical or at the least not musical in the sense of concrete notes, within which I look for, or in some cases make of my own, a certain sound recording. In *Coltrascension*, for instance, I used an extract from Coltrane's free-jazz album *Ascension*, and in *Basic Prague* the bustle from places in the Old Town disfigured by the tourist business. In the case of *La Riemersione di Venezia* I teamed up the sounds of water with the concluding aria from Monteverdi's opera *The Coronation of Poppea*, and so this was actually a combination of the two approaches from the pieces I mentioned before. The score emerges on the basis of the selected "objects" from these sound sources and their spectral analysis. Some objects at the same time become parts of the piece

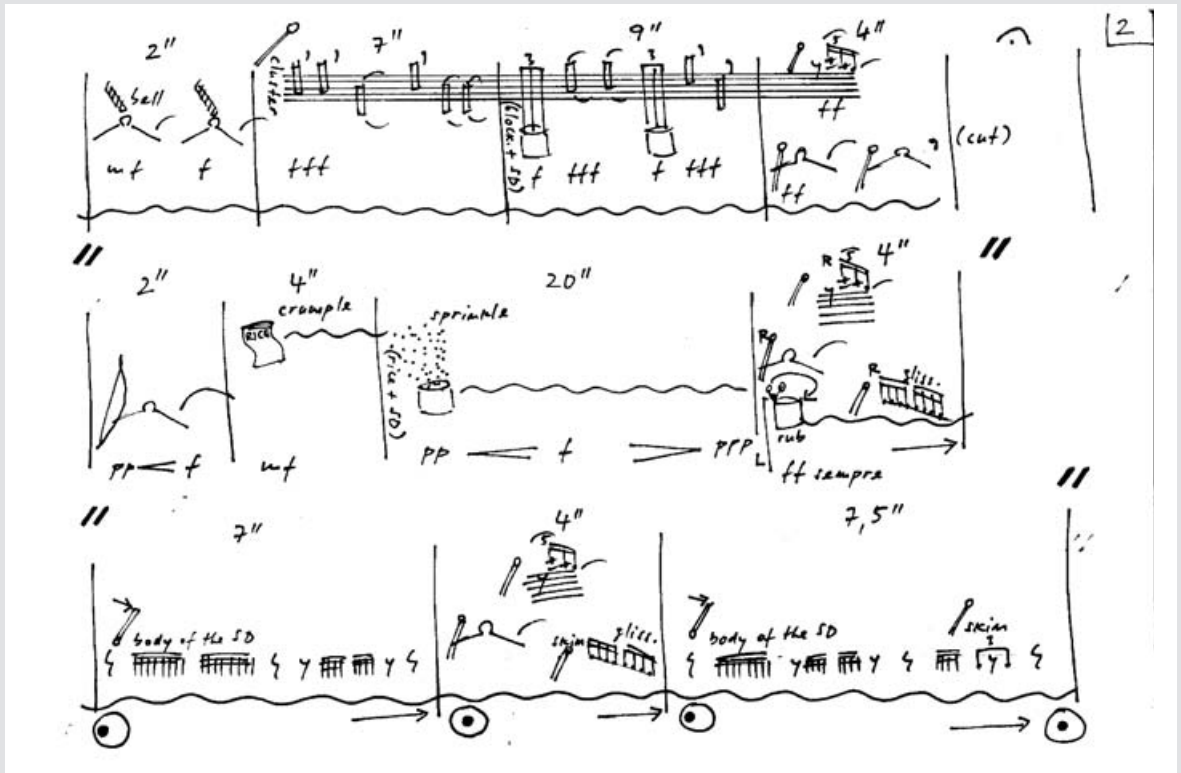
in the form of samples or sound tracks, subsequently trimmed of certain frequencies of their spectrum so that the note material from the spectral analysis can augment or accentuate them, or sometimes form a certain counterpoint to them. As I suggested in a previous answer, what is important is that in work on the piece itself the two elements should be completely equal in status and be fully subjected to what the form itself requires, in other words – intuition. Nonetheless, currently my recent encounter with pop-art has set my thinking about abandoning spectral analysis and the whole "artificial" remainder of my composition up to now, including only those "objects".

Would the objects nonetheless be transcribed for normal musical instruments? What is your attitude to purely electro-acoustic music?

From both active and passive experience, I must say that purely electro-acoustic music doesn't fully satisfy me. It's not a problem of sound, because for example the amplification of live acoustic instruments at concerts often doesn't bother me so much (with a certain type of music). It's simply the absence of the human element – the unrepeatable and immediate interpretation and the actual presence of players on the podium, i.e. the theatrical element. What is more, as a composer I like working with performers, and I get a lot of pleasure from the phase when the piece is changing under pressure of their own imaginations and a compromise is emerging (of course that only applies with performance by good players, since otherwise the process of rehearsal can get to be a travesty of the composer's idea – which is especially a problem in the case of a premiere where this idea is still being formed). So those "objects" would be once again a combination of live instruments with electronics, but all this is really just in the embryonic stage for the moment.

When writing chamber or solo pieces do you in some way consider the difficulty of what you are composing for the performer, or do you rely on the idea that (almost) anything can be played if the will is there?

Mostly I know or at least have some idea of the capabilities or special preferences of the performers that I am composing for, and so I respect them or deliberately go just a little beyond them. Sometimes I consult with performers while I'm still composing the piece. Otherwise when I'm com-



posing I'm usually surrounded by musical instruments and I test out my concrete demands on them myself. That doesn't mean I know how to play every instrument, but I try to master at least the basics of most of them and to get a practical sense of their techniques. On strings, for example, I try out difficult fingerings and work out in my mind whether a passage would be playable at high tempo. Apart from that, the instruments themselves inspire me when I am just messing about clumsily improvising or testing their sound possibilities.

I'm interested in your views on another dimension of the problem. Notation is among other things the way that a composer communicates with the performer. But often with chamber scoring (not to speak of big ensembles), the individual parts by themselves seem haphazard and nonsensical. Maybe in the end the meaning crystallises in the effect of the whole, but on first sight musicians often find parts depressing. Do you have a problem with this? Do you try to address it in any way?

I don't do anything about it and I think that it's to a large extent a traditional Czech pseudo-problem – the idea that everything that looks exaggeratedly complicated, difficult, or even worse eccentric, ex-

trovert and jumps about a lot is suspect and ought to be avoided. In the performing conditions here one sometimes has a tendency to spare players and be "considerate". I try not to give in to this conformism, because from my point of view that would mean the end of the idea and point of my role. Even here I expect performers to commit themselves to a piece to the full, just as I do. What's more, I often find that in rehearsal the difficult part not only acquires meaning as part of the whole piece, but that it gradually stops being difficult!

Currently you are studying for a doctorate at the Music Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague. What does the doctoral programme for composers involve? Tell us about your "projects".

