

Piano Talent from Brno

PORTRAIT

Jan Jiraský was born in 1973 in Vysoké Mýto. With his perfect pitch, he was already spontaneously improvising on the piano at the age of four. After graduating from the Conservatory in Pardubice he continued to study piano at the Janáček Academy of Performing Arts under Dr. Alena Vlasáková. He has attended many master classes led by famous teachers and pianists from France, Poland, Russia, the Ukraine, the USA and Israel.

At competitions at home and abroad he has achieved outstanding results. He is laureate of the 1989 Beethoven Competition and the 1990 Smetana Competition. In 1994 he won 1st Prize in the Karlovy Vary International Piano Competition and in the same year he carried off the 1st Prize and

Public Prize at the Concours International de Noyers in France. We should also mention his medal in the Maria Canals de Barcelona '93 Competition and his special prize at the 1996 European Chopin Prize in Darmstadt. He won the Gold Medal, 1st Prize and Jugoconcert Prixe at the F. Chopin International Young Pianists' Competition in Novi Sad in 1997 and also the 1st Prize and title of "Laureate" at the international pianists' competition Art of the 21st Century held in 1998 in Kiev.

Jiraský's interpretations of the work of Czech composers have been particularly well received, and he won an award from the L. Janáček Fund for his exceptional performance at the Moravian Autumn Festival in 1994. Memorable concerts have included his recital of Czech piano music in the Rudolfinum

in Prague as part of the "Hundred Years of the Czech Philharmonic" cycle, and his performance of Hummel's *Concerto in A Minor* at the 1996 Moravian Autumn Festival, which was regarded by critics as the high point of the programme. The pianist's first CD, a recording of Smetana released in 1994 by the Austrian Musica company, has drawn favourable responses both at home and abroad. He has worked with many Czech and foreign

Czech

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orchestras (the Brno State Philharmonic, the Prague Chamber Philharmonic, the Ostrava Janáček Philharmonic, the Virtuosi di Praga and others), and has already given fifteen concerts with them. His recordings are to be found in radio and television archives both in the Czech Republic and abroad. He has given solo piano recitals in twelve European countries and the USA. Jan Jiraský won the Classic Prize for 1999 in the Talent of the Year (under 30) and Performance Achievement categories.

Most of the repertoire of historic music has already been performed by hundreds of pianists, dozens of them brilliant musicians, and there are innumerable recordings. Can anyone still come up with something essentially new, or is it just a case of trying to come as close as possible to the best? Fortunately performance is always in a state of development, and so I am not afraid of some situation in which we would just be copying models. At a certain period every performer has his favourites, whose style he absorbs and combines with his own musical feeling. In fact this helps to mould his own particular style. But I'm not very keen on teachers who keep playing their students recordings by "the three best pianists in the world" saying "that's how it ought to sound". I take an individual approach to everything and everybody, perhaps because that was the way I was brought up. Every day I find something new in a piece, and that's why I can play it with involvement and interest for many years. I am sure the same principle applies over a longer period of time, too. I've managed to collect a large quantity of outstanding, interesting or curious

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recordings. It's one of my hobbies. On the other hand I do it to gain understanding, not to copy, since I regard the notated score rather than any sound recording as the basis of my interpretations.

In orchestral music, only a relatively limited set of works written up to the beginning of the 20th Century are played. Is that true for the piano as well?

Plenty of pianists today prefer to rediscover less played works, since this is more satisfying than an endlessly repeating repertoire. I'm definitely one of them.

How do you choose your repertoire?

Mostly according to what I like. But even when concert offers arrive with particular requests I have so far been fortunate with the high quality of the pieces proposed. I've never yet rehearsed a piece with distaste, or been motivated only by the commercial aspect of playing it.

There is a vast range of piano music, and you can't play everything that interests you. When I think about it now, I have to admit that at the time of my academy studies my repertoire was strongly influenced by my teacher, but she did it in a way that gave me the feeling I had chosen for myself.

What is your view of attempts at what is known as "authentic performance", now, at the turn of the millennium?

That's a difficult question. It's definitely right to try to get as close as possible to the composer's original intention. but instead of the word "authentic" that we hear so much,

I would rather use the familiar term, "historically informed". My impression is that authentic performance is essentially non-existent, and if we try to achieve it we shall never manage it perfectly. But without such efforts music would be like a Babel with everyone speaking a different language. That's why I'm always looking for information that would help me to a more faithful interpretation of a piece and I start from the most original scores. But I don't own a Mozartian wig and I don't deliberately overeat before a Bach recital. I've come to realise that the old masters were not so much interested in the specific instrument on which a piece would be played as on the art of presenting it convincingly and using the advantages of the instrument available. That's why I "shamelessly" play music going right back to the renaissance on a modern piano.

What is your relationship to later 20th-Century music as performer and listener?

Closer and closer. Whether as performer or as listener. I believe that in the future I'll develop an understanding of several composers whose work doesn't say much to me at the moment. I try not pretend enthusiasm in cases where it hasn't happened yet. That's probably because I wouldn't like it myself if people "clapped me on the back" just out of politeness.

Music has been developing for centuries. Do you have the feeling that it's "going somewhere" now?

There's no doubt that its developing now as

well. Everything is going somewhere, whether voluntarily or not. As a performer I think I unconsciously seek for a means of communication in music. And so I see contemporary music and its stylistic diversity as a picture of the contemporary world, in which people often wonder if we are not already at the end of the world.

What do you most value in your career to date, and what would you like to achieve?

I value many things. Partly the fact that I was able to study and train for a professional career under Docent Alena Vlasáková, an outstanding human being, musician and teacher, and partly that I found excellent conditions and standards of study at JAMU in Brno. If possible, I would like some time to repay the debt to my own students. At the moment the greatest joy for me is when I share that special atmosphere of community with music with the audience at my concerts, when stage-fright goes and is replaced by pleasure that I can be engaged in something so wonderful on the podium.

And finally the obligatory question...What are you doing in the near future?

This year I shall be giving concert performances of the first part of Bach's *Well-Tempered Klavier*, the complete Chopin and Debussy etudes, and concerts with orchestra and recitals at festivals in Poland and in Italy. I shall also be playing in Lisbon in the final of the European Radios Competition.

/Ivo Medek/

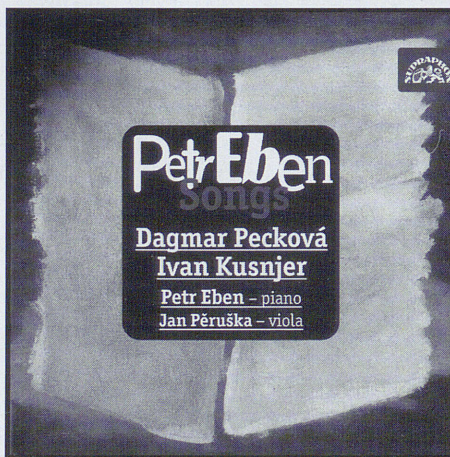
Petr Eben: Songs

CD REVIEW

(Šestero písní milostných [Six Love Songs], Písně nejtajnější [Most Secret Songs], Písně nelaskavé [Unkind Songs], Sechs Lieder nach Gedichten von Rainer Maria Rilke, Písně z Těšínska [Songs from the Těšín Region])

Dagmar Pecková, Ivan Kusnjer - voice, Petr Eben - piano, Jan Peruška - viola

Supraphon 2000, SU 3011-2 231, DDD, TT 75:09



various different sources. A year after using medieval texts in his *Six Love Songs* (1951), Eben turned to the love lyrics of his most beloved Czech authors such as J. Seifert and V. Nezval, and to foreign texts, for his new cycle entitled *Most Secret Songs*. The cycle *Songs from Těšín Region* (1952) is based on South Bohemian folksongs, and another source of inspiration was the poetry of the German poet Rilke, in the cycle *Sechs Lieder nach Gedichten von Rainer Maria*

Rilke (1961). The *Unkind Songs* together with the preceding cycle are representative of the author's mature compositional style. On this CD Eben's songs are performed by our leading singers: Dagmar Pecková (1,3,4) and Ivan Kusnjer (2,5). It is impossible not to compare the interpretations of Pecková and Kusnjer on the CD. One's pleasure in the technical and expressive perfection of the singing is weakened, in the case of Dagmar Pecková, by an excessive attempt at "opera". In contrast to Ivan Kusnjer, who bases his performance on the simplicity of the relationship of voice to piano, Pecková uses too strong a vibrato, which shifts the musical expression of the songs onto another level. Both singers must be congratulated, however, for precision of intonation and clear, comprehensible articulation. Since the whole cycle is crowned by piano accompaniment from the master himself, Petr Eben, there is indeed much to inspire universal admiration, although different listeners will find different pleasures in the performance of the vocalists.

/Sandra Bergmannová/

Interview with conductor Vladimír Válek

When the Czech Radio Symphony Orchestra is mentioned, most people immediately think of the name Vladimír Válek. This spirited principal conductor is celebrating his sixty-fifth birthday in September but still holds the post of conductor at the Czech Philharmonic, records, gives concerts, undertakes tours abroad and above all continues to radiate energy and optimism.

What are the most important criteria in drawing up a programme plan for a concert season?

