czech music *quarterly*

3 19

Jiří Adámek

10th Ostrava Days

Quarter-tone trumpet

Antonín Rejcha

SYMFONICKÝ
ORCHESTR
HL. M. PRAHY
PRAGUE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

fok

PIETARI INKINEN
PINCHAS ZUKERMAN JAC VAN STEEN TOMÁŠ BRAUNER
ELISABETH LEONSKAJA VADIM REPIN LUKÁŠ VONDRÁČEK
EVGENY KISSIN RADEK BABORÁK

CHOOSE YOUR CONCERTS
FROM THE 85TH PRAGUE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
SEASON 2019/2020

www.fok.cz

czech music quarterly 3_19

DEAR READERS,

as the leaves on Petřín Hill overlooking our offices slowly start changing colour from green to brown, a sudden spike in cultural activity lets it be known that the autumn is finally here. One of the many contributions to this flurry of events is Contempuls, one of Prague's leading contemporary music festivals, in relation to which we bring you this issue's flagship text: an interview with theatre director of a musical persuasion, Jiří Adámek, whose collaboration with composer Martin Smolka will receive its Czech premiere at the festival. We also present a survey of this year's Ostrava Days biennale, with its typical barrage of premieres and performances turning late-August Ostrava into the capital of the world in terms of contemporary music.

However, we're also not forgetting our historical component, with several texts on historical sources and developments of the 16th, 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries. I'd particularly like to mention Dina Šnejdarová's illuminating exposé of the life of composer Antonín Rejcha, which she concludes with a mention that Rejcha is still, to an extent, waiting to be rediscovered. That process is already underway, as attested to by a review of the second in Ivan Ilić's Rejcha Rediscovered five-CD series, which you will find at the end of this issue.

Wishing you a busy and inspiring autumn,
Ian Mikyska

CONTENTS:

MINISTRY OF CULTURE CZECH REPUBLIC
PRAHA PRAGUE PRAGA PRAG
NADACE ČESKÝ HUDEBNÍ FOND

Czech music information centre

Czech Music Information Centre
Besední 3, 118 00 Praha 1, Czech Republic
fax: +420 257 317 424, phone: +420 257 312 422
e-mail: info@czechmusicquarterly.com
www.czechmusicquarterly.com

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

Editors: Petr Bakla, Ian Mikyska
Producer: Monika Havlová
Translation: Ian Mikyska
Graphic design: Ditta Jiřičková
DTP: HD EDIT. Print: Nová tiskárna Pelhřimov

ISSN 1211-0264 (Print), ISSN 1804-0586 (Online)
MK ČR E 7099

Price and subscription (shipping included):
Czech Republic: one issue CZK 80
subscription (4 issues) CZK 320
Europe: one issue € 10, subscription (4 issues) € 40
Overseas countries: one issue $ 12,50, subscription
(4 issues) $ 50, or respective equivalents.
Electronic subscription: $ 18 (see www.czechmusicquarterly.com)

cover: Antonín Rejcha

by Ian Mikyska

AN OFFER OF WELL ARTICULATED SILENCE
AN INTERVIEW WITH DIRECTOR
JIŘÍ ADÁMEK

Since the middle of the preceding decade, Jiří Adámek has carved out a unique position on the Czech theatre scene. Beginning with *Tiká tiká politika,* a theatre piece created in 2006, he has presented a distinctive musicalised form of theatre, making use of repetition, variation, and other compositional methods in combination with speech and a heightened bodily presence on stage. In recent years, he has repeatedly crossed over into more musical waters, most notably in collaborations with composers Martin Smolka and Michal Nejtek. We spoke about his background, his position as a pedagogue, various collaborative relationships, and the importance of faith.

I'd like to start at the beginning. You're from an artistically oriented family?
My wife likes to tease me, saying she'll forbid me from saying this – apparently I mention it in every interview (laughs). The most important thing is that my younger brother, Ondřej Adámek *(see also CMQ 2007/2)*, is a composer who lives in Berlin. He used to live in Paris and he also spent some time on residencies in Rome and Kyoto, so he's a very cosmopolitan person who has pieces performed by top-class ensembles and orchestras in the west, which he also sometimes conducts.