Above all I'm working on my dissertation. Its provisional title is "Open Composition – unlimited possibilities of inspiration with the help of computer". This means that I'm looking at the field of computer-assisted composition mainly as an instrument for processing data from spectral analysis and as a means for the more sophisticated exploitation of music by others (whether in sound or note form) and for work with the graphic rep-

resentation of musical processes (graphs, curves). The dissertation will of course include a composition, but I can't say much about that yet – I'm still waiting to see how the situation turns out over the possibilities of performing it outside the school. It would be a relatively demanding multimedia project and unfortunately the Music Faculty doesn't have the funds to finance it.

My doctoral studies also involve teaching at the department; I've created the syllabus for my own course, which once again is closely connected with themes I've been intensively concerned with recently. The teaching follows the syllabus more or less – students have the chance to present their own proposals for using the techniques studied throughout the course and so they define the material in the lessons to a certain extent. One important element is an introduction to the whole field of computer-assisted composition, including listening to key works and practical familiarisation with OpenMusic, which is currently the most frequently used software in the field.

Jiří Kadeřábek

(born 1978 in Zlín) studied composition at the Jaroslav Ježek Conservatory in Prague (2002) and the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague (2006), where he is currently studying for a doctorate and teaching a course on computer assisted composition. In 2005 he spent three-months on a La Sacem scholarship in Paris, which gave him the chance to get to know the most recent composing technologies and applications. Since then he has regularly taken part in IRCAM workshops in Paris as well as in other courses and had private consultations (with Marco Stroppa, Tristan Murail, Helmut Oehring, Lasse Thoresen, Stefano Gervasoni, Adriano Guarnieri, Jeff Beer, Marek Kopelent, Martin Smolka and others). In 2008-2009, he is also an Erasmus student at the Royal Conservatoire in the Hague, the Netherlands. He has won several prizes in the Generation composing competition, has been nominated for the Gideon Klein Prize (2006) and was awarded the Czech Radio Prize (2006) and the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague Dean's Prize (2006). He works with the Czech Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Hradec Králové Philharmonic, the Těplice North Bohemian Philharmonic, the Bohuslav Martinů Zlín Philharmonic, the National Theatre in Prague, the Slovak Philharmonic Choir and chamber music ensembles such as the Rainbow Quartet, Ensemble Martinů, Ensemble MoEns, Ensemble Calliopée and Ensemble Intrasonus. Some of his works have been recorded and published by the Czech Radio and the Gold Branch Music. He writes also film and stage music.

www.jirikaderabek.com

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A MUSIC-POLITICAL CONFESSION

BOHUSLAV MARTINŮ'S MEMORIAL TO LIDICE



Bohuslav Martinů's Memorial to Lidice
Lidice had been
Martinů's pi-
Lidice
Ma rt in u
ori Martinů's Me
al to Lidice
at
Mart i

Bohuslav Martinů's Memorial to Lidice was written in 1943, after the Czech village of Lidice had been razed to the ground by the Nazis one year before. This atrocity has led many artists to create diverse works on this subject right up to the present. Martinů's piece is one of the most important and internationally best-known compositions inspired by the Lidice tragedy. Like many other works in music history – like for example Luigi Nono's *La victoire de Guernica* (1954) and Arnold Schoenberg's *A Survivor from Warsaw op. 46* (1947) – Martinů takes war crimes against civilian population in the 20th century as a central theme.

The musical quotations used throughout the piece are distinctive features of Martinů's *Memorial to Lidice*. Thus at the beginning of the work there is an allusion to the St. Wenceslas Choral from the 12th/13th century, which Martinů had quoted in some of his earlier compositions like the *Czech Rhapsody* (1918) and in the *Double Concerto* (1938). A second historically important musical quotation, which is heard near the end of the piece, is the so-called "destiny motif" from Beethoven's *5th Symphony*.

The life and work of Bohuslav Martinů after 1923

In 1923 Martinů studied under Albert Roussel in Paris. After moving from Prague to Paris, he definitively abandoned his preference and fascination for dreamy

impressionism. This was mainly because of his teacher, who had a neo-baroque or neo-classical view of music. In Paris from 1926 to 1929 the composer was attracted by jazz music, which fascinated him with its rhythmic aspects and certain resemblances to Czech or Slavonic folk songs. In France, where he lived until 1940, Martinů achieved his first success outside Czechoslovakia. The French capital became a new home for him, where he made new friends, including some fellow countrymen. Far away from their native country they were brought together by a common language and the Czech tradition in general. Paris in the 1920s was the focal point of many changes on the music scene. This included the activities of the avant-garde group known as "*Les Six*", although the latter did not appeal to Martinů,

who held a more traditional view of music. Instead, he was attracted by Stravinsky's works, which were increasingly performed in Paris at this time.

In the 1930s Martinů's musical style matured and his reputation as a composer grew. 70 new works were written between 1927 and 1932 in Paris. In the summer of 1938 Martinů stayed for the last time in his native town of Polička. In autumn of the same year he composed the *Double Concerto*. It was a piece in which he went into the historical-political circumstances of his native country, which was soon to be occupied by the Nazis. Political events in his home country made a subsequent return to Polička impossible and when the Second World War broke out, the composer immediately registered as a volunteer at the embassy of the exiled Czechoslovak govern-



Part of the Lidice Memorial

ment in London, but he was not admitted to the army. One of the works written during that period is the *Field Mass* (1939), which he dedicated to all Czech and Slovakian volunteers who were preparing side by side with the French soldiers for the fight against Nazi Germany.

In 1940 Martinů had to flee into American exile after the defeat of France by Nazi Germany. This flight was not only necessary because of his connections to the Czechoslovak government in exile, but also because his works were blacklisted in fascist Germany. In the USA Martinů had to rebuild

his reputation as a composer. He spent the war years, which on the one hand were characterized by homesickness and on the other hand by artistic successes, close to New York. The Second World War and its terrible impact on his native country did not leave him unaffected and were often reflected in his compositions. It was at that time that he composed *Memorial to Lidice*. Martinů returned to his Czech roots in the works written during these years in American exile. From this time on the Czech folk song and other quotations, such as the *St. Wenceslas Choral*, appears more frequently in his

compositions. Composing music gave Martinů the chance to return in his thoughts to his native country. The end of war in 1945 made him happy since he could now hope to return to Czechoslovakia, but because of his different teaching posts in Lennox, Princeton, New York and Rome and because of a serious accident in the USA his journey home was constantly postponed. A medical examination in Switzerland in May 1959 led to a diagnosis of an advanced stage of stomach cancer. Martinů died on 28th of August 1959 in a Swiss hospital, without ever having visited his native country since 1938.