We always try to make the programme as varied as possible, because we have about ten or eleven concerts in the Rudolfinum, and that is not many in all. This means that we can't do the kind



of thematic concerts that would be systematically linked up. We aim at variety, because if we were to put four new pieces on in one evening, then we would hardly be doing the composers a good turn. We therefore put our faith in having music of different genres and periods. And it works, because the tickets are already sold out.

How much do you manage to include contemporary music?

I think that we're one of the few orchestras that include it systematically, although - if I can put it this way - cautiously. Not that we're afraid of it, but we have to take account of the demands of the audience.

So that means there have to be compromises...

There have to be. To give a concrete example - if we have a composition of Ondřej Kučál (*Danse Symphonique* - author's note), and then the suite from Sergei Prokofiev's ballet *Romeo and Juliet*, then we say that this first half is a little more difficult - although Prokofiev is wonderful music and not so very difficult - and so we put Schumann in the second half. I'm saying that we ought to add something pretty. In drawing up the programme we also take account of what we've played before, and make sure that there should be German, Russian or English music as well as Czech, and of course we consider how much money we have. Then we have a plan and look for performers, and then comes the worst part - looking for jointly acceptable dates.

Ondřej Kučál is linked with the Czech Radio Orchestra as a conductor, and not just a composer...

He's a kind of renaissance man. He's a brilliant conductor, a violinist

in the Prague Chamber Orchestra, and a composer. I got to know him in České Budějovice. We recorded a CD of his Violin Concerto...

But he's not the only contemporary composer whose work you are presenting and with whom you work. I'm thinking of your artistic director Jiří Kalach?

Jiří Kalach is not only our artistic director, but my friend. He comes from the composing circle of Professor Hlobil and was in the same college year as Luboš Fišer. His *Concerto for Orchestra*, which we are presenting, was written in 1978 and in my view his form of musical expression is highly individual. With the composers that I've mentioned, there's a guarantee that we know what we're taking onto the podium.

Do you have a different approach when you conduct a piece by someone you know personally?

Yes. For example with Jiří Kalach I'll take an uncompromising line and say "Strike that out!", and he'll tell me that he doesn't like something... obviously we can have that kind of conversation. Jiří is formally precise, not to mention inventive. That is self-evident in his case. We played his *Violin Concerto* at the Biennial in Zagreb, and then *Baroque Overture* with the Nuremberg Orchestra.

What else are you presenting?

We have included Alexej Fried's *Triple Concerto for Flute, Clarinet, French Horn and Orchestra*, which I originally premièred. Alexej Fried is in my view an under-appreciated composer. He almost writes jazz, and I would compare him to Bernstein. His style is a synthesis of symphonic music and jazz, and I'm glad we can include it. My brother (flautist Jiří Válek - author's note) will be taking part. With Tomáš Secký on French horn and Tomáš Kopáček on clarinet - those are boys with a feeling for jazz. We shall also be presenting Ljadov's *Kikimora*, *The Upward Stream* by Russel Peck...

Last season you relied heavily on young soloists, partly for financial reasons. Will it be different this season?

We have to take account of finance in every season. Fortunately there are plenty of excellent performers and I think we have really managed to find interesting conductors and soloists. And we don't even try to have stars at any price, especially since we wouldn't be able to pay anyway. Concretely, I've heard - though I don't know him myself yet - that Jack Houlik on saxophone is very good. I'm delighted that we've got the conductors Grzegorz Nowak, Isaiah Jackson and Ahmed Elsaedi from Cairo, and we have Elli Jaffe here from Jerusalem... I'm glad to be able to get to know how things work in the more exotic countries.

What are the privileges enjoyed by the only radio orchestra in the Czech Republic?

One privilege is that we have a place to rehearse. We're under the wing of Czech Radio and are very grateful for it. Another privilege is our music publishers' which allows us to release several CDs each year - which in today's conditions is quite something. Just think about it... who can afford to record 3 CDs with symphonic music? Well, recording isn't really the problem. The problem is selling it afterwards. But we also have a sales outlet at Czech Radio, which is another advantage.

What do you think is the role of radio at the present time?

First of all the radio ought to educate and offer people beautiful music. That is our duty. And it shouldn't be a question of calculating how many people listen to the Vltava (classical music) radio station. It just ought to be there. I remember that during my childhood we used to listen to the radio at Sunday lunch and that was how we discovered Dvořák, Smetana... or how we found out that Alois Klíma was a conductor.

This is also the purpose of radio. And I think that it succeeds a little even today.

Today there is a great deal of talk about the crisis of classical music, the fact that few people listen to it and few people go to concerts. Do you see it that way?

I can only speak about what I see. Our concerts are sold out. So are the Czech Philharmonic's concerts, and the Prague Symphony Orchestra's concerts. I don't know, but I think that there's a lot of interest. When you consider that there are dozens of concerts in Prague every day. But you know, here we don't have that middle class of businessmen who would not only finance music, but also go to hear it. That's the class that keeps it going.

In the Autumn you're planning to go to Japan. Will you be taking some modern music there?

I have to say that it's very hard even to sell Martinů or Janáček there. They never want anything but Dvořák and Smetana. But you get a conservative audience and conservative organisers everywhere. Before that, however, we're going to Switzerland and there - they even proposed it themselves - we shall be presenting Martinů's *Sixth Symphony* and Schulhoff as well as Dvořák...

You and pianist Jan Simon won a prestigious award at Midem in Cannes for the recording of the Schulhoff piano concertos. What are you recording now?

Now we've completed recording of the *Slavonic Dances*, and we're finishing a recording of all four Brahms symphonies... then we were approached by a group of contemporary American composers. Their head McKinley hears out CD of Gershwin songs, liked it and offered to collaborate with us, which has led to concerts and recordings for MMC.

In one interview you mentioned a music centre that could have been created (although it didn't happen) from the radio's unfinished building in the Pankrác district of Prague...

It's a great shame. It's an example of how Czechs can't get together and agree on something, and everyone just works on his own little patch. Someone has a recording company but isn't interested in the problems of the orchestras which produce the music. It's the same with institutions. The Academy of Arts isn't interested in the conservatoire, the conservatoire isn't interested in what's going on in the elementary arts schools which are the real seedbeds of professionals and consumers... it's a shame. The Pankrác building could have become the Lincoln Centre of Prague. We could have had studies, concert halls, and music shops there... but we threw away the chance. Unfortunately it's a reflection on me as well - my generation. It's a disgrace. Another disgrace, which shows we are incapable of agreement, is the Hannover EXPO 2000 exhibition. In my view the Czech Philharmonic should have played there, and the National Theatre. There should have been an evening of classics, and perhaps an evening of popular entertainment. We're a nation of musicians, and have hundreds of amateur and professional ensembles. So why couldn't we try and sell it there?

And if we have always kept up with the west in something, then it's been in the arts. We even taught the Beethovens... it's astonishing that every third to fifth person among us can play music.

What would you like for your birthday?

Do I really have a birthday? You know the worst thing about them? They come every year. I envy people who were born on the 29th of February. They have it easier. What do I want? I want to be able to rely on at least a little good health. It looks as if I shall have work... and so perhaps I wish that the Czech Radio Symphony Orchestra continues to be a success.

/Veronika Žajdliková/

Forfest in Kroměříž 2000

The 11th annual festival of contemporary art with a spiritual orientation ended in the last week of July. The mosaic of artists, music and visual art at the FORFEST is very varied, and it is hard to offer even a glimpse of all that is on offer to visitors over one week in July. The most important question here is clearly a search for the deeper principles of art, and orientation to the spiritual dimension of the human being. The range of the FORFEST is of course very broad. There are performances of Christian, Jewish, Buddhist and Indian art, and indeed of different peoples and cultures from throughout the world.

From another perspective we can note that the FORFEST offers not only music by the "classics" of the 20th Century (this year including **Messiaen, Shostakovich, Hindemith, Reger** and others), but also works that are brand new. In fact it is the most contemporary, new and perhaps still unknown music that is the major focus of attention at the festival. This year the festival heard more than 30 premières! It is also a remarkable feature of the FORFEST that the composers of the music, whether from the Czech Republic or abroad, are very often present at the premières (this year: František **Emmert**, Jiří **Teml**, Petr **Pokorný**, Kurt Anton **Hubber**, Matthias **Drude**, Daniel **Kessner**, Sara **Torquati** and others). The inspiring atmosphere of the festival is always enhanced by exhibitions of pictures and the presence of artists. This year such "balm to the soul" was provided by an exhibition of new pictures (of monumental size) by Václav **Vaculovič**, installed in the Garden Atelier.

Suspicion of contemporary art is a fairly widespread phenomenon. Fortunately there are people with other ideas. Composers again and again produce new works and find listeners for them. In 1998 the American composer **Daniel Kessner** visited the FORFEST. Perhaps the town of Kroměříž really appealed to him, since two years later he returned to the FORFEST and even wrote a chamber cantata directly for the festival. The FORFEST has become an event that composers write for!

Kessner's cantata "In the Center", sets to music texts by three

authors: the poetry of the Silesian poet and mystic Angelus **Silesius**, texts from the works of the American poet Walt **Whitman**, and a poem by the contemporary Salvadorean writer Javier **Alas**. The text by Alas is the centre of the composition (the question of how it might one day be to be "in the very centre of God", from which the



Performance of Kojetín Industrial Philharmonic

cantata takes its name), and the other two authors are used to complement and deepen understanding of Alas's poem, making the search for the presence of God even more urgent.