It's not just about his artistic success, but also about the fact that we have a very close relationship. We grew up in a family that listened to classical music a lot. My parents were not musicians, but their interest on an amateur level was enormous. It's something of a mystery how I arrived at theatre, because it wasn't present in our family at all. But where we've ended up is that Ondřej composes pieces with an excellent sense for their performative component, sometimes extending this towards staged concerts and the like, while I make theatrical works that are conceived using a musical and compositional mindset.

PHOTO: T. BARTŮŇKOVÁ

The greatest enigma is how we both arrived at a somewhat similar approach to the voice and speech, their deconstruction, melodisation, and rhythmisation, to a need to find vocal expression that is not particularly related to singing in the traditional sense (particularly the operatic manner), but also avoids informal speech. This leads to play not only with the sonic component of language, but also with meanings and their transposition. Ondřej studied abroad since he was eighteen, so we weren't that close, but we still arrived at this intersection.

You say you don't know how you arrived at theatre. Can you try and remember?
Well, my parents were always listening to classical music. Always. We didn't have a television set, we never listened to the more popular radio stations. Mostly, it was vinyl records. The only theatre they'd take us to was opera. But opera productions in the '70s were just... bad. Miserable. But that's the only way I could get to know theatrical means.

I remember writing a play when I was in third grade. Very funny. I'd love to see it now. It was spread over two notebooks and I remember the characters included

a Butcher and a Beggar – she begged, he was heartless, something like that. I have no idea where it came from. And then, in high school, I developed a passion for reading plays. That's long gone. (laughs) When I started at *DAMU (the Theatre Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague – translator's note)*, I'd read more plays than anyone else, whereas now I'm doing poorly.

A very important impulse was when me and my friends from high school started attending productions by Petr Lébl at the Na Zábradlí Theatre *(sometimes known as Theatre on the Balustrade – translator's note)*. That was an apparition.

And then you started at DAMU, at the Department of Alternative and Puppet Theatre.
DAMU is organised by year groups, and my year's leader was Ivan Rajmont, who at the time had arrived at a more purely dramatic conception of directing. *(Translator's note: the Czech theatre scene is, to a large extent, defined by a dichotomy between "dramatic" (činohra) and "alternative" theatre (alterna). This division begins, to a large extent, at DAMU, where the two central departments are the Department of Dramatic Theatre and the Department of Alternative and Puppet Theatre.)* He'd take a text, interpret it rationally, analyse it in a lot of depth and detail, and provide a reading of it. Old school, I'd say today. For him, the actor in a situation stood at the centre of everything, communicating a text in the director's interpretation.

Throughout my time at DAMU, I suffered. That's not a criticism of anyone – I just wasn't in a good place in my life; I was struggling with myself. We weren't a year group that was very adept at communication, and none of the other people who studied directing or dramaturgy are working in theatre today. The only really close person for me there was a friend who was quite special and who later disappeared from the school. They had completely different values and interests than I did. I had this burning idealism that wasn't shared by anyone there, even among the actors, that wasn't the atmosphere.

I only admitted this to myself recently, but I really like how students at DAMU are positioned in recent years. I don't know if it was just our year, but there was really no idealism. It was a reflection of the second half of the '90s, when the post-revolution ideals had faded away and everyone fought for their place pragmatically, wildly, and rudely.

So I had no idea what to do about this. I'm probably a bit strict, but I think maybe one piece I did in those four years was any good. Then I went through a puppetry period. I felt closer to that, but the real moment of saving grace came with three influences at the same time: one was a stint as assistant director to Jan Antonín Pitínský in Zlín, where I'd spend whole days with him because he had nothing to do in Zlín, so he was happy to have me there. Another was that I studied dialogical acting for a year and a half with Ivan Vyskočil at the Department of Authorial Creativity and Pedagogy at DAMU, which twenty years ago was a department that had quite a spark. And finally, I did my first internship in France. And these three things really opened up the possibilities.

Growing up listening to music, when you later discovered the possibilities of musical work in the theatre, what are the elements or approaches that entice you? What specific potential do they offer?
I wouldn't say they entice me. I just didn't have anything to hold onto. With the talent I have, the rigorous dramatic education I was given did not awaken a development of my talents. It's not about enticement, it's about necessity. To this day, I am fascinated by the amount of things that happened in a short period that opened up the possibilities.