The Lidice children's victims – a monument by Marie Uchytlová



Bohuslav Martinů was a prolific composer and left a large oeuvre of 384 compositions. His oeuvre spans a great variety of musical genres. The composer's eventful life, which was characterized by many stays abroad, was reflected in the very diverse musical and cultural influences in his oeuvre, but there is always that distinct "Slavonic tone" in Martinů's works, which reveals his close relation to his native country. It is therefore not surprising that Martinů admired the Czech composers Dvořák, Smetana and Janáček and saw himself as developing the tradition that they had established. Fundamental to Martinů's musical development was his exploration of the music of the Classics. Mozart was his principal musical ideal, and he also studied Georg Friedrich Handel's *concerti grossi* and the *Brandenburg Concertos* by Johann Sebastian Bach. For Martinů the concerto grosso was an ideal form of composition, with which he could achieve a balance between the musical themes of dynamics and emotionality. *Memorial to Lidice* is also composed in the style of the concerto grosso.

Memorial to Lidice

Adagio.

B. MARTINU.

Handwritten musical score for "Memorial to Lidice" by B. Martinu. The score is written on multiple staves, including woodwinds (Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Bassoon), strings (Violin, Viola, Violoncello, Double Bass), and percussion (Timpani, Snare, Cymbal, Triangle, Gong, Tom-tom, Anvil, Piano). The tempo is marked "Adagio." and the key signature is B-flat major. The time signature is 6/4. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, dynamics (p, f), and articulation marks. The bottom of the page features the publisher's information: "Circle Blue Print Co., Inc. New York City".

Historical background of the composition

On 28th of October 1918 the First Czechoslovak Republic was proclaimed in Prague, but soon had to face many problems. There were not only economic difficulties, but also social conflicts between the different ethnic groups. From 1918 the Germans of what came to be known as the Sudetenland constantly complained that they were subject to discrimination in the Czechoslovakian Republic and demanded political autonomy. In March 1938 the "Sudeten Crisis" came to a head and on 30th of September of the same year the Munich Agreement dictated the definitive cession of the Sudetenland to Hitler's Germany. The following October Hitler sent German troops into these territories. On 15th March 1939 the Czech capital Prague as well as the rest of Czechoslovakia was taken by the Nazis. Czech national territory was declared by Hitler to be the German *Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia* on March 16th 1939 and was consequently annexed to the *Großdeutsches Reich*.

Although Hitler declared the *Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia* to be autonomous, it was given only formal powers of self-government. The so-called *Reichsprotektor*, who was above all supposed to suppress any kind of resistance, held the real power in the occupied area. The everyday life of the

native population was therefore characterized by subjection to the arbitrary decisions of the German occupying power. As early as in October 1938 purges were carried out in the frontier area, on the one hand to demonstrate the power of the Nazis and on the other hand to nip any resistance from the Czechoslovakian population in the bud. The pressure on the Czechs culminated on September 27th 1941, when Reinhard Heydrich was appointed new *Reichsprotektor*. Only one day after taking office, Heydrich declared a state of emergency in order to combat the growing resistance and to prevent acts of sabotage. A brutal wave of arrests and executions followed.

On May 27th 1942 Jan Kubiš and Josef Gabčík – two parachutists sent by the Czechoslovak government in exile – made an assassination attempt on Heydrich, who was on his way to his official residence. The assassins injured the *Reichsprotektor* seriously with a hand grenade, without being captured. Immediately after the assassination, military law was imposed on the Protectorate and a large-scale manhunt for the culprits was initiated. Thousands of people, whether they belonged to the resistance or not, were arrested. Heydrich died of his injuries on 4th of June 1942. Kurt Daluege, the former commander of the so-called *Ordnungspolizei* (order police),

was appointed the new *Reichsprotektor*. A special unit under the administration of Horst Böhme, who was the commander of the *Sicherheitspolizei* (security police) and the *Sicherheitsdienst* (security service), was ordered to spare no efforts in finding Heydrich's murderers. Dubious evidence led Frank and Böhme to suppose that the culprits were in Lidice, and so this village became the target for exemplary retaliatory action. In the night of the 9th to 10th of June 1942 the Kladno *Schutzpolizei* (protection police) surrounded the village. When the armed forces of the *Wehrmacht* arrived and took over the outer security, the *Schutzpolizei* assaulted the small town and executed the 173 adult male inhabitants without a trial. 198 women were deported to the Ravensbrück concentration camp. Nearly all 98 children were brought to the Chelmno extermination camp (Kulmhof) and were gassed. The village was burned down and the houses were blown up. Kubiš and Gabčík were found together with other Czechoslovak parachutist agents on 18th of June in the Church of St. Cyril and St. Methodius in Prague. After a desperate battle they took their own lives in order to avoid arrest by the SS. On 24th of June 1942 the village of Ležáky suffered the same atrocious fate as Lidice because the Germans believed that the radio station used by Heydrich's assassins

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Program


MARTINŮ *Memorial to Lidice*
SMETANA *String Quartet No. 1, in E minor, "From My Life"*
MARTINŮ *(Obituary March to Lidice Court)*
DYŮŘÁK *Second Concerto for Piano and Orchestra*
DYŮŘÁK *Cello Concerto in B minor, op. 104*
SMETANA *Symphonic Poem "Blaník" from "My Country"*

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Programme of the concert including the premiere of Martinů's Memorial to Lidice

sins had been located there. All the adult inhabitants including the women were shot and the children were handed over to the German *Dienststellen*. The Nazis' plan to erase the village of Lidice and its name from the world's memory failed. Martinů's *Memorial to Lidice* and many other commemorative actions are testimony to that failure.

The genesis of Memorial to Lidice

Memorial to Lidice was written during the Second World War, when Martinů was already in American exile. The memorial composi-

tion was commissioned by the Czechoslovak government in exile in London in 1942 as a musical expression of the horror of the Lidice tragedy. Already in August of the same year, two months after the extinction of the village Lidice, Martinů wrote the first sketch of the work, but it did not satisfy him. Some months later the *American League of Composers* also asked him for such a composition, and on the 3rd of August 1943 Martinů finished the musical memorial, which he dedicated to the innocent victims of Lidice, after a comparatively short working period in Darien (Connecticut/USA). It is clear that he needed a certain

amount of time and psychological distance to produce a piece in response to the horrible events in his native country. Originally, Martinů had conceived the work as a kind of triptych, with a slow middle movement – the *Memorial to Lidice* – that would contrast with others in tempo and rhythm. The title of the musical triptych was to have been RAF, the abbreviation for the Royal Air Force, which – in my opinion – was a patriotic allusion to the resistance fighters of the Czechoslovak government in exile who had been parachuted into the *Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia* by the British Royal Air Force. Martinů abandoned this triptych concept,

however, leaving only the middle movement *Memorial to Lidice* as a one-movement composition for symphonic orchestra. The movement nonetheless has a ternary form, which reflects Martinů's preference for wideness or space with regard to the musical form of the composition. In *Memorial to Lidice* deep sadness about the massacre of Lidice is mainly expressed in the gloomy minor chords and by the diminished chords that denote pain and run through the whole work.