The solo part was sung by Kristina **Valoušková**. This year she appeared in two concerts. In addition to the Kessner cantata she gave a personal recital with pieces by Miroslav **Pudlák** (*Prostosrdečné písně hřbitovní [Simple-Hearted Graveyard Songs]*), Peter Graham (*Three Wives*), Petr **Pokorný** (*Jednorozec zmizel [The Unicorn Disappeared]*) and the Israeli composer Max **Stern** (*Three Songs on Texts by Children from Terezín*). Kristina Valoušková performed with excellence in the Kessner cantata, singing the relatively difficult part with insight and a light touch, and managing texts in three different languages with ease (the texts are used in the cantata in their original, untranslated form).

The accompanying chamber ensemble was also full of first-rank musicians. Kessner's cantata was played by members of the **Moravian Quartet** with pianist Dolly Eugenio **Kessner**, the composer's wife. The piece was rehearsed in record time shortly before the concert, but this did not take away from the quality of the performance and the interest of the music. On the contrary, the message of the music made a strong impression on the audience, who will be recalling the piece and the questions it raised for many years to come. The première was conducted by the composer himself, and was undoubtedly one of the biggest events at this year's FORFEST.

The orientation of the FORFEST to the spiritual side of art was abundantly reflected in the programme this year. For me, the unforgettable experiences included, for example, the cycle of songs on texts by children from Terezín by the Israeli composer Max **Stern**, and another important event was the presentation of music by the Ostrava composer Alexandr **Hůla** (the very interesting string quartet "Confession of Faith" and *Sonata for Violin and piano* we unfortunately could hear only on recordings). There was a fascinating concert of music by Matthias **Drude**, and the composer presented, among other pieces, his concert-length *Christmas Oratorio*. This year contemporary music was also to be heard in Kroměříž churches even during services, where the works performed included pieces by Pavel **Smutný**, and a "Missa" by Zdena **Vaculovičová**. The song cycle *Andělu strážnému [To the Guardian Angel]* by František **Emmert** (on words from St. Teresa of Lisieux) was performed during service in the main Kroměříž Cathedral of St. Maurice.

The keenly awaited concert by the **Kojetín Industrial Philharmonic** offered an opportunity for us to get to know the work of this ensemble fully. It appeared at the FORFEST with a difficult and representative programme. The concert, conducted by Peter **Sammler**, took place in the Cathedral of St. Maurice and started with the meditative piece *Ponorná řeka [Subterranean River]*. The young cellist Dagmar **Kulichová** then took the solo part in a *Concerto for Cello and Orchestra*, a short but fresh and very joyful work. The next piece, *Mešní vzorky [Extracts from the Mass]* was one we had already heard at last year's festival, but at that time in a chamber form. This time we heard a reworked expanded version. The individual parts of the work, carefully named according to the parts of the catholic mass, were now linked up and almost cast in a single unbroken musical current. Even with these modifications it was ultimately still the collective work of all participating, and clearly the aim had been to deepen the unity of the work (I should mention that the music played by the ensemble is always created co-operatively, by all the performers, and authorship is collective). This time the piece was performed at a faster tempo, more courageously, and with greater confidence and power. The solo vocal roles were taken by members of the orchestra Jana **Hradilová** and Magdaléna **Koptová**.

Over more than two years of existence, the Kojetín Industrial Philharmonic has achieved constant artistic growth, gained the

interest of the public, and is developing serious ambitions for the future. It now even has as organised group of admirers, a kind of fan-club, which apparently never misses a concert. Everything suggests that the "philharmonic" has now successfully embarked on its musical career.

One shining moment at the FORFEST was the appearance of pianist Eduard **Spáčil** with a very interesting programme (Josef **Adamík**, Werner **Schulze**, Eberhard **Böttcher**, Kurt Anton **Hubber**). Adamík's forty-minute, truly imposing composition *Vzpomínky na lepší časy [Memories of Better Times]* was engaging for the honesty of its message and strong emotional charge. Behind the apparently ordinary, lucidly melodic and compositional lines we sensed something unpredictable, a kind of order hard to define, something illogical but very beautiful. If music can sometimes bring about a "harmony of soul" among the different people who came to the concert, then this was what we witnessed thanks to the music of Adamík. The music reminded me of something else as well: the ideal of fraternity, joyful and free co-operation and understanding between all people, the ideal once sung by Beethoven. In Adamík's music we could perhaps hear such a vision of the future - an ideal of the kind that Beethoven left us? And has that time already come, are our lives thus....?!

I would like to emphasise one aspect of the festival that I have noticed every year, and that is the fact that people come there not just for music, but far more in search of answers to the questions of the soul. We know - of course - that it would be folly to look for some rational knowledge in music, and that we make the best use of music by listening to it and no more. Let us not "dissect" music, let us simply listen to it. If we are perceptive, we shall perhaps learn more about the daily life "around music" from the behaviour of the artists, and the reactions of the audience. But even if we pay no attention to anything "around" the music, we shall undoubtedly come back from every concert enriched. Have we found some help for our souls? We have. But where? In that - irrational, fleeting, immaterial and illogical - music, in those "frequencies" in that formless "undulation"! How is it possible? The visitors to the FORFEST come back again and again, and seemed "to have found what they sought". Interest in the understanding of one's own soul is great. It is good that we have such an opportunity, such a music festival. What do you think?
/Jan Vrkoč/

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Ten Concerts of Orchestral Music by Czech Composers - Czech Philharmonic Series (2)

The Major Representative Cycle of Czech Music, organised by the Czech Philharmonic, passed its halfway mark on the 9th of March 2000, with a concert by the Janáček Philharmonic from Ostrava, which was led onto the podium of the Rudolfinum by its former director, the ageless Dr. Otakar Trhлік (78). I do not know why Trhлік replaced the originally advertised Christian Arming, but the change was no doubt to the benefit of what was a worthily grand performance of four pieces by contemporary composers (Jaromír Podešva - 1927, Jindřich Feld - 1925, Petr Eben - 1929 and the eldest Karel Husa - 1921). Trhлік approached the music with a painstaking attention to detail and in all four cases reaped an understanding and favourable response from the audience. (Over the last half of the cycle audiences remained roughly at the same level as in the first half, which meant that while the hall was far from full, it scarcely gaped with emptiness.) In view of the undoubted quality of the pieces, the acknowledgement was entirely deserved. Both Podešva's *3rd Symphony* of 1966, with its subtitles "Culmination", and "Pearl on the Bottom", inspired but the ideas of Milan Kundera and Bohumil Hrabal, and Husa's *Fresco for Orchestra* (1946-47) were definitely among the best pieces offered in the course of this informal festival of Czech music.

Podešva's symphony was intriguing in terms of its structure, run through with several layers of sound and colour. Both parts of the piece showed the full-blooded musicianship of the composer, who was undoubtedly influenced fifty years ago by Igor Stravinsky (the instrumentation in the first movement), and Bohuslav Martinů (kinship to the *Symphonic Fantasies*). In terms of content the symphony's message is expressed in clear, concrete and authentic form; highly effective elements include sharp contrasts of sound and the strong, flexibly "readable" and excitingly urgent melodies. Husa's *Fresco*, with a musical current at first principally carried forward by motoristic stereotype, is gradually developed from sober rhythmic pulsation to a mellow cantability, and its initial rather superficially grand character matures in graduated waves to a beautifully meditative conclusion. In this illustrious company, Jindřich Feld's *Dramatic Fantasy*, a response to the occupation of 1968 and written far from home, in Australia, struck one as testimony to the unwavering values of Feld's work. Feld's music never lacked a strong feeling from dramatic conflict, and in this piece too a rhythm typically hurrying forward alternates with soothing melodic passages. Even before 1989, Eben's symphonic movement *Vox clamantis* had won a place in the gold reserve of post-war Czech music. Its performance here only confirmed our certainty in the knowledge of the qualities we associate with Petr Eben.

The care that Otakar Trhлік devoted to rehearsal of the pieces by contemporary composers most likely limited time spent on the older scores, with negative effects. This was the case with Míča's *Symphony in Re*, which entirely lacked the necessary lightness of touch, and especially with the performance of Zelenka's motet *Chvalte Boha silného* [*Praise God the Strong*]. The bass Ivo Hrachovec had trouble making himself heard against the accompaniment, but this did not matter as much as the embarrassing and shamefully persistent dissonance in the horns. The demands of a long and very difficult programme provide some explanation, but no excuse for this kind of failure on the part of professionals, since it undermined the otherwise high standard of performance of the whole orchestra.