I discovered that when I compose a staged form, not when I interpret a text and try to complete a narrative through dialogues and situations, but when I compose a staged form with its components, time, and space, that's when I feel at home, immediately, particularly when this has to do with the voice, sound, the acoustic component, the meaning of the spoken word. So it was more about uncovering where I felt free.

And as for what I'm drawn to, that's always developing. I find it most interesting, of course, to speak about what's happening now. And I'd call that a post-political direction. When the political scene began collapsing – we can say that was marked by Miloš Zeman's first victory in the presidential election and later ANO's win in the parliamentary elections – nobody could let it be, so theatres started heatedly producing quick political responses.

That had to happen and I'm glad it did, but in my experience as an audience member, most of them were considerably provisional. And this happened to me too. We did a show at the National Theatre, *New Atlantis,* which I think had many substantial attributes, but also many provisional, disordered elements it shared with these other quick reactions to the problem.

I really tried to find a response to this experience, and I discovered I was after something more universal and transcendental than an immediate political response to the immediate political situation. In the last four or five years, my personal life has turned towards spiritual questions; faith has become very important to me. This has led to a number of developments, spiritual experiences, and so on. And

The Infinity of Lists

PHOTO: MARTIN POPELÁR 2x

I realised there was no reason not to take this into account. And that leads to a quieting, a refinement – I think this happens to most artists: something develops and we don't even know how, and we only reflect upon it and define it retroactively. So I gradually discovered that what I create is a quieting and a refinement, including minimalist acting and a general narrowing down of means I work with. And that's where I see my personal politics: in the possibility of stopping, of letting things affect me in a more subtle way. In pricking up my ears and eyes, experiencing individual words. That's what all my current projects circle around.

It seems to me that these two approaches – the sonic or compositional versus the political – are in a kind of opposition. The compositional approach often leads to abstraction, whereas politics are often specific. With your work Tiká tiká politika, it makes complete sense – it's not about anything specific, but rather about linguistic structures explored through sound.
I think it has to do with both the developments of the times we live in and my own development. I don't think there has to be an opposition. One of the really important productions I did was *Europeans* in 2008. That was completely specific. The connection of form, musicality, and specifics – Bush's invasion of Iraq, the failure of the EU Constitution, and the like. But now, I'm over forty, I have three kids – everything changes. As a student, I had this enormously angry critical position towards the world I lived in. And I just don't feel it anymore. I feel things differently, I feel the beauty of things, my roots...

It also has to do with the means we use: in *Europeans*, we created what I consider a virtuosic scene to do with the arguments among MEPs, how they can't understand each other, with twenty-eight languages sounding at once. It was really funny and also a strong statement. But I can't do the same today, because I would be put in the camp of eternal critics of the EU. And I'm not part of that camp – I'm pro-EU. But being pro-EU doesn't provide good material for a strong ironic scene.

I know you once mentioned irony is no longer sufficient as a political statement.
You just can't do that today, because we're split into tribes. One thing you can do is to express your tribe's position well – and I simply can't do that. The other option is to see politics as such from a different angle than those adopted by the tribes. I therefore feel closer to an offer of well articulated silence and perhaps even a vain attempt to reach somewhere inside oneself. More transcendental, universal things.

It's very important that I was very liberated by a specific kind of humour – that has to do with my development too. I realised I enjoy an almost boyish playfulness; that I don't have to know my way around the meanings and seriousness of the things I do – not that they're not there, but that I don't have to know my way around them – and I can approach these with the strange "around the corner" humour that is created therein.

Let's talk about your current projects. The first on the list is Before the Law which you did with Martin Smolka.
Before the Law was commissioned by the ensemble ascolta, which, in order to secure funding, found two crucial and fantastic co-producers: the Wittener Tage festival for new music and the Lucerne Festival. Ascolta is an ensemble for the performance of exclusively contemporary music which has existed for about fifteen years. In addition to being excellent performers of any crazy progressive new music, they also have a direction towards more playful and slightly performative projects. They have a series of pieces they've commissioned to accompany silent films. They've done several pieces that are

The Infinity of Lists

essentially musical theatre: like one where they sit around a table and the score includes gestures or head movements.