Musical quotations in the composition

In the Czech Republic St. Wenceslas (Svatý Václav) (ca. 907 - 935) is venerated as a patron and national saint. He is famous for having supported the spread of Christianity in early-medieval Bohemia, which had not been fully christianised at that time. He also promoted the foundation of new church buildings. Under Wenceslas there was also a strong reorientation of Christianity in Bohemia towards the Western, Latin Church rather than the Eastern Church and this had major political consequences. For example, Wenceslas had to subordinate his dukedom to the supremacy of the German Empire in order to get permission to affiliate it to the Bavarian Diocese in Regensburg. The policy of the governing duke was always criticised by the nobility and anti-German circles in the realm. A party

of politically dissatisfied members emerged, which included Wenceslas's mother and his brother Boleslav. This group decided to remove the duke by force, and on the 28th of September 929 Wenceslas was murdered by the sword of his brother on the way to morning service in Stará Boleslav. Boleslav then took charge of the dukedom and all Christian scholars, clerics and priests were expelled from the country or murdered. Yet immediately after his death, Wenceslas was worshipped as martyr by a large part of the population. This led to his canonization by Pope Alexander III. (died 1181) in 1170. His mortal remains were transferred to Prague's St. Vitus Cathedral, which became a place of pilgrimage for the whole Bohemian nation in the following centuries. Thus, even in 995 the anniversary of Wenceslas' death was celebrated as a commemoration day. Towards the end of the 11th century Wenceslas was made patron saint of Bohemia, and his cult attracted a large following even outside official church circles. During the following centuries however, the Bohemian or Czech population regarded St. Wenceslas primarily as a freedom-fighter. The Wenceslas Choral *Svatý Václav* (Saint Wenceslas) came into being in the context of the cult of Wenceslas and his canonisation in the 12th/13th century. This choral is considered the second oldest Czech ecclesiastic chant after the famous 10th century hymn *Hospodine pomiluj ny* (Lord have

mercy upon us). The St. Wenceslas Choral, of which different versions of text and melody exist, originally had three stanzas.

1. *Saint Wenceslas, Duke of Bohemia,
Our Prince, pray for us
To God and the Holy Ghost!
Kyrie eleison!*
2. *Glorious is the Kingdom of
Heaven,
Blessed is he, who enters there
To eternal life, to the bright light
To the Holy Ghost.
Kyrie eleison!*
3. *We plead for your help,
Have mercy upon us!
Comfort those who are in sorrow,
banish all evil,
Saint Wenceslas,
Kyrie eleison!*

The chant was used over the centuries not only in ecclesiastical and liturgical context, as for example at services, processions and pilgrimages. It was also sung as a battle song or war song, despite its unwarlike character. Thus Wenceslas came to be venerated both as a saint and as a brave great warrior of the Czech people. In the 15th century the Hussites even engraved the first stanza of the St. Wenceslas Choral on their shields and added a fourth stanza during the Hussite Wars:

*You are the Heir to the Czech country,
Remember your tribe,
Do not let us and our descendants go
to ruin!
Saint Wenceslas!
Christe eleison!*



Destruction of Lidice



The St. Wenceslas Choral runs through the whole *Memorial to Lidice*. Two versions of the choral from the 12th and 15th century respectively are combined to constitute the basic cells of this musical memorial. Given that from medieval times St. Wenceslas had been regarded not only as Christian martyr but primarily as highly venerated Czech patron saint of Bohemia, Martinů gives the piece a dominant patriotic character by quoting the St. Wenceslas Choral, which is one of the oldest surviving musical monuments of Czech music. The fact that the choral had increasingly been used as a battle song since the 15th century, even if its musical structure is rather calm in character suggests that its quotation in *Memorial to Lidice* can be seen as a motif of military resistance to the terror of the Nazi regime. This interpretation is supported by the fact that Martinů originally wanted to entitle the work *RAF*. It had, after all, been the Royal Air Force that had dropped the parachutists of the exiled Czechoslovak government into the occupied territories in order to support the armed resistance in the country. The idea is underlined by the fact that in 1940 Martinů's brother František had painted the portrait of St. Wenceslas on the external wall of his family house in Polička and had written beneath it the fourth stanza of the choral – “*Do not let us go to ruin*” – which was a deliberate provocation against the Nazi occupiers.

Towards the end of the piece Martinů quotes – grotesquely distorted – the succinct head-motif of Beethoven's *5th symphony*, which had gone down in music history as the “destiny motif”. In Martinů's composition the motif appears in an unambiguous mood – menacing, dark and gloomy. Earlier interpretations have regarded the Beethoven quotation primarily as a sign of victory or of freedom of the Allied forces, but this is an assumption that I consider to be based on a wrong interpretation of the initial signal of the European BBC-service.

On the 14th of January 1941 the BBC started the “*V-campaign*”, which aimed to break the morale of German soldiers and was also intended to lead the people to expect rescue by the Allies from the Nazi occupa-

tion. The letter “V”, which stands for victory, had to be translated into morse, which fits to the rhythmical motif dot – dot – dot – dash, three short beats, followed by a longer beat. This morse-code, which was played by a kettle drum, became the initial signal of the European BBC-service. C. E. Stevenson, Professor of Ancient History and member of the ministry of economic warfare, discovered after the first broadcast that the morse code for the letter “V” was rhythmically identical to the first bar of Beethoven’s *5th Symphony* and so the motif became the background music for the station. For the BBC, however, the Beethoven quotation was no sign for victory, but rather a musical motif with which the Nazis should be mocked, since it must be emphasized that Beethoven represented Germany’s advanced musical culture. This means that in my opinion it is a mistake to interpret the Beethoven motif in Martinů’s composition as a sign of freedom or peace. To sum up, it can be argued that the Beethoven quotation in *Memorial to Lidice* must be seen as “motif of fright”, and is so a strong contrast to the St. Wenceslas Choral, which runs through the whole composition. The location of the Beethoven motif towards the end of the composition, where the whole mood gradually brightens up, also gives the work a dominant warning character. Maybe it is only with the aid of the Beethoven quotation that Martinů’s work becomes a very significant musical memorial. Thus, in *Memorial to Lidice* motifs or well-known quotations from music history are combined, representing deep sorrow as well as warlike resistance and blank horror. Nevertheless the work reflects moments of hope for peace and freedom. At least it closes in a conciliatory C major.

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Vítězslava Kaprálová
April Preludes op. 13, Legend
op. 3a, Burlesque op. 3b, Five compositions for piano op. 1, Elegy for violin and piano, Sonata Appassionata op. 6, Variations sur le Carillon de l'Eglise Saint-Etienne-du-Mont op. 16, Little song for piano

Virginia Eskin - piano, Stephanie Chase - violin.

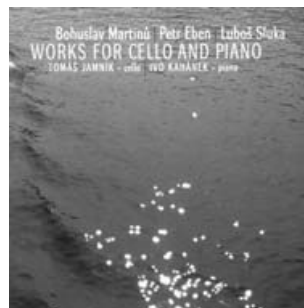
Production: Susan Napodano Del-Giorno. Text: Eng. Recorded: July 2007, The Performing Arts Center, New York. Released: 2008. TT: 64:31. DDD. 1 CD Koch Records KIC-CD-7742.