The seventh concert in the cycle was held on the 22nd of March and featured the Bohuslav Martinů Philharmonic from Zlín. Headed by Tomáš Hanus, the orchestra presented music by four 20th-century composers, with the addition of the *Symphony in F Minor* by

František Xaver Richter. The performance of Jaroslav Řídký's *Prelude in A Major*, op. 11, was a pleasant surprise with the drama and lucidity of its musical expression and witty instrumental stylisation. Although the not entirely balanced structure rather diminishes the initial excitement, this is a truly rewarding composition, which there is now no reason for the repertoire directors of symphonic orchestras to overlook. The "Reprise" from Milan Slavický's symphonic triptych, *Země lidí* [*Land of People*] was clear confirmation of the undoubted value of a work from the turn of the 1970s/80s. In the interweaving of voices in the first part (*Oživená krajina* [*Revived Landscape*]) it brilliantly catches the double level of Léger's picture, while the second part (*Hamletiana*) potently evokes the atmosphere of Shakespearean inspiration, and the finale (*Země lidí* [*Land of People*]) has a drama that engraves itself on memory before the arrival of the peaceful and tonic conclusion. Jaroch's symphonic poem *Stárec a moře* [*The Old Man and the Sea*] of 1961 is another piece that this reviewer has heard several times in performance. Hanus offered an interpretation that underlined the conflictual rather than the philosophic element in the music, but was a compelling demonstration of the lasting value of the work. What was probably a surprise for most of the audience was Vítězslava Kaprálová's *Vojenská* [*Military*] *Symphonietta*. Although it is clear that the young composer was still immature in many respects, the piece is remarkable for its embodiment of the idea of resolve, eloquently contrasted with very insistent lyrical passages - and the whole is proof of the extraordinary talent that Czech music has lost in Kaprálová.

The performance of the Zlín Philharmonic stands up to the most rigorous standards of criticism: the orchestra was thoroughly prepared. Naturally Tomáš Hanus had devoted the most attention in rehearsals to the 20th-century works, and so the *Symphony in F Minor* by František Xaver Richter, in terms of both composition and performance, was more or less just an addition to a programme which was definitely among the most interesting in the whole nine-concert cycle.

The eighth concert was given in the Rudolfinum (on the 5th of April) by the North Bohemian Philharmonic from Teplice, conducted by Charles Olivier Munroe, and presenting works by four important figures in modern Czech music culture. Miloslav Kabeláč, Jan Klusák, Miloslav Ištvan and Otmar Mácha have all made so convincing a contribution to the modern history of Czech music that even in decades of preference for simplified ideas of the function of music in society, they could not be entirely overlooked. From the mid-sixties Václav Smetáček was beating a path for Kabeláč's nine miniatures, *Zrcadlení* [*Mirroring*]; Mácha's *Variations on a Theme and the Death of Jan Rychlík* was warmly received by the audience at its première in 1965, as was Jan Klusák's *Harmonický Kovář* [*The Harmonic Smith*] a year later; Ištvan's *Hry* [*Games*] are from the period of the composer's maturity (1977) and here his technical mastery and craftsmanship are in the service of communication and so raise the music above mere experimentation with sound. The conductor's approach was interesting. Charles Olivier Munroe had undoubtedly devoted the most care to rehearsal of the four pieces from the 20th Century. He did not manage, either stylistically or technically, to come to terms with the Smetana overture to the opera *The Two Widows*, but he understood Voříšek's *Symphony in D Major* to perfection.

Here I shall mention only the most essential elements of the last two evenings. On the 19th of April the violist J. Peruška performed Alois Hába's *Concerto for Viola*. The most impressive and most strongly

thematically conceived part of this work from the later fifties was the free second movement, while in the other movements the solo part is very much "overlaid" by the orchestra. *Tajemství elipsy* [The Secret of the Ellipse] by Zbyněk Vostřák has stood the test of time (it was written in 1970), and literally overwhelmed by its brilliant colour and unique exploitation of technical possibilities, which are here exclusively placed in the service of the music and its message. The modest, unostentatious performance from Jan Pěruška deserves admiration and honour, and the Czech Radio Symphony Orchestra with Ondřej Kukul were right up to standard.

In the last concert (the 26th of April), the cycle's designer, Jaroslav Smolka found a place for composers who were still with us only recently - Luboš Fišer (1935-1999), Klement Slavický (1910-1999) and Jan Novák (1921-1984). Given the strength of the impression produced by Slavický's *Rhapsodic Variations* (1953), and especially when set beside the clearly momentous, masterly composition by Fišer (*Fifteen Prints from Dürer's Apocalypse*, 1965), Novák's *Philharmonic Variations* (1955-6) and Piňos's *Pocťa Praze* [In Honour of Prague] (1974-75) were somewhat overshadowed, although this is no reflection, of course, on their fundamental value.

As expected, the performance of the Brno State Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of Petr Vronský, was of a satisfactory professional standard, but it offered an exceptional experience only in the piece by Fišer.

In the course of this ambitiously conceived cycle various general criticisms have been heard, the legitimacy of which I discussed when assessing the first five concerts. Despite all reservations that can be expressed in relation to Smolka's conception of the cycle, however, there is no doubt of the meaningfulness of a project in which the Czech Philharmonic has invested considerable funds, imagination and energy. Like any selection, Smolka's is inevitably rather one-sided, but he has nevertheless managed, within the limitations set by time, to present much of what is valuable in 20th-Century Czech music and to allow direct contrast and comparison by placing so many such works together.

The cycle of Czech orchestral music was a worthy display of durable achievements. Its organisers have taken courageous risks and have fulfilled their aims with remarkable thoroughness.

/Petar Zapletal/

COMPOSER Jiří Teml at Sixty-five



It was soon clear that the jury had made an excellent decision, because this major success stimulated Teml to a full development of his composing talents. One work followed another: *The 1st Symphony*, "Lidé a prameny" [People and Springs], (1976), *Concerto for Violin* (1979), *Fantasy - Concerto for Violin and Harp* (1980), *Promenades for Orchestra* (1983), *Concerto Grosso* (in honour of Haendel, 1984), *2nd Symphony*, "Válka s mloky" [War with the Newts] (1987), *Concerto for Organ, Strings and Percussion* (1985) and so forth. These are all works that have shown the great durability of Teml's spontaneous imagination. At the same time as producing orchestral music, Teml also devoted himself systematically to composing chamber and vocal works. His *Capriccios for Strings* (1989) has become extremely popular in the best sense of that word, not only for its vivid inventiveness, but also for its attractive and instrumentally rewarding understanding of stringed instruments. The same can be said of his numerous other chamber works, such as "Vivat Stravinsky. Three Pieces for String Quartet" (1986), *3rd String Quartet* "Fantastic Scenes" (1987), *Pantomime for Flute and Piano* (1987), *Teatro Piccolo for bassoon and piano* (1982), *Three Compositions for Organ and Percussion* (1991), *Hommage à Simenon* (1993) or *Rozmarné léto* [Profligate Summer] (A Musical Joke) for Nonet and others. Teml is not, of course, the kind of composer to become stuck in a certain phase of stylistic development and go no further. On the contrary, we have been witnesses of his unending creative restlessness and systematic search for new approaches. From an initial approximate orientation to the classics of the 20th Century, Temple has come to sensitive terms with the circle of musical thought outlined by the so-called

Polish School and other similar techniques (Ligeti). Teml is, however, a convinced supporter of solid architectonic conceptions linked to a structurally firm order of composition. His more recent works clearly testify to his mastery of structure. The *3rd Symphony "Kafka"* (1994), the *2nd Concerto for Organ, Brass, Springs and Percussion* (1994), the *4th String Quartet* or the choral piece *Ave* all undoubtedly demonstrate his artistic quality. These works present Jiří Teml as a composer of unusual individuality, with unique and irreplaceable value in contemporary Czech music. Despite all their complexity of compositional technique, Teml's works are always lucid and offer the listener a clear sense of orientation. His occasional use of folklore material adds a characteristic hallmark of humour and pithy directness. In this connection, too, we can say that Teml's work for children's choirs is an example of how the artist refuses to shut himself up in the prison of a single style and contributes to the development of musicality. Teml's works always possess a "solid standard", and give the impression of being finished and complete, which is a rare quality. It is no accident that his works have frequently been chosen as compulsory pieces in all kinds of performance competitions in the field of chamber music (most recently, for example his *Diptych for Harpsichord* at the Prague Spring Competition). In Teml's jubilee year we should also remember his work as artistic director of symphonic, chamber and vocal music at Czech Radio. He has always shown a high level of tolerance, especially in relation to works by contemporary composers. At the radio he also initiated recordings of a whole series of valuable works from the Czech musical past.

/Zdeněk Šesták/

● Sixty-five this year, Jiří Teml is a very conspicuous composer on the Czech contemporary music scene. Born in Vimperk in South Bohemia (24th June 1935), he came quite late to a professional career as a composer. His original profession was accountancy, but even then he was actually engaged in music, composing in mainly popular genres. The influence of his teacher doc. B. Dušek, however, and above all his ten years of consultation study with the Prague composer Jiří Jaroch, made all the difference. It was a great surprise for the whole musical public when one of the main prizes in the anonymous Czech Music Fund competition of 1972 went to the *Fantasia Apassionata* by Jiří Teml, at that time a completely unknown composer.

Breaking the Ice - Jacqueline Bobak in Brno

Although Brno has already hosted several important exponents of new vocal music (Roswitha Trexler, Beth Griffith, Eberhard Blum, the Die Maulwerker ensemble), their appearances have always seemed to escape the notice of the Brno vocal community. For this reason Ivo Medek - the main organiser of the concert by American singer **Jacqueline Bobak** - decided to go on the offensive. He took the opportunity presented by her visit to organise a seminar with the Department of Singing at the Janáček Academy of Performing Arts, at which students had the chance to find out about the use of what are known as "extended vocal techniques" and also to hear pieces from the singer's repertoire. At the seminar Jacqueline Bobak explained that the increasingly frequent demand for special techniques in contemporary music is leading to the enlargement of the very definition of singing. On the one hand vocal effects and methods of singing never considered in traditional vocal schools are appearing, and on the other, new pieces are making use of traditional vocal techniques from non-European cultures (e.g. various styles of aliquot singing - and Jacqueline Bobak also demonstrated a special form of Tibetan singing allowing a remarkable shift of the voice into the lower registers).