I think the very first composer they approached when they started was Martin Smolka. They only told us recently that for years, they'd been hoping to do an evening-length piece with him. And I had the good fortune that they only approached him after we'd done *The Infinity of Lists (an opera commissioned by the New Opera Days Ostrava festival and later moved to the Alfred ve dvoře theatre in Prague – translator's note)*, so Martin immediately told them he wanted to work with me.

I asked them right away that we do a four-day workshop. We discovered that some of them are capable of specific forms of musically inscribed vocal acts, once again on the borders of speech and song. We also found that they are playful and open to everything, and that they're extremely fast with gestures: they can pick something up, make a sound with it, put it down, and already have another thing in their other hand.

The problem was that we knew the texts would have to be in German, or at most in English, which is hard for me. I proposed Franz Kafka to Martin – we both have a deep love of his work, but we also have almost too much respect for him. We decided we'd do it but we felt a bit awkward. So I suggested to Martin we had to free ourselves of the heavy, depressive, dark Kafka, and I showed him extracts that also had a certain humour.

Max Brod has a short essay on Kafka's humour.
Right. So we arrived at this lighter, more playful colour and then we attempted once again to find a highly organic combination of what I bring and what Martin brings: gesture, sound, text and its dismantling, which Martin can do for the notes or I for the meaning...

PHOTO: CLAUS LANGER

I imagine you selected the texts in dialogue?

We spent a lot of time on it, we went to my cabin several times for a few days. I think the idea to use Kafka came from me, and I also found this lovely selection of aphorisms, put together by one of Kafka's Czech translators under the title *Leopardi v chrámu (The Leopards in the Temple)*, which helped us a lot. But I also know the last text in the piece was Martin's idea and it helped a lot.

That's why I'm asking: in the materials I've found, you are credited as librettist and director, but it seems like this is one of the occasions on which we could say you are both authors.

Maybe it's a mistake. I also experienced an equal relationship this with Michal Nejtek's opera in Brno, *Rules of Good Behaviour in Modern Society*. I have no problem when composers rework my libretto and I'm also not coy about adding my opinion on the music. But

ensemble ascolta performing Before the Law

Jiří Adámek's new work *Before the Law (Vor dem Gesetz)*, a commission by the ensemble ascolta created in collaboration with composer **Martin Smolka**, was premiered at the Wittener Tage festival in May 2019. On the 24th of November 2019, the Contempuls Prague Contemporary Music Festival will present the work in its Czech premiere. The performance will take place at the new DOX+ hall at the DOX Centre for Contemporary Art, and will be preceded by a panel discussion with Adámek and Smolka led by Boris Klepal.

www.contempuls.cz

the problem is that in the western model of contemporary music, the composer is a huge title; a pampered star. You wouldn't believe it – when Martin comes to Germany, everyone nothing short of worships him. I would feel awkward proposing to Martin that we present ourselves as a duo – he's in a much higher position than I am in that context.

I feel like this is one of the big differences between, say, opera or musical theatre within contemporary music, and how authorship is viewed at the Department of Alternative and Puppet Theatre at DAMU, where it is mostly attributed collectively.

Sure. But the difference – and something I completely respect – is that up to a certain point, we can meet, write texts, rework them, but then there's always a moment when the composer shuts off for months upon months, and nobody can do that for him.

And at that point, you stop working together?
That would be impossible. They have to completely immerse themselves in their inner world and their inner ear, writing note after note. And that's where the composer's dominance is unambiguous. I totally respect that, and what's more, as a theatre-maker, I know I exist in an unusually democratic environment – I can withstand the scenographer telling me how the script should be changed and the dramaturge discussing the set design and the actors having their input into the conceptual foundations. They can all do that. It takes up time, but I love it.

But it's true that I write the text and I direct it, so I know very well how that position of authority works. However, I really enjoy giving up control and trying to pinpoint the composer's idea; surrendering myself to it. Being at once contemporary and yet retaining piety towards their piece. Sometimes I feel like I'd really like to find out if I could direct an opera.

An older one?
Baroque – that's what I'd enjoy most. Though I've also had some – as yet inconclusive – talks with a theatre about Benjamin Britten. There are things I wouldn't know how to approach and things I'd very much like to do. But my vision is that it can be set in a very contemporary, progressive language, but it doesn't have to go violently against the music. I have the good fortune of being able to read and understand music quite well.