It is not so long ago that **Vítězslava Kaprálová** (1915-1940) was remembered only for her intimate association with Bohuslav Martinů and a tragically short life. Her music was not only sporadically performed but also seemed to be destined to fall into oblivion. The fact that today Kaprálová is considered one of the most remarkable Czech musical personalities of the first half of the twentieth-century has much to do with the invaluable and relentless efforts of the Kapralova Society to make the composer's legacy available to the music loving public. Since its inception ten years ago, the Society initiated and supported a great number of interesting projects that have been instrumental in rediscovering Kaprálová's considerable worth as a composer. The most important among them are the Kaprálová Edition, an initiative to publish in print Kaprálová works (often in their first edition), and the profile recordings of Kaprálová's music. Following the "discovery" profile CDs of Studio Matouš (Vítězslava Kaprálová: Portrait of a Composer, 1998) and Supraphon (Forever Kaprálová: Songs, 2003), another Kaprálová-dedicated title, this time from the American label Koch International Classics, has been just added to the Kaprálová Catalog. This new profile CD offers a representative selection of Kaprálová's piano works and complete output of her music for violin and piano. All but one work featured on the disc are first recordings. One of the surprises of this valuable disc is Kaprálová's first opus, *Five Compositions for*

Piano, composed during her studies at the Brno Conservatory. It is incredibly mature, with the composer's unique musical diction already present. In fact, I consider the closing piece of the cycle – "Funeral March" – to be one of the most remarkable compositions featured on the disc. Another work from the period is the outstanding *Sonata Appassionata op. 6*. The two-movement composition is remarkable not only for its abundance of original ideas but also for the masterly development of its form. While the first movement is in passionately conceived sonata form, the second is a cycle of variations that culminates in a grandiose fugue. Kaprálová's impressionistic *April Preludes op. 13* reflect the influence of Novák and Janáček; in her imaginative piano *Variations sur le Carillon de l'Eglise St-Etienne du Mont op. 16* one can occasionally detect elements of the musical palette of Bohuslav Martinů. Kaprálová had a natural affinity for the piano, and she continued writing for it throughout her life. In contrast, she wrote only three works for violin: *Legend* and *Burlesque op. 3* were composed when she was still a student at the Brno Conservatory, while *Elegy* from 1939, dedicated to the memory of Karel Čapek, is one of her last works. All three compositions are highly effective, with *Burlesque* being the most interesting of the three (it was also published during the composer's lifetime).

Kaprálová's music on the Koch CD is interpreted by two renowned American artists – the pianist **Virginia Eskin** and violinist **Stephanie Chase**. As Kaprálová's compositions are often technically demanding and pose various interpretative challenges, they should be rendered by highly experienced performers who are in full command of their technical and expressive skills. Both Eskin's and Chase's performances clearly demonstrate that they are entirely up to this challenge: not only are these performers equipped with superb technique but they are also able to interpret the music with a sensitivity that underscores the hallmarks of Kaprálová's compositions – the abundance of creative ideas, extraordinary sensitivity, delicate colors, and logical, rational organization of the musical material. Excellent liner notes written by Karla Hartl, so comprehensive and compact that they read as a miniature monograph, add to the attractiveness of this release. I have no doubt that it will not only please Kaprálová's enthusiasts but also many others to her following.

Věroslav Němec



Bohuslav Martinů
Sonata for Cello and Piano
no. 3 H.340, Variations on a Slovak
Folksong H.378
Petr Eben: Suita Balladica for Cello
and Piano, Luboš Sluka:
Sonata for Cello and Piano

Tomáš Jamník - cello,
Ivo Kahánek - piano.

Production: Matouš Vlčinský. Text: Eng., Ger., Fr., Cz.. Recorded: April 2008, Bohemian Music Studio, Prague. Released: 2008. TT: 69:05. DDD. 1 CD Supraphon Music SU 3947-2

In the booklet for their first joint CD for Supraphon Music we find **Tomáš Jamník** (see CMQ 1/2007) and **Ivo Kahánek** (see CMQ 2/2008) walking through the streets of old Prague, and in the booklet for the second they are wandering along the Prague Embankment by the River Vltava. But this is only an external similarity. A much more important similarity is that of the programme, which is compact in its creative richness. The common cornerstone is Martinů, and if on the first CD his partners were Kabeláč and Janáček, here the partnership is even more striking in the music of Petr Eben who died last year and Luboš Sluka, eighty this year. All the pieces share a relationship to the heritage of folk music, are among the very best Czech compositions for this instrumental combination, and were written in the 1950s. It is another proof that some truly timeless instrumental music was written in this socially dark period, when many of these composers' colleagues were just churning out music glibly celebrating the bright socialist present and guaranteed radiant tomorrows. Each piece has its own distinctive style: mature in the case of Martinů, youthfully ardent and taking up the best impulses of the time (Prokofiev, Stravinsky, Janáček...) in the case of Eben and Sluka. Perhaps it is partly the better choice of compositions, but as far as instrumental unity is concerned, we can definitely hear a qualitative advance. For example, several cellists have made excellent recordings of the *Variations* and Eben. It cannot be said that Jamník is much better – he is simply different, perhaps with more chamber feel in his equal dialogue with the piano and aware of the fact that there is no need to go into ecstasies



Released: 2008. TT: 148:00. Picture format: NZSC Colour 16:9. Sound format: PCM Stereo - DTS 5.1. 1 DVD Deutsche Grammophon 00440 073 4426.

The audiovisual recording of the production of the opera *From the House of the Dead*, staged in 2007 at the festival in Aix-en-Provence and not long before in Vienna, preserves the memory of a project that was a major event and will certainly find a place in the history of opera performance. It was an exceptional meeting between three masters – the director **Patrice Chéreau**, the conductor **Pierre Boulez** – and the composer. The stirring last opera by the seventy-two-year-old Janáček, with his own libretto based on Dostoyevsky's book, was here turned into unprecedentedly complex, authentic and moving theatre. This was because the director Chéreau found a precise, skilful and congenial interpretation that was both sufficiently realistic and sufficiently stylised in its evocation of the harshness and horror of life in a prison camp under the Tsarist tyranny and the feelings of political exiles in Siberia – an interpretation that with its almost perfect understanding of the original rather bizarre and austere work overcame all the pitfalls, above all the more or less complete absence of plot. The production is a marriage of the lyrical and the rough, individual avant-garde features and expressionism with brevity and loftiness. Both in sound and picture, the hundred-minute drama presented here is the unaffected materialisation of what Janáček was trying to convey. The almost choreographically precise presentation of theatre in a theatre, the mime plays performed by the prisoners, is extraordinarily successful and faithful. The direction is detailed and full of ideas throughout the opera. The individual roles are created in a genuinely dramatic way. My only criticism is that the voices of the singers are not always perfectly recorded. The musical interpretation of the opera by the ageless Boulez, lyrical and dramatic in equal measure, might seem to take a back seat to the strong visual impact of the production, but this is an illusion. The bonuses offer some moments from the rehearsal of the production. This provides a unique insight into the work of the director. The nineteen-minute footage of the director working with the tenor **John Mark Ainsley**, with a great deal of thought put in on both



sides, confirms that this soloist's realistic interpretation of the sick Skuratov is the high point of the production.