The new vocal techniques are being introduced mainly by composers who are themselves singers and have considerable experience with the voice. Moreover, the current situation in America requires a much greater universality, adaptability and openness to new demands than is usual in this country. Interestingly, this broader spectrum of vocal techniques makes for greater ease in mastering the normal vocal repertoire, since it provides the singer with a much more intimate knowledge of his or her own voice. In addition, a voice trained in large interval jumps finds diatonic melody easier, and experience with different kinds of tone helps the singer to overcome intonation problems. (For example, Jacqueline Bobak recently premiered a piece that used nine different types of tone!) The American singer also performed several samples of the work of her husband, Mark Bobak, on texts by e. e. cummings, and a "composition-output" entitled *Lady Lazarus* (Daryl Runswick, 1985), which is a musical version of the famous poem by Sylvia Plath. In the discussion that followed the students expressed some fears about the possibility of damage to the voice, but it was

explained to them that the main cause of voice damage is overstrain, and voices can be as easily destroyed during classical training. The idea that current developments were moving fast in the new directions described and that the new demands would soon be appearing in this country raised other anxieties as well.... It appears that our young students of the art of Orpheus are still living very much within the limits of their specialisations (in romantic or baroque forms of singing), and are not very keen on new approaches that might distract them. Nonetheless, this "look over the village walls" (apparently the first in the history of the school) was received with interest and rewarded with warm applause. On the day of the concert (22nd May 2000), Jacqueline and Mark Bobak also attended a seminar at the Department of Composition. Here it was mainly Mark Bobak who took the floor, giving a very detailed and fascinating account of his approach to the musical setting of a text. His goal is to extract the maximum amount of information from the text, and his textual analysis provides the basis for determining the musical quantities (such as type of melody, rhythm, form and accompanying instruments). Bobak's impressive speech was convincing testimony to the advantage of the American method of teaching, in which composition and musicology are much more closely connected than is usual in this country.

The choice of the central hall on the second floor of the Pražák Palace as concert venue was a stroke of luck, confirming once again that contemporary music works better in the context of contemporary art than in the context of the traditional concert hall. An environment filled with modern art provides contemporary music with more appropriate conditions - one can even say the music and visual art explain each other. The visual art creates an atmosphere for perception of the music, and vice versa, and together they stimulate in the public a sensitivity to contemporary aesthetics, which here emerge in clearer and more comprehensible form than at chance and isolated meetings. The pictures of Martin Mainer, Vladimír Kokolia, Petr Nikl, Oldřich Tichý, Anežka Kovalová, František Hodonský and Petr Veselý, with the unconventional sculptures of Jan Ambrůz and Jiří Sobotka, created an appropriate setting for the performance by singer Jacqueline Bobak, composer and percussionist Dan Dlouhý and pianist Šárka Králová.

Dan Dlouhý started the programme with his electro-acoustic piece called *Přelety mezi čtyřmi vrcholy kruhu* [*Flights between Four Vertices of a Circle*]. There is an emphasis on acoustic colour in Dan Dlouhý's work that makes him quite a rarity among Czech composers. The piece was fascinating for its eerie use of sound and evocation of imaginary spaces, and was particularly closely in tune with the works of art on display.

Mark Bobak's composition *Bell trash whisper* (on a text by e. e. cummings), for soprano and electronics (with the composer at the mixing panel), showed both guests in the best possible light. Seldom does one have a chance to hear such an organic interaction of the vocal and electronic element, creating an effect so subtle and yet so inspired. The world of sound miraculously merged with the passing of trams and police cars, and visual pictures combined with the sound pictures in a unique and unforgettable experience... The piece that followed, Miroslav Pudlák's song cycle *Prostosrdečné písně hřbitovní* [*Simple-Hearted Graveyard Songs*] on poems by H. C. Artmann, was in striking contrast. Artmann's bizarre texts appeal directly to a "post-modernist" interpretation, and Pudlák has used them as the basis for an ironic treatment of sentimental neo-romanticism represented by the form of song and piano. The musical arrangement thus uncovers another dimension of the poems, which balance on the borders of morbidity and humour, in order to extract from them a highly individual kind of poetry. If anyone at the seminar on the expansion of vocal techniques had doubted whether the singer was able to sing "normally", he or she would have found the performance of Pudlák's cycle a very convincing answer. The quasi-romantic vocal line gave Jacqueline Bobak the opportunity to highlight the natural charm of a classically trained voice, with perfect command of pianissimi even in the highest registers. It was a true delight for lovers of bel canto. The piano part was brilliantly interpreted by **Šárka Králová**, who despite being forced to play a Clavinova - once again showed her capacity for prompt and sensitive accompaniment. She also performed in the complicated *Masque of Death*, in which she gave the songs the necessary atmosphere of unreality... Dan Dlouhý then appeared as both composer and performer in his piece *Sublimation*. It is another electro-acoustic work, this time with the live element of a theremine played in a non-standard way, and showed yet another aspect of Dlouhý's creative search. The combination of a mix of extracts from his older works and live improvisation on the theremine (one of the oldest electro-acoustic instruments, played

by moving the hand in its electromagnetic field) means a further shift in his approach to composition. Evocative expression and a boldly imaginative form are among the strong points of this work. Dan Dlouhý - on this occasion without his monk's habit and theatrical stylisation - emerged not only as a highly individual composer and brilliant performer, but as an unaffected and relaxed commentator on his own work. For me personally, this informal musicianship is more sympathetic than the pompously spectacular style of DAMA DAMA and I hope that for Dan Dlouhý, this approach represents a path he will continue to take in the future.

The final piece in the programme was a work that provided an excellent opportunity for Dlouhý to exhibit a fine musicianship that is the fruit of so much

experience, and for Jacqueline Bobak to display the range of her vocal capabilities: Ivo Medek's *Ancient Stories* are a free, approximately forty-minute cycle of short pieces for female voice and percussion. It is a work that develops a line marked out by such composers as Boris Blacher (*Abstrakte Oper*) or György Ligeti (*Aventures a Nouvelles Aventures*). Like these works, *Ancient Stories* has no concrete text and the vocal part serves as the bearer of unmediated emotional expression. Each of the short pieces is characterised but different emotional charge and represents a kind of archetype of basic emotional situations - hence the title *Ancient Stories*. The separate parts of the cycle are only loosely connected and they can be performed in any order. The concert presented a "world pre-première" of what

was only a selection from the whole, which we look forward to hearing at the "Meeting of European Music" Festival in December. Even in this incomplete form, however, the work represented the crowning glory of the concert. Jacqueline Bobak and Dan Dlouhý mastered their difficult parts perfectly, and at the end they were unexpectedly joined by Šárka Králová, who accompanied the last of the *Stories*...

In design and performance the concert was an exceptional event and the organiser Ivo Medek, who provided a laconic and witty introduction to the evening, deserves much thanks for a job well done.

The singer Helena Jankovská could be glimpsed among the relatively numerous, mixed-age and enthusiastic audience. It would appear that the ice has been broken.

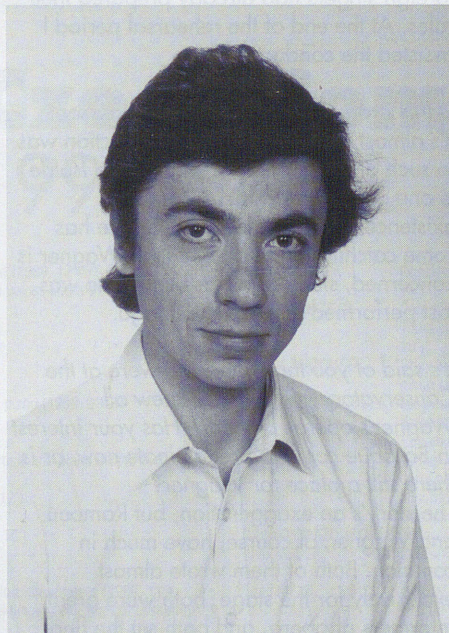
/Jaroslav Šřastný/

Tomáš Hála - Wagner and Rameau Lover

Tomáš Hála was born in Prague. In 1978-83 he studied piano (Prof. Anna Bolcková) and composition (Dr. Jindřich Feld) at the Prague Conservatory. While still a student he founded the ensemble "Madrigalists of the Prague Conservatory" which not only gave public recitals, but also made recordings for Czech Radio. In 1982 he conducted performances of his own chamber opera, *Veštvupný syn*, with members of the Prague National Opera at the Young Smetana Festival in Litomyšl and Jeunesses Musicales Days in Prague, and the opera was also recorded by Czech Radio and TV. From 1983 to 1990 he studied piano (Prof. Josef Páleníček) and conducting (Prof. Václav Neumann) at the Musical Faculty of the Prague Academy of Arts. The year 1990 saw his appointment as conductor of the opera of the South Bohemian Theatre in České Budějovice, and a year later he joined the opera ensemble of the National Theatre in Prague, where he conducted performances of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and *The Marriage of Figaro*, Verdi's *La forza del destino* and a ballet version of *Martinů's Field Mass*. In 1993 he conducted the National Theatre Opera's production of *The Magic Flute* and was also involved in productions of other operas such as Richard Strauss's *Rosenkavalier*. From 1991-96 he conducted a series of concerts by the South Bohemian Philharmonic in České Budějovice. In 1996 he won a Richard Wagner Foundation scholarship to work at the Bayreuth Festspiele, and two years later he spent some time studying at the Centre de Musique Baroque de Versailles. In the same year he conducted an opera by Francesco Conti and an evening of extracts from Mozart operas at the Valtice Festival. In January this year he conducted several concerts with the Prague Chamber Philharmonic.