In October, Prague will host the EFB Festival, dedicated to the work of pioneering composer and theatre-maker Emil František Burian, one of the key figures of the interwar avant-garde. As I understand it, you're doing an adaptation of Burian's May, so is that one of these cases when you're directing without such an authorial position?
Not quite: I studied Burian's voiceband version of *May*, but then I responded with a setting that is entirely my own. That's an example of a project where I can't separate my position as an author and as a director. I have the form in my ear, and that's what I communicate to the actors. These are the situations I love.

Does that mean you prepared a score?
Yes.

With notes?
No, not with notes. The score I made for myself is very detailed: slide down on this word, a glissando here, a crescendo here, a diminuendo here, down a half step here. What I give to the actors is a considerably more concise version that only gives them a sense of it. And then I teach them that, I demonstrate a lot of things, but in many cases, they also offer better solutions – we're really well coordinated and they're fantastically musical, so they perfect a lot of elements.

How do you seek out the actors that might be interested in this kind of work and who have the appropriate skills?
That's a good question... I'm very grateful for every time it connects. When I first wrote *Tiká tiká politika,* it was such a different process for me, so distant from how I was taught it was done, that I essentially called the actors I dared to call, begging them to do it. And of the four that had the time, three stayed on. So it was really... well, not by chance. It's kind of chemical. They're the people I felt I could call, the people who had the compunction to do it.

And it only took a few years of my teaching at DAMU before I started working with my students. Before it happened, it never occurred to me that it could. But now, the teaching feeds right into practice.

And institutionally?
The actors I work with from the alternative department have an inimitable working method. I've never experienced that with anyone else. I worked at the National Theatre twice – both times, I brought guests, and both times, the theatre was generously accommodating in letting me work only with people with whom we could find a mutual understanding. Both were wonderful collaborations. But still, the way the actors work there is somewhat different to what I'm used to and I had to adapt to that.

If we were to take some of the theatres you work with – Alfred ve dvoře, home of alternative and experimental theatre in Prague, the National Theatre, and the Minor Theatre, which focuses on performances for children, how do they compare?
At Minor, the circuit of actors has enough overlap with the people I work with, so I can just work with them. In Alfred, I only work with my group, and at the National, it's the ensemble actors with whom we can understand each other, plus my guests. I consider all these three institutions absolutely professional, each in their own direction.

A big difference is the type of commission: you just can't trick an audience of children at Minor. You can repeat a thousand times that it has a good theatrical idea or that it's clever, but if they're not entertained, they're not entertained. In most cases, this worked out very well, but twice, it didn't.

At the National, this is quite difficult for me: *Po sametu (Post Velvet)* seemed to hit the spot and I'm still happy with the production now. But I was also left with a feeling of having danced to the audience's tune a little too much. In *New Atlantis*, I tried not to think about the question of who it was for, and in a way, it backfired a little.

It's obvious that my function in these theatres is specific. When they invite me, they know it will be more demanding, that perhaps it will help the actors advance in some way, and that it will be a little complicated for the audience.

You mentioned that faith has become more important to you in recent years.
I occasionally think about whether I should talk about this in public. I'm quite introverted on this topic. Some four or five years ago, I was baptised as an evangelical, though I don't feel especially evangelical. When I have the time, I really enjoy going to masses led by Tomáš Halík, a Roman Catholic priest, and reading his books. I've also discovered *exercicia*, spiritual "exercises", which are often run by Jesuits and other groups tied to Christian mysticism. This mysticism then often links to Eastern teachings. And in terms of origins, I'm three-quarters Jewish. But you could say that the language through which I approach this field is Christianity.

And is this reflected in your work?
Internally and in an introverted way. So far, I see absolutely no reason to make it more straightforward. It's more about a change of values, and also about an amplification of what I always had: the perception of words in the Bible and Christianity opened up further layers of my relationship to words, language, and speech.

by Boris Klepal

10th Ostrava Days

One might not even have noticed that this year's Ostrava Days festival was the tenth anniversary edition. This biennial focusing on world and Czech premieres first took place in the Silesian city of Ostrava in 2001. Since then, its structure has stabilised. Without any unnecessary talk, this year was about as intensive as previous editions, and the contents of the programme were equally copious. As the festival progressed, however, it gradually transpired that its artistic director, Petr Kotík, has paused a little, looking back, and perhaps also looking around with a little more calm.