A quarter century ago, the same director and conductor created a now legendary production of Wagner's tetralogy *The Ring of the Nibelung* at Bayreuth. Especially in view of the fact that Chéreau and Boulez have got together again in a creative project after so long an interval and that they were basically encountering Janáček's stage legacy for the first time, the expressively urgent result is almost incredibly empathic. For its brilliance of invention and high standard of craftsmanship, and for perfect visualisation, the recording deserves high praise both as major feat of recording and as the production that it records.

Petr Veber

Antonín Dvořák Stabat Mater Original Version

Alexandra Coku – soprano, Renata Pokupic – alto, Pavol Breslik – tenor, Markus Butter – bass, Brigitte Engerer – piano, Accentus, Laurence Equilbey – conductor. Production: Didier Martin.

Text: Fr., Eng. Recorded: July 2007, Cité de la musique, Paříž. Released: 2008. TT: 60:00. DDD. 1 CD Naive V 5091.

This ought to be the event of the year for Czech discophiles and admirers of Dvořák's music. After all, his *Stabat Mater* is one of the most beautiful and spiritual in world literature and **Miroslav Srnka's** musicologically brilliant critical revision of the original version of 1876 had been crying out for a recording. The score and parts were published by the Prague branch of Bärenreiter and the recording produced with enviable speed by the exceptionally flexible French firm Naive, which has recently been expanding and developing its recording profile in a remarkable way. It entrusted the performance to young soloists and a young choir and conductor. Only the pianist was of an older generation. If you listen to the recording with a score of the usual version, you will find quite a large number of changes, but these have no fundamental affect on the overall form of the work.

over tone. The singing quality of the phrases is not the tonally ostentatious kind, heady with intoxication at the superb melodies that can be found in all the pieces. Here it is appropriate to praise the sensitivity and tone quality of Ivo Kahánek (unfortunately the booklet does not state what kind of piano and microphones were used). He has mastered the difficult piano parts at the level of an experienced chamber player of world-class qualities. (I have rarely heard such soft piano passages since the days of Jan Panenka.) There is a great deal of elegiac, meditative music on the CD, and the as it were dampened sound suits it. The recording as a whole deserves a high rating. The one question concerns the Martinů *Variations*, where perhaps both performers could have done more to "sell" the virtuosity of their parts, since technically they are more than able to meet it. I believe, however, that their restraint was a conscious decision, perhaps to be explained by the date of the composition (1959).

Probably the most praiseworthy aspect of the Jamnik – Kahánek duo with their rapidly developing profile is that they confirm in practice the value of the saying "strength lies in unity". Neither by himself may perhaps become a global star, but as a team that breathes and acts together they have immense creative potential. They are also a slap in the face for pessimists who claim that Czech performance is in decline and we are unable to produce musicians who can cope in the extremely tough competition at international level. And what is the most cheering thing of all? In this country they are not alone in the age category up to 30.

Luboš Stehlík

Leoš Janáček From the House of the Dead

Olaf Bär, Eric Stoklossa, Štefan Margita, Peter Straka, Vladimír Chmelo, Jiří Sulženko, Heinz Zednik, John Mark Ainsley, Ján Galla, Gerd Grochowski and others – singers; Mahler Chamber Orchestra, Pierre Boulez. Director: Patrice Chéreau, Film Director Stéphane Metge.

Text: Eng., Ger., Fr. Recorded: live, July 2007, Grand Théâtre, Aix-en-Provence.



The different instrumental combination nonetheless changes the character of the piece. The role of the piano is naturally different to that of an orchestra, but the absence of the marvellous colours of the orchestral instrumentation is made up for by the wonderful limpidity of the texture, a complete transparency that is enhanced by the chamber intimacy of the thirty-eight-member choir, which is less than half the strength of the choir in the usual version. The soloists were evidently chosen very carefully, and the conductor seems to have been more interested in the expression of the intimate tragedy of the biblical text than in oratorio-style monumentality. I must admit to finding the quartet of soloists chosen on this basis more appealing than the showy operatic vocal beauty of a number of other recordings. The choir was only founded after the turn of the millennium. It has a very homogenous tone, its reliable voice training is evident, and what is important – it is very musical. A tastefully designed jacket, an excellent explanatory text and a brilliant sound (it is a pity that there is no indication of the piano used in the list of recording components) puts the finishing touches to a project that I definitely recommend to the attention of all Dvořákophiles (and conductors and choirmasters too).

Luboš Stehlík

**Karel Ančerl
Bedřich Smetana: My Country,
Ludwig van Beethoven:
Violin Concerto,
film Who Is Karel Ančerl**

(Smetana, Beethoven)

**Henryk Szeryng - violin, The Czech
Philharmonic, Karel Ančerl.**

Production: Matouš Vlčinský. Text: Cz.,
Eng., Ger., Fr. Recorded: live, 1968, 1966,
Smetana Hall of the Municipal House,
Prague. Released: 2008. TT: 155:16. ADD.
1 DVD Supraphon Music SU 7015-9.

Many music-lovers are today preferring video to audio, i.e. DVDs to CDs. Let us leave on one side the question of whether this is or is not a good thing. In the case of the two most popular titles in Czech national music offered by the oldest Czech recording company Supraphon, the film material is historical. Like the earlier DVD of a 1955 TV studio version of Dvořák's Slavonic Dances conducted by Václav Talich, the **Smetana Má vlast [My Country] with Karel Ančerl** (TV recording of the opening concert at the 1968 Prague Spring) included on this DVD has suffered at the hands of time. Indeed, the substantially more recent Ančerl video recording is of very markedly worse quality even than the Talich. The reason is obvious – the Slavonic Dances were recorded on film, which is much more durable than the TV magnetic recording. The sound aspect also suffers on DVD. And so both performances sound significantly better and generally acceptable even according to today's technical standards on the CDs published earlier. Ančerl's opening festival concert has even been released in a stereo version by Radiožurnál and so it is possible (although manual synchronisation is tricky), to listen to it while watching the performance on DVD. Yet these editions are not primarily about sound quality and we are grateful for them. Both the earlier Talich and the present Ančerl film recordings are documents of immense value, and watching them in many cases replaces the need for long-winded texts seeking to characterise the artistic style and contribution of the two conductors. What is more, the Ančerl DVD came out just at the time when we were commemorating the 100th anniversary of the conductor's birth. With this project Supraphon completed its forty-three-part CD Golden Edition series. Both specialists and laymen can be grateful for the documentary by the screen-writer **Ladislav Daneš** *Who is Karel Ančerl*, made for Czechoslovak Television in 1968. Here we can admire Ančerl's noblesse and smiling serenity as he talks about his work, we can follow his rehearsals of Beethoven's Second Symphony with fascination, and regret that he did not get the chance to record more of the Beethoven repertoire. He never made a recording of the Second Symphony and this is a great pity, for his recordings of the First and Fifth are excellent, and the documentary shows that his Second would have been just as good.