Was Castor and Pollux your first major Baroque production, or had you done something similar in scope before?
While I was still a student at the Prague Academy I conducted a concert performance of Rameau's opera *La Guirlande*. Of course back then we didn't have authentic instruments at our disposal,

but at least we used Baroque strings, which allowed better phrasing in terms of style. The year before last at the Valtice Festival I presented two one-act operas by the Italian composer Francesco Conti, and we staged them in the chateau garden. In the National Theatre I was intensively



concerned with Mozart's operas: I rehearsed *The Magic Flute*, and I conducted *Don Giovanni* and *The Marriage of Figaro* many times...But I always dreamed of putting on a French baroque opera in this country, because in my view many of them are among the best ever written for the operatic stage. The fact is that owing to the French Revolution this whole musical epoch was forgotten for centuries and today we still can't get over

our astonishment at the kind of beauty that was lying under all that dust.

What did you find the biggest challenge about putting on Castor and Pollux?
The form of French Baroque opera - "tragedie lyrique" - has many typical features. They include five acts, an allegorical prologue, a French overture, ballets and so on. As compared to Italian opera, they were more systematically composed, and in order to enhance the dramatic effect, the difference between recitative and aria is blurred. We often find arias with the character of recitative and recitatives that sound like arias. One often flows imperceptibly into the other. The dramatic moments are enhanced by very strong involvement from the chorus. In Rameau's work, which is the crowning glory of the epoch, we even find large ensembles of several soloists and a chorus structured polyrhythmically, revolutionary modulations, chromatics, potent instrumentation...When I first encountered these works, I sensed a need to present them on the Czech stage as well. The Director of the National Theatre, Jiří Srstka and the Head of Opera Josef Průdek showed great interest in the idea, although the original plan was more modest - we talked about a production in a historical location outside a theatre. In the end, however, we managed to get hold of the Estates Theatre and a large orchestra of authentic instruments for the project, and leading experts on baroque theatre were invited to collaborate thanks to the French Institute in Prague. To put it in a nutshell, we weren't forced to make any major compromises and were able to produce a baroque opera with all its necessary elements, even in this country.

The choice of the opera to stage was very important. After long and deep consideration I finally chose Rameau's *Castor and Pollux* because it is a work - and by the way it remained in repertoire for maybe fifty years after it was written - which is a typical example of "tragedie lyrique" but also contains elements that point the way along the path opera was going to take in the near and distant future. The story itself is also very effective, deeply human, captivating and moving, with a great many contrasting levels. The libretto for *Castor and Pollux* is regarded as one of the best. Another important consideration was that some of the roles seemed almost "made to measure" for some of our singers.

Castor and Pollux was the fruit of Czech-French co-operation. To what extent did the production reflect the experience of the French side, and what did the Czech side bring to it?

I had the chance of a scholarship at the Baroque Music Centre in Versailles and in the Opera Bastille in Paris, where a year ago the leading French conductor Marc Minkowski was rehearsing Rameau's opera *Platée* with his ensemble. This was an opportunity for following the rehearsals in detail and consulting with this internationally acclaimed expert. A year before the première, in the course of our rehearsals, the director of our own production, Eugène Green and other French specialists in Prague organised lectures and study trips for our singers on the specifics of baroque theatre, pronunciation, ornamentation and so forth. Apart from the leading French soprano, Isabelle Poulenard, who took the role of Têlaire, almost all the other roles were taken by Czech singers. Their voices entirely suited the demands of the style, but most of them had little experience with the performance of baroque opera. I had the chance to prepare the soloists over more or less eight months, and I think we managed to get a long way in the mastery of this difficult style. Authentic interpretation also requires correct declamation of the French words. The director, who is also an expert on historical French, persuaded me that *Castor and Pollux* should be sung with period pronunciation. It is actually slightly simpler than contemporary French, but for Czechs it was still pretty difficult.

Musica Florea, our leading Baroque music ensemble, was also involved in the production. What was it like working with them?

I would like to say in advance that it is impossible to give a good performance of French baroque opera without authentic instruments. It is a question not only of phrasing, but of tuning, since without the

lower tuning it would be impossible, for example, to sing the extremely high tenor parts at all. I am delighted that today we have so many outstanding players on historic strings, and historic wind as well. Most of them are young people which studied, or are still studying their instrument and "historically authentic performance" in Holland, France or Switzerland... They make music with great commitment and love, and another remarkable thing about them is they way they keep looking for new angles on performance. I very much value their enthusiasm and application (for example, they decipher contemporary parts that are very hard to read without a murmur), which are unfortunately rather rare qualities in musical circles today. The founder and artistic director of the ensemble, Marek Štryncl, and harpsichordist Václav Lux played all the recitatives of the opera with a feeling not only for musical style, but for the dramatic moments and subtle nuances of the dialogues.

You were involved in the production of Tristan and Isolde which was recently première at the National Theatre. What exactly was your contribution?

From December I was training the soloists - mainly the Czechs, because most of the foreign singers had already prepared their roles. At the end of the rehearsal period I assisted the conductor Kout.

Is this production special for any reason?

It's almost a miracle that the production was to such a high standard. *Tristan and Isolde* is one of the most difficult operas in existence. And the National Theatre has some catching up to do as far as Wagner is concerned, since as far as I know, he was last performed here 25 years ago.

It's said of you that when you were at the Conservatory you already knew all Wagner's operas by heart. Has your interest in Baroque come to predominate now, or is there still a place for Wagner?

The story's an exaggeration, but Rameau and Wagner, of course, have much in common. Both of them wrote almost exclusively for the stage, both were great reformers of opera, and both set the final seal on a musical epoch. In their music you can feel a struggle with period conventions and clichés. With their genius, they both brought the musical style of their epochs into a "final stage", and so subsequent composers could not directly draw on them, but had to come up with something completely new.

You studied piano, conducting and composition, but at present you have been developing a reputation mainly as a

conductor. Do you still have time for composing?

Unfortunately only a really small amount, and I need quiet as well, in order to be able to really immerse myself in composing. But I strongly hope that I shall be devoting myself to it more in the coming months and years.

I gather you have been planning to compose a full-length opera for some time. How far are you on with it?

Ever since I composed the chamber one-act *Vejšťupný syn*, I've had it in mind to compose a full-length opera. The biggest problem apart from time has been the libretto, since I know from experience how important the choice of suitable text is for the writing of an opera. What makes it worse is that today there are no longer professional librettists, as there used to be in the 18th and 19th centuries. I already have a theme, and several musical sketches, but the libretto doesn't yet exist in definitive form.

What are your plans as conductor in the near future?

At the National Theatre there are plans for more Baroque projects, and I would also like to conduct a 20th-Century opera.

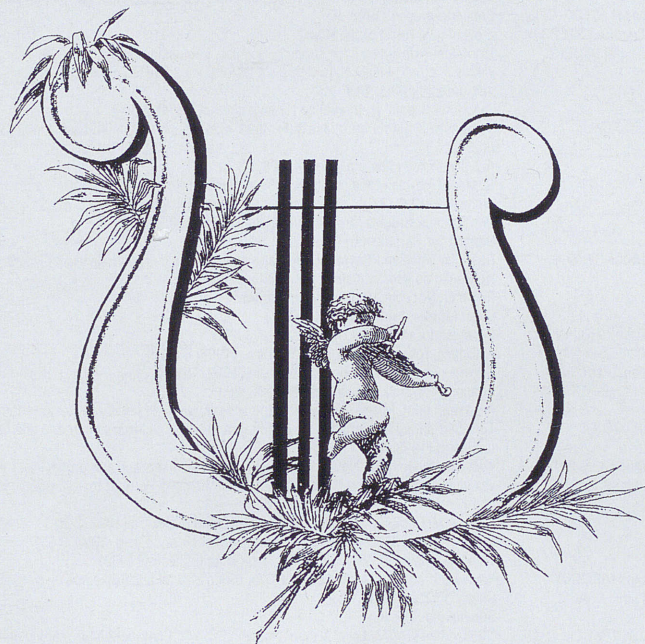
/Tereza Havelková/

Competition Results

● The winners of the 52nd Prague Spring Music Competition (6th - 15th May) were the Canadian Principal Conductor of the North Bohemian Philharmonic in Teplice, Charles Olivieri-Munroe and the Finnish cellist Panu Luosto. Second prizes were carried off by French musicians, the conductor Claire Levacher and the 18-year-old Sébastien Van Kuijk. Third prizes went to the Italian conductor Massimiliano Matesic and the German cellist Niklas Eppinger. Apart from conductor Jakub Hrůza and cellist Hana Baboráková-Shabuová - honourable mentions - the Czech candidates were unsuccessful.