AN ALLIANCE BETWEEN THE OLD AVANT-GARDE

Since its beginnings, the Ostrava Days Festival (under Kotík's leadership) has consistently presented contemporary music and the great classics of the second half of the 20th century. It is the biggest event of its kind in the Czech Republic. This year's edition took place from the 22nd to the 31st of August. The Ostrava Days institute hosted **thirty-five students** and **sixteen lecturers including** Christian Wolff, Chaya Czernowin, Miroslav Srnka, Petr Kotík, Marc Sabat, Peter Ablinger, Bernhard Lang, Klaus Lang, and others.

The festival was composed of **sixteen events** in **ten days.** This included thirteen concerts, one nineteen-hour concert marathon, one five-hour mini-marathon of electronic music, and one five-hour panel debate with twenty guests. Almost all of the festival concerts were recorded by Czech Radio, which will gradually present them in its broadcasts.

The festival saw performances by two symphony orchestras (Ostrava New Orchestra and the Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra), **two chamber orchestras** *(Ostravská Banda and Studio Dan),* **three string quartets (**DoelenKwartet, Quatuor Bozzini, and Slavíková Quartet), **six conductors** (Peter Rundel, Johannes Kalitzke, Petr Kotík, Lilianna Krych, Bruno Ferrandis, and Jurij Galatenko), **twenty-three soloists,** and a number of occasional ensembles.
Ostrava Days presented eighty pieces altogether, of which twelve were world premieres. The oldest piece was written in 1938, the youngest were finished during the festival.

The New York Roots of the Ostrava Festival

This year's dramaturgy accented the founding ideas of Ostrava Days, which have their roots in the avant-garde of the sixties and later, this year with a significant focus on the USA. The festival put on world premieres of two compositions by the last living protagonist of the New York School of the '50s, Christian Wolff. Pieces by the institute students were also convincing above their usual standard (they form part of the festival every year). This anniversary edition presented in concentrated form everything which the organising Ostrava Center for New Music has achieved since the year 2000.

Paradoxically, this was the first edition not to include a piece by John Cage. His music, ideas, and positions have been essential sources for the festival since its inception, and his pieces appear regularly not only at Ostrava Days, but also at the allied New Opera Days Ostrava biennial. A personal meeting with John Cage in 1964 was also an exceptional artistic and human impulse for Petr Kotík himself. The absence of Cage's music was, however, excellently covered by a stream of programming focusing on the New York avant-garde from a wider perspective, but mostly on its minimalist component and composers who were influenced by minimalism to various degrees. This review will focus on this dramaturgical component and the festival's world premieres.

Composer Devin Maxwell conducting the Slavíková Quartet

AND TODAY'S ENTHUSIASM

Radical Music of Minimal Change

The 2019 edition of Ostrava Days began on Thursday the 22nd of August with a performance of the minimalist classic *In C* (1964) by **Terry Riley.** The concert took place in the renovated Old Baths of the former Hlubina Mine (now known as Provoz Hlubina), part of the industrial zone of Lower Vítkovice. Over the last few years, this conglomerate of mines, coking plants, blast furnaces, and steelworks has become one of the most charismatic areas of Ostrava.

As one of the founding pieces of its genre, *In C* became the first link in a chain running throughout the festival and reminding us of minimalism in its radical form. Even part of the festival audience (an experienced audience) was perhaps surprised that minimalism isn't just the pleasantly flowing planes characteristic of Philip Glass or Michael Nyman. Fifty three musical patterns which, played collectively, make up *In C*, were somewhat lost in the Ostrava performance – the large ensemble with drums sounded more like a pulsating rock band.

Even so, you couldn't miss the connection between *In C* and **Julius Eastman's** *Crazy Nigger* (1979). It was performed as the second piece in Friday's nineteen-hour marathon. The longest concert in the history of the festival began on Friday afternoon in the parking lot with **Dieter Schnebel's** *Harley Davidson* for nine motorbikes, synthesiser, and trumpet. **Joseph Kubera** led the performance of *Crazy Nigger* for four pianos, having performed the piece with Eastman in the past. It was an authentic and thrilling performance of a nervous and aggressive music which reminded us how even a minimalist stream can be fierce and grating. In addition to Kubera, the performance in the foyer of the Jiří Myron Theatre featured **Daan Vandewalle**, **Alexandr Starý** and **Miroslav Beinhauer**.