Listening to Ančerl's *My Country* and **Beethoven's Violin Concerto** with **Szeryng** the writer of these lines cannot resist personal memories. It is a pity that the film of the opening concert lacks a shot of the leaders of the political "Prague Spring", who were at the time loved by practically the whole nation, and shots of the enthusiastic public response not just to presence of these men, but to Smetana's music (so relevant to the time) under Ančerl's baton. It was one of the most tumultuously applauded opening concerts that the festival has ever had (there was a similar atmosphere in 1990 on the return of Kubelík). That relief and joy in freedom – later, alas, to be so harshly cut short – was enhanced in the TV broadcast of the time by the deeply engaged and inspiring words of the presenter Jiří Pilka. The musical performance itself is a typical example of Ančerl's "down to earth" approach. *Vyšehrad* is taken at a relatively brisk tempo from the very start – it sounds like a carved commemorative stone, yet full of the pulse and energy of life. The lyrical passages are treated rather soberly – sometimes almost too pragmatically, which was typical of Ančerl. Some technically exposed places come out wonderfully – for example we rarely hear the fugato in *Meadows* as perfectly elaborated as it is here. In the orchestra, of course, we cannot overlook a number of today already celebrated philharmonic legends, with concert master **Bruno Bělič** in first place. The directorial shots and film editing, still sometimes the bane of concert films and live broadcasting today, are very problematic here as well. Illogical shots of accompanying instruments while others are obviously dominating the music are not exceptional. Many of the shots have no real rationale. In general the television direction gives an impression of randomness rather than thorough preparation. But what interests us most is Karel Ančerl and his gestures – and the film gives us this in relative abundance. I listened to Szeryng's Beethoven (recording of the *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra* at the 1966 Prague Spring festival) from the top balcony of the Smetana Hall. The evening brought me two unforgettable experiences, since before the Beethoven Ančerl presented the Czechoslovak premiere of Prokofiev's cantata *Seven, They Were Seven*. From a distance Szeryng looked very static, which as one listened to his dynamically finely worked, tonally ravishing performance, was both incredible and fascinating. On a detailed view



after all these years I find that this "static" quality was just an illusion, and that overall this was a model of superb artistically and humanly radiant co-operation between the world famous violinist and the conductor. A precious and for many unforgettable document!

Bohuslav Vitek

Jan Dismas Zelenka
Missa purificationis Beatae Virginis
Mariae D dur (1733) ZWV 16,
Litaniae lauretanae "Consolatrix
afflictorum" (1744) ZWV 151

Gabriela Eibenová, Hana Blažíková
 - sopranos, Petra Noskaiová - contralto,
 Jaroslav Březina - tenor, Tomáš Král
 - bass, Ensemble Inégal, cond. Adam
 Viktora.

Text: Eng., Ger., Fr., Cz. Recorded: September 2007, Church of Panna Marie Pod Řetězem, Prague. Released: 2007. TT: 61:27. DDD. 1 CD Nibiru 0147-2211.

Jan Dismas Zelenka is one of the greatest phenomena of the European musical Baroque. His work is so distinctive that one can recognise it by its characteristic features immediately one hears it; the composer is an outstanding melodist, works effectively with text, makes brilliant use of vivid instrumental effects, and creates a constant tension that culminates in a catharsis as powerful as in the supreme compositions of Bach or Händel. Over the last two decades several interesting CDs of Zelenka's music have come out in the Czech Republic. In 2006 the **Ensemble Inégal** added to their number with an excellent recording of the oratorio *Il serpente di bronzo*, which won an award from the French magazine *Diapason découverte* in 2007. This ensemble's second Zelenka CD – *Missa purificationis beatae virginis Mariae*, ZWV 16, of 1733, and *Litaniae lauretanae*, *Consolatrix afflictorum*, ZWV 151, which Zelenka wrote in 1744, is also remarkable.

The Ensemble Inégal's recording is a typical product of the time in which we live: a decade ago it would only have seen the light of day with considerable difficulty (a likely lack of faith on the part of potential publishers in the abilities of an ensemble that plays on period instruments) while twenty years ago it would

have been completely unthinkable. It is an expression of a creative freedom never dreamt of by pre-revolutionary musicians who were interested in early music. A closer look at the list of musicians and singers taking part in the recording reveals quite a few names of people who had no hesitation in leaving to study the performance of early music at prestigious music schools abroad and of people who despite their youth already have a notable domestic and international career behind them precisely in this field. Naturally some foreign names figure here as well – most projects of this kind in the Czech Republic are born out of collaboration with foreign musicians (especially, as in this case, players on historical wind instruments). The quality of the recording is as one would expect from the top musicians involved: the orchestra's performance is sure and pure, the phrasing clear, and the singers pay attention to the meaning and content of the text. It is appealing that the soloists (**Gabriela Eibenová, Hana Blažíková, Petra Noskaiová, Jaroslav Březina and Tomáš Král**) also sing the choral parts of the pieces; the choir is in any case composed mainly of well-known soloists and the same applies to the orchestra. There are no blind spots in the performance of the individual pieces, which is dynamic and captivating, always fresh and keeping the attention of the listener to the very last moment. It is obvious that the conductor of the recording, the artistic director of Ensemble Inégal **Adam Viktora**, has an exceptional knowledge of authentic performance practice and rich experience of work of this kind. While Ensemble Inégal was formed relatively recently (in 2000), today it is artistically mature and the precision of the rehearsal of every detail clear from its other recordings and concert performances is evident here as well.

Technically the standard of the recording is excellent. The same can be said of the painstakingly prepared sleeve-note essay by **Václav Kapsa**. Its conclusion, which underlines the fact that Zelenka's litanies are not the summarising work of an old man but in terms of style point "far ahead, or rather above, to a heaven full of stars", precisely captures the listener's impression of Zelenka's legacy as composer. Praise is also due for the list of singers and musicians who took part in the recording and the information on tuning (A = 415 Hz, after Valotti) and note sources used in the recording, since this information is not always included in CD booklets. One



might criticise only a few details: instead of the phrase "recording made using authentic instruments", it would be more accurate to say that period instruments and their copies were used. Overall, however, this CD gives an excellent impression: both Ensemble Inégal and the Prague recording company Nibiru, as well as the private sponsor of the recording, Hynek Gloser, can take credit for a perfect artistic and recording feat, which will definitely find a wide positive response among specialists and the general music public.

Michaela Freemanová

Josef Bohuslav Foerster
Violin Concerto no. 1 in C Minor op.
88, Concerto for Violin and Orchestra
in D Minor op. 104

Ivan Ženaty - violin, BBC Symphony
 Orchestra, Jiří Bělohlávek - conductor.
 Production: Jana Gonda and Matouš
 Vlčinský. Text: Eng., Ger., Fr., Cz. Re-
 corded: live, December 2007, Barbican Hall,
 London. Released: 2008. TT: 65:23. DDD.
 1 CD BBC / Supraphon Music SU 3961-2.