● In the 7th year of the Competition for the Leoš Janáček Prize (26th - 28th May), held by the Janáček Academy of Performing Arts in Brno, the following were the winners: Libor Meisl and Věra Meislová of the Prague Academy of Performing Arts in the violin and piano duet category, and in cello and piano duet category Ewa Mizerska and Katarzyna Glensk from the Chopin Music Academy in Warsaw, followed by Pavla Capíková and Samuel Bánovec from the Brno Janáček Academy.

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Works by Czech Composers premièred in 1999 Part 2 Kop - Z

Pavel KOPECKÝ Marek KOPELENT	Domino. Piece for trumpet and electro-acoustic sound (1999, 12'45") Cantus de dilectione filiarum, for baritone, five female voices and 3 trombones (18') Per Aminko, for solo harpsichord (1998)	Martin MAREK Cosciette di roncole alla Luigi Galvani, for fl, cl, vn, vla, vic, pf, synth and tape (1999, 11')
Michal KOŠUT	Noc mi voní podzimem [In the Night I Scent Autumn] Concertino for shakuhachi and electro-acoustic music Fragment, for symphony orchestra (1998)	Zbyněk MATĚJŮ Čaroděj ze země Oz [The Wizard of Oz]. Full-length ballet for children (1998, 80') Tichá posloupnost [Quiet Succession], for flute, clarinet, viola, cello and piano (1999, 10')
Petr KOTÍK František KOVÁŘÍČEK Lubomír KOŽELUHA Jitka KOŽELUHOVÁ Ladislav KUBÍK Václav KUČERA	Sonata for Violin and Piano (1995, 14') Songs on words from folk poetry for higher voice and piano (1998, 9'10") Trio for Flute, Cello and Piano Sinfonietta (1999, 12') Satiricon de creatione. Concert monologue for male voice and piano on the author's own Latin text (1999, 14') Consonanza. Trio for 2 oboes and cor anglais (1990, 12') Spanish Rhapsody, for wind orchestra Missa in Re, for 3-part mixed choir and organ (1997, 16') Sonata for Piano no. 6 (1996)	Lukáš MATOUŠEK Stíny a odlesky [Shadows and Reflections], for flute, clarinet, violin, viola, cello and piano (1999, 16') Vlastislav MATOUŠEK Incantus, for at least 3 instruments (1999, 5'30") Suite for Guitar (1976, 6'30") Jiří MATYS Pohádka [Fairytale], for violin and piano String Trio (1998, 10') Jarní bubnování [Spring Drumming]. A melodrama with words by O. Mikulášek accompanied by the piano (1999, 3') Borověnky [Small Pines]. Instructive cycle for piano (1999, 6') Jarmila MAZOUROVÁ Jednohubky [Appetisers], for alto saxophone and piano (1999, 6') Ivo MEDEK Zvětšenina deváté podoby [Enlargement of the Ninth Likeness], for fl, cl, pf, viola, vic (1999, 13')
Eduard KUDELÁŠEK Jiří LABURDA	Duetti melancolicci II per clarinetto e fagotto (1999) Ztracený Orfeus (Lost Orpheus), for soloist on percussion instruments (1999, 11') Planeta ptáků [Planet of the Birds] II. Meditation for violin and electronics. In memory of O. Messiaen (1999, 20')	Jan MEISL Balada, version for violin, guitar and bayan (1999, 12') Trio for clarinet, cello and piano (1999, 25') Balada, version for violin and piano (1999, 8') Triple Concerto for Violin, Cello, Piano and Symphony Orchestra (1999, 25') Ad honorem Bohuslav Martinů, for solo violin (1999, 10')
Ivana LOUDOVÁ	Liturgical Songs, version for alto and saxophone quartet (1999, 8') Ricordo, for 2 oboes, bassoon, harpsichord and double-bass (1998, 8') Sbohem a sáteček [Farewell and Kerchief], for mixed choir (1998) Concerto grosso IV (1998, 16') Messagio. Symphonic prelude (1998, 10') From the most beautiful Songs of Solomon. Cantata for soprano, baritone and chamber orchestra (1998, 24')	Antonín MORAVEC Luboš MRKVIČKA Goran NAČEVSKI Jindra NEČASOVÁ Květiny [Flowers]. A cycle of songs for female choir and piano lidové texty (1992, 9'10")
Zdeněk LUKÁŠ	Double Concerto for Oboe, Bassoon and Orchestra (1999, 16') Veta za vetu [Measure for Measure]. An opera with libretto by D. Ledecová based on the play by William Shakespeare (1986) From the most beautiful Songs of Solomon. Cantata for soprano, baritone and chamber orchestra (1998, 24')	Michal NEJTEK Some Strange Bird, for oboe and clarinet (1999) Procitání [Waking Up]. 5 songs on verses by Boh. Reynek for soprano and chamber ensemble (1998, 26') Music for 18 Strings for electric guitar, violin, viola and cello (1999, 13')
Michal MACOUREK	Cembalina Drempela, for piano duo Prologos, for symphony orchestra Rozstřívání [Coming of Light], for wind quartet (1999) In Honour of Gustav Mahler, for mixed choir (1998, 3') Variations on a Medieval Song for violin and chamber string orchestra (1998, 10') 4th Wind Quartet Zimní [Wintry] (1998, 11')	Roman Z. NOVÁK Obejmí lehce, čistě, vroucně, nekonečně [Embrace lightly, purely, warmly, undingly], for flute, 2 clarinets, strings and piano (1999, 13') Černá vdova [The Black Widow]. A melodrama with piano accompaniment (1999, 2') Bůh nebo ďábel, nikdo nás nevidí? [God or Devil, Does no-one See Us?] Musical (1999) Allontanamento for flute with 3 trombones (1999, 13') Bílí ptáci [White Birds], for flute, clarinet, violin, viola, cello and piano (1999, 13') Too far... Music for flute and French horn (1999, 8') Zužování [Narrowing], for flute and violin (1999, 13')
Otmar MÁCHA		Václav NOVÁK Arnošt PARSCH
Jan MÁLEK		