About five hours later, the hall of the same theatre saw a performance of *Composition 1960 #7* by **La Monte Young**. The long perfect fifth was performed by members of the **Ostrava New Orchestra** led by **Petr Kotík.** Music of minimal change checked in with another of its uncompromising manifestations.

A large study into the "minimalist" part of **Morton Feldman's** thinking took the form of *For Philip Guston* (1984) for flute, percussion, and piano. This performance of the four-hour composition began at around seven in the morning in the foyer of the Jiří Myron Theatre, and it was the penultimate

PHOTO: MARTIN POPELÁŘ 2x

piece in the marathon. The last piece was a spatial composition by institute resident **Theo Finkel,** *Super-Ostrawitza*. The marathon then concluded with a brunch for both performers and audience on both banks of the Ostravice river.
Another significant contribution to the minimalist line of the festival was a performance of **Yves Klein's** *Symphonie Monotone-Silence* (1949) as part of the vocal concert on the 27th of August. Twenty minutes of D major in the Cathedral of the Divine Saviour were followed by twenty minutes of silence in which the effect of the preceding sonic experience could fully develop.

Sometimes obsessive repetition of musical patterns is one of the central features of **Morton Feldman's** *Neither* (1977). A performance of this genre-defying piece provided a fantastic close to the festival on the 31st of August in the Karolina Triple Hall. Feldman, of course, was not a minimalist in the true sense of the word – his phenomenally diverse and contrasting work with the sound of the orchestra falls entirely outside stylistic boundaries. Feldman's musical thinking, however, took minimalism into account, and it was certainly one of the essential intellectual sources of the festival. *Neither* was performed by the **Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra** conducted by **Peter Rundel,** with **Claudia Barainsky** singing the soprano part. The stage installation, by director **Jiří Nekvasil** and scenographer **David Bazika,** perfectly captured the uncertainty of the situation as inscribed into the text by **Samuel Beckett.** Feldman's *Neither* was preceded by the festival's last world premiere: *There Is an Island Above the City* by **Petr Bakla.** The orchestra played with precision, and, most importantly, without vibrato and traditional phrasing – as the author demands. This allowed the remarkable structure of the composition to step into the foreground.

World Premieres Are Our Daily Bread

The Ostrava Days Festival applies themselves to works by living authors as if it were a matter of course, so from the perspective of the festival, Bakla's premiere was nothing special – just like the other eleven premieres which came before it. But looking in from outside, it is exceptional that at Ostrava Days, composers get the chance to work with a large orchestra or with variable ensembles of excellent musicians, regardless of their experiences and credits. Thanks to top class performances, even very young composers can test out their pieces.

However, two of the most anticipated premieres of the festival were by a legendary composer. Eighty-five-year-old **Christian Wolff** was present at the first of them: *Small Orchestra Piece* was performed by the festival chamber ensemble, **Ostravská Banda,** at their first concert of the festival, on the 26th of August in the Karolina Triple Hall. Its fragmentary style is typical of Wolff, in places approaching dadaist collages. Furthermore, *Small Orchestra Piece* is partially based on collective improvisation. The performance was conducted by **Petr Kotík** with an infallible sense of style.

Wolff's second premiere was a string quartet, *Out of Kilter.* Compared to *Small Orchestra Piece,* the quartet, performed by the Canadian **Quatuor Bozzini** on the 29th of August in Provoz Hlubina, had a much more compact and logical character, almost as if classicism had risen from

Frederic Rzewski and Ostravská banda perfoming Petr Kotík's Spontano

the depths and shone through in places. The Quatuor Bozzini composed their programme from a combination of festival composers (including one institute resident) and their standard repertoire.

Christian Wolff was part of the group of artists around John Cage, but in the '60s, he also befriended composer and pianist **Fredric Rzewski**. Eighty-one-year-old Rzewski was also a guest of the festival. A number of his pieces were played and he performed the world premiere of his *6 Movements* himself. This was at Provoz Hlubina on the 28th of August, closely followed by **Alvin Curran's** performance of his *Shofar Rags*, for the shofar – a Jewish instrument made from the horn of a kudu antelope –, piano, and electronics. Curran's premiere, on the boundaries of sonic delicacy and brutality, was one of the most impressive experiences of the festival.