The first recording of Foerster's violin concertos is an event worthy of special attention thanks to the music itself, the performers, the exceptional collaboration between Supraphon and BBC Radio 3 and the logo of the Czech Ministry of Culture, which I assume means that after a long interval the state has supported a project from a purely private recording company. Naturally this is only an external attribute of the album. More important is the superb music and realisation. In his scores Foerster embodied a richly structured strong emotionalism – energy, exaltation, restlessness, passion, lyricism, meditative contemplation. All this in a difficult virtuoso packaging reflected in the fact that the first concerto was written at the prompting of Jan Kubelík and the second was premiered by Karel Hoffmann. Foerster was not just a master of instrumentation, but a great melodist. If I can be permitted a little hyperbole, I would say that for me the concertos are music poems of their own kind. They are also proof both for Czechs and the world that in the first decades of the 20th century Josef Suk was not the only synonym for the violin in late Romantic style. In this sense the project is a fundamental discovery. **Ivan Ženaty**



has found a music that very much suits his talents here. His performance is truly inspiring. For the rest, the result could hardly have been less than brilliant when conducted by **Jiří Bělohlávek**. As at the Prague Spring Festival 2008, the orchestra confirms here that thanks to its principal conductor it has found an internal harmony with Czech music. The publisher also deserves our praise. Titles such as this will give the firm a good international name. The filling of the gaps in the world catalogue, the breathing of fresh life into history, consciousness of Czech roots, a sense of continuity and refusal to expand the ordinary catalogue with recordings that cannot anyway compete with the large companies – this is a meaningful strategy for the future.

Luboš Stehlík

Eva Urbanová Best of Eva Urbanová

(Verdi, Puccini, Čilea, Mascagni,
Janáček, Smetana)

Eva Urbanová – soprano, Prague Philharmonic Choir, Jaroslav Brych – choirmaster, Choir of the National Theatre in Prague, Milan Malý – choir-master, Prague Symphony Orchestra, Jiří Bělohlávek, European Janáček Philharmonic Orchestra, František Preisler jr., Orchestra of the National Theatre Opera in Prague, Ondrej Lenárd, Oliver Dohnányi.

Text: Cz., Eng., Fr. Recorded: 1993, 2000, 2003, Smetana Hall of the Municipal House, 1995, National Theatre, Prague. Released: 2007. TT: 65:00. DDD. 1 CD Supraphon 3935-2.

Eva Urbanová is without doubt a Czech artist who merits a major retrospective CD. Her twenty-year career, in which she has performed successfully on many prestigious opera and concert podiums including La Scala in Milan and the New York Met, has prompted Supraphon to bring out this Best of Eva Urbanová CD. It is up to the tastes of each Urbanová fan individually to judge whether the selection is the best, and of course it is safe

to assume that Urbanová will be bringing us more "best" performances in the future. The only unanswered question is whether it would not have been better to use this anniversary to release a new recording that would represent the supreme singing achievements of the artist's mature collaboration with important conductors and the new roles that she has added to her repertoire since 2003. But this hasn't happened and so listeners must be content with a compilation of older Supraphon recordings of 1993, 1995, 2001 and 2003, with the sensible omission of Urbanová's Mozartian extempore for Clarton in 1994. Blocks of Italian arias from the operas of **Verdi** (Ritorna vincitor – Aida, Tu che vanita – Elizabeth in Don Carlos, La vergine degli angeli – Leonora in the Force of Destiny, Ecco l'orrido campo – Amelie), **Puccini** (Vissi d'arte, vissi d'amore – Tosca, In questa reggia – Turandot), **Čiela** (Poveri fiori – Adriana) and **Mascagni** (Voi lo sapete – Santuzza) are augmented by two tracks from Czech operas – Kostelníčka's *Co chvilá* from Jenufa and Libuše's prophecy from the 3rd act of the Smetana opera. It is good that we can compare Urbanová's vocal art with soloists in the first international category. Urbanová here confirms that she belongs to it by the firm sonorousness and colour palette of her voice and its great range of dynamics, in which the places where she rises from the middle registers in forte into subtle high registers that she then develops are particularly ravishing. Urbanová's special domain is that of the more nostalgic, touching expressive nuances, but she also shines in a dramatic Turandot. I am sure that not just her Libuše but above all her Kostelníčka are today among the very best and that in these roles there is hardly anyone to compete with her on the international scene. (Urbanová is the only singer so far to have won two Czech Thalie prizes for different interpretations of the role of Kostelníčka.)

All the same, today, when the competition in Urbanová's field of light dramatic soprano with some overlap into the dramatic is extremely strong and soloists are coming up on all sides with recordings that are innovative and imaginative in terms of repertoire in addition to showing off their vocal art, this Supraphon Best of Eva Urbanová looks more like a commercial stunt than a project with a considered artistic rationale.

Helena Havlíková

Baroque Bohemia & Beyond

(Mysliveček, Gallina, Vent, Bárta, Fiala)

The Czech Chamber Philharmonic
(artistic director Zdeněk Adam), Vojtěch Spurný – conductor, harpsichord.

Text: Eng. Recorded: May 2007, Studio Arco Diva. Released: 2007. TT: 72:00. DDD. 1 CD alto ALC 1014.

The latest instalment in the pioneering "Bohemical" series from **The Czech Philharmonic** and **Vojtěch Spurný** offers music by composers whose output reached its high point in the later 18th century. The only overlap into the 19th century is music by the latest composer on the CD, Josef Fiala, who was born in Lochovice but found work mainly in Russia and then the German Lands, especially Prussia. The album contains a whole four premiere recordings: apart from Fiala's *Sinfonie in F*, Jan Vent's *Sinfonie in Eb*, and *Sinfonie in Eb* by Jan Adam Gallina and *Sinfonie in F* by Josef Bárta, which are the most interesting works in this project. They even surpass Mysliveček's *Sinfonie in D* and *in C*. Bárta was born in Prague, but it was an engagement in Vienna and authorship of the first singspiel, *La diavolessa* (1772) that made his name. Gallina was one of the circle of musicians at the Citoliby Chateau owned by the Counts of Pacht, and he even directed the chateau capella. Vojtěch Spurný has rehearsed the orchestra with exemplary care, and so the presentation of this undemanding but melodically charming and sometimes harmonically interesting music is highly successful. Apart from the musical qualities, all credit should be given to an ensemble that has been systematically promoting the work of the composers who created the good name of Czech musicianship in the last decades of the 18th century. With this series the Czech Chamber Philharmonic is following the excellent international trend of rescuing high quality music by lesser known composers from the archive and breathing new life into it.

Luboš Stehlík

SPECIAL ISSUE ABOUT
CZECH DANCE

DANCEZONE⁰⁸

Review for contemporary dance



9.11. – 22.11. 2008

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