Jiří PAVLICA Jaroslav PELIKÁN Vlastimil PEŠKA Elena PETROVÁ Karel PEXIDR	Missa brevis, for mixed choir, chamber orchestra and orchestra of folk instruments Concerto for Flute and Orchestra - Chorinhos (1999, 33') London Suite, for violin and piano (1998, 10') Prelude and Passacaglia for organ (9'30") Habějí Habájlín... Musical arrangement of a Hebrew biblical text from the Book of Ecclesiastes, for baritone and viola (1998, 7') Selanka [Idyll] for 2 clarinets (1998, 4') Prelude Fugue and Postlude for orchestra (1988, 18') Stella matutina, for fl, cl, bcl, vl, vla, vlc, pf and percussion (1999, 13') Stille Nacht for flute and violin. Reminiscences of the Christmas songs of Franz Gruber (1998, 8') Thanks for Every Day, (three versions - for saxophone quartet, wind quintet and string quartet) (1998, 8')	Zdeněk ŠESTÁK Miroslav ŠIMÁČEK Karel ŠIMANDL Otto ŠIMEK Pavel ŠNAJDR Miloš ŠTĚDRŮN Miloš ŠTĚDRŮN jun. František ŠTĚRBÁK Ondřej ŠTOCHL	Laetentur coeli et exsultet terra, for mixed choir a cappella (1992, 16') Symposium musicum, for 9 wind instruments (1997, 15') Act 1-3. Concerto for Tibetan bowls, percussion, electronics and video Modlitby [Prayers], four for players on percussion (1992, 11') Dances and Rhythms, for flute and harp (1998, 9') Pochvala svatého Vojtěcha [Praise of St. Adalbert]. Cantata for bass, mixed chamber choir, timpani and bells to words by K. Schulz (1996, 9'30") Chamber Symphony Music for Viola and Wind Quintet Canorum amicus, for guitar and harpsichord (1997, 8') Sedm kontinentů [Seven Continents], for flute and violin (1998, 8') Slova, věty, ticho [Words, Phrases, Silence], for soprano and piano, (1999, 9') Item jiná o marnosti světa [Item another view of the vanity of the world], for voice, flute and violin (1999, 9') Scherzetti cervetti. 7 nostalgic waltz miniatures for double-bass and piano (1999, 7') Concerto grosso (1998, 9') Zrození růže [Birth of the Rose] Troufalost [Affrontery], for soprano, 3 violas, percussion and harp (1999, 11') Jako v Jiříkově vidění [As in Georgiev's Vision], for 3 players on percussion instruments (1998, 14') Já to chci [I want it]. Infantilia for solo clarinet (1998, 6'30") Metamorfózy [Metamorphoses], for flute, clarinet, piano, double-bass and percussion (1998, 15') Ave, for mixed choir a cappella (1998, 6') Sonnets. A cycle of songs on texts by William Shakespeare, for baritone and chamber orchestra (1997, 27') Two Folklore Studies for Flute, Viola and Harp (1999, 9') Diptych for Harpsichord (1998, 9')
Alois PIŇOS Mikuláš PIŇOS Petr POKORNÝ Zdeněk POLOLÁNIK Miroslav PUDLÁK Tomáš PYKAL Jiří RAČLAVSKÝ Štěpán RAK Michal RATAJ Radek REJŠEK Artuš REKTORYS Václav RIEDLBAUCH Josef RUT Karel RŮŽIČKA Rudolf RŮŽIČKA Kateřina RŮŽIČKOVÁ Jaroslav RYBÁŘ Bohuslav ŘEHOŘ Eduard SCHIFFAUER Karel SKLENIČKA Milan SLAVICKÝ Milan SLIMÁČEK Luboš SLUKA Sylvia SMEJKALOVÁ Slávek SMIŠOVSKÝ Jaroslav SMOLKA Martin SMOLKA Pavel SMUTNÝ Dalibor SPILKA Miroslav SRNKA Pavel STANĚK Jiří STREJČ Vladimír SVATOŠ	Reichquartett, for string quartet (1998, 5') Ferenc Liszt sedí na terase a pozoruje oblohu [Ferenc Liszt sits on the terraces and watches the Horizon], for piano (1999, 4') Hudba pro Kryštofa [Music for Christopher], for solo cello (1998, 10') Znamení noci, netopýři a mlha [The Omens of Night, Bats and Mist] for bt, viola, vlc, cb and harpsichord using poems by Peter Huchel (1999, 19') Libera me, for baritone and bass (8') Osamělý píštěc [The Lonely Piper], for bass clarinet (7') Partita giubilare, for string quartet (1999) Dulce cantilenae. Three songs for baritone and piano (1998, 12') Interlude for 4 Bassoons (1998, 5') Astarot, for chamber ensemble (1999) Prostosrdečné písně hřbitovní [Simple-Hearted Graveyard Songs], for soprano and piano on texts by H. C. Artman (1999) Nokturno [Nocturne], for chamber ensemble (1999, 8') Hlasy dvou [Voices of Two], for string chamber orchestra (1999, 10') Vzdálené volání [Distant Call], for 2 clarinets and piano (1999) Převržený čas [Time Turned Upside-Down], for mezzo soprano, 2 violins, 2 cellos and percussion (1997, 10') "iemka", for cello and retuned guitar (1999, 4') Four Pieces for Clarinet and Guitar (1998, 7') Jan Hus. Composed programme for speaker, guitar and 3 male voices (1999, 01:10') S kytarou kolem světa [Around the World with a Guitar]. Composed programme for guitar accompanied by words from the author and various kinds of music (1998, 70') Hledání lásky [Searching for Love]. Composed programme for 2 male voices and guitar (1999, 70') Z tajemství egyptských [From the Egyptian Mysteries]. Composed programme for 2 male voices and guitar (1998, 70') Rudolfinská pokušení [The Rudolfine Temptation], for guitar quartet (1998, 10') Impromptu for clarinet and guitar (1999, 6') Christmas Meditation. Electronic piece (4') Quartet o hledání a nalézání [on searching and finding] (1997, 10') Sonare, for flute, piano, electronic instruments and computer (1998) Mýtus o věčném návratu [The Myth of Eternal Return], for organ (1998) Musica per organum II (1996, 28') Otčenáš [Paternoster], for chamber mixed choir and organ (1998, 3') 3rd Wind Quintet (1998, 14') Wind Quintet no. 2 Suite for 4 French horns (1998, 12') Přiblížování [Convergence] Madonna. Suite for solo organ (1998, 14') Aranea. Electro-acoustic composition (and a version for solo instrument and electro-acoustic music) (1999, 13'15") Kymbalon, for solo dulcimer and electro-acoustic sounds (ad lib.) (1997, 10'30") Suite 10 for solo flute (1999, 8') Konec novověku [The End of the Modern Age], for symphony orchestra (16'30") Dva názory na romanci [Two Views on Romance], for clarinet and cello Two Paraphrases for String Orchestra (14') Three Toccatas for Piano (1999, 12') Aerofonie II, for wind quintet (1999, 11') Hříšná toccata [Sinful Toccata] (prelude and toccata for organ) (1999, 17') ...a kytička zůstává [...And the bouquet remains]. Collage of memories for flute, cello and piano (1993, 12') Čardáš [Chardash] for solo tuba (1999, 7') Hospodine, pomiluj ny [Lord, Have mercy upon us], for 4 voices and wind quintet on an Old Slavonic text (1999, 13') Vzývání [Invocation] IV, for violin, clarinet and piano (1998, 7') Sonatina for Oboe and Piano (1997, 10') Klec pro dva slavíky [A Cage for Two Nightingales], for cello and piano (1986, 4'30") ...a je to prostě [...and it is simple], for solo baritone, choir, orchestra and audiotape (1999) Odnikud! Nikam? [From nowhere! Going nowhere?], for symphony orchestra (1997, 13') Pět pohledů do hudby [Five Views into Music], for clarinet, viola, violin, cello, double-bass and piano (1999, 8') Modlitba [Prayer], for mixed choir Symphony for Large Orchestra (1989, 24') Eight Pieces for Guitar Quartet (1999, 10') Songs without Words and Passacaglia, for oboe, bassoon, French horn, viola and double-bass (1999, 15') Psalm, for clarinet and guitar (1999, 5') Hrana za nás [Edge for Us]. A song cycle on verses by Oldřich Mikulášek for mezzo soprano (baritone) and piano (ad lib. cello) (1999, 23') Litanie [Litany] for Double-Bass and Piano (1999, 17') Miserere. Motet for mixed choir (1999, 4') Návrat [Return], for violin and piano (3rd movement of the Memoria Terrae sonata) (1999, 10') Signum. Mystery for organ in five parts (1999, 25') Via lucis. Fourteen meditations for guitar (1999, 26') Sonata dolorosa (In memoriam H.B.), for violin and piano Komorní nálady [Chamber Moods], for flute, clarinet and piano, (1985, 10') Sinfonietta camerale (1981, 18') Fugue and Prelude for Percussion (1999, 8') Etude for Saxophone and Chamber Wind Orchestra (1999, 6') Missa Orbis Factor, for mixed choir, organ and orchestra (1961, 20') Two Organ Fantasies on Old Czech Chorales (1999, 12') Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso, for cello and piano (1999, 10')	Michal TRNKA Pavel TROJAN Jan TRUHLÁŘ Antonín TUČAPSKÝ Jiří VÁLEK Monika VEJVODOVÁ Jan VIČAR Emil VIKLICKÝ Luděk VLACH Jan VRKOČ Pavel WLOSOK Zdeněk ZAHRADNÍK Evžen ZÁMEČNÍK Pavel ZEMEK	Rub a líc [Face and Reverse], for piano and electronic organ (clavinova) (1999, 8') Homunkulus [Homunculus]. A symphonic creation (1999, 30') Rub a líc [Face and Reverse], version for two pianos (1999, 8') Great Murder, for 2 pianos (1999, 2') Concerto for Violin and Orchestra (1998, 20') Astorian, for symphonic wind orchestra (1998, 8') Scherzi per armonica a bocca e chitarra (1999, 15'45") Concerto for Viola and Orchestra (1996, 26') Amo ergo sum. Mixed choir with piano accompaniment, text by K. Raine (1998, 11') 18th Symphony - Alternative for middle-range voice, children's choir and chamber orchestra (1999, 45') Kvěť zapomnění [The Flower of Oblivion], for mezzo soprano and orchestra (1999, 9') Jak venčit velrybu v Praze. [How to Walk the Whale in Prague] for symphonic wind orchestra General McCook/Generál Mekku, for large wind orchestra (1999, 2'30") Voda, voděnka [Water, Waterkins], for mixed choir and E key (1998, 3'55") Walking Whales in Washington, for large wind orchestra (1999) Rajská zahrada [the Garden of Eden], for string quartet and audiotape String Quartet (1971, 13'30") Sonatina for 2 Pianos (1996, 26') Udolí vidění [The Valley of Vision] (Isaiah 22:1-14). Chamber picture for violin, flute and piano (1999, 6'40") Three Pieces for solo double-bass Reverberations, for 4 players on percussion instruments Ajnyahita. Song cycle on texts of the Ancient Persian Legend, for soprano and organ (1999, 14') Divertimento semplice per flauto, violino e cello (1998, 12') Concertino for violin and large wind orchestra (1998, 10') Velká denní houslová hudba [Large Day Violin Music], for 11 violins, double-bass and percussion (1999, 10') Les chemins et meditations (Paths and Meditations), for large wind orchestra (1998, 11') Modrá hudba [Blue Music] for flute, clarinet, violin, viola, cello, double-bass, percussion and piano (1998, 6') In Honour of Paul Klee, for bass clarinet and harp (1999, 6'30") Bílá oblaka [White Clouds], for bass clarinet, viola, double-bass, piano and harp (1999, 3') Je t'aime, for solo baritone (1997, 2'30") Ptáčí rok [The Bird Year]. 12 miniatures for 2 violins, cello and piano (1998, 7'30")

The Editor would like to request all our friends who reprint material contained in Czech music 2000 kindly to send him either the respective copy of their publication or otherwise to inform him about the reprinting of our texts, and thanks them in advance for their courtesy in this matter.



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