One of the biggest surprises was the premiere of **Petr Kotík's** violin concerto, *Wednesday at RW on Spring Street*. It seemed as though Kotík had forgotten his expansive sonic musings, writing instead a heartfelt piece with arching melodic parts in the violin, played excellently by **Hana Kotková.** You could occasionally hear Kotík's typical fifths or percussion figures, but the melodic layer was markedly dominant.

Students at the Ostrava Days institute also got several premieres. One of the most successful was *In The Summer Every Truth Is Like A Saturday* by **James Ilgenfritz.** It was performed at Provoz Hlubina on the 28th of August by **Studio Dan,** a chamber ensemble from Vienna whose energy and style constantly reminded us that its usual stage is the Viennese jazz club Porgy & Bess.

Two large orchestral premieres by Czech composers were heard during the concert at the Karolina Triple Hall, which officially opened the festival on the 25th of August, although concerts had already begun four days prior to that. Only the first finished movement from Petr Cígler's *Horn Concerto* was heard. The virtuosic solo part was performed by horn player and assistant to the principal conductor of the Czech Philharmonic, **Ondřej Vrabec.** Just like Cígler's piece is gradually built up from logically arranged series of chords, Vrabec gradually constructed his instrument from the mouthpiece to the full horn. The second premiere of the opening concert was *Movis,* a piano concerto by **Michal Rataj**. Based on distinctive rhythmic figures, the piece gradually relaxed until it nearly flew off in a jazzy improvised cadence. The piano part was performed by the excellent **Daan Vandewalle.**

Natural Connections Outside Borders and Nationalities

The Rataj – Vandewalle connection seems like a real expression of the spirit of Ostrava Days and their insistence on the essence of a music which knows no borders. The music of composers and performers from around the world enters close relationships in which nationalities play no part. However, Czech composers also receive extraordinary opportunities for direct confrontation with their colleagues from abroad. The Czech musical present enters into direct interaction with the world scene, at intensities unheard of at any other festival in the country.

This consciously developed communication freedom makes Ostrava Days an exceptional event on the international level too. The creative community arises from the compositional courses by young composers and returns in mutual influences and collaborations by mature composers and first-class performers. This year's programme saw meetings and confluences by acclaimed American avant-gardists and the youngest composers of today. Thanks to Petr Kotík, the bridge between Ostrava and New York seems to be a natural and unbreakable bond.

This year's edition of the Ostrava Days biennial saw thirty-one performances of pieces by institute residents and four world premieres by Czech composers (and one by a Czech-American composer). Probably the strangest of these was the first full performance of Peter Graham's *Fantasia for six cellos*. The graphic score was created back in 1974, and except for one obscure and incomplete performance, it had never been played.

Whether it was brand new pieces or debts from the past, all the premiered and student pieces received the same care from the musicians and the same attention from the audience. Not even in their anniversary edition did Ostrava Days present stars from the media – the only important space was reserved, once again, for music.

by Jan Kouba

Jan Blahoslav's 1569 *Musica* as a Facsimile

Jan Blahoslav, Musica. A facsimile of the edition of 1569.
Prepared by Petr Daněk and Jiří K. Kroupa.
Koniasch Latin Press, Prague 2016, 200 + *56 pages.
ISBN 978-80-87773-37-6

In European history of the last several centuries, the Czech lands are most distinctive for their early adoption of religious reformation. The Hussite movement, arising from the legacy of Jan Hus (+1415), started a reformist mobilisation a full hundred years before Martin Luther, directing local social and cultural development up to the beginning of the Thirty Years' War. The Unity of the Czech Brethren, founded in 1457, became the most important heir of the Hussite legacy. Its multifaceted activities made their mark not only on the history of religion, but also on book culture, literature, spiritual poetry, and church song. After the victory of the counter-reformation in 1621, the church went into exile, where its legacy subsided, but also culminated in the work of Jan Amos Komenský, often referred to by his Latin moniker Comenius (+1670).

One of the key figures of the Unity of the Brethren at the time of its flourishing was Jan Blahoslav (1523–1571), according to his obituary a "great and dear jewel of the Unity". This bishop tied his entire life and work with the church, enriching the Brethren ideology, particularly with stimuli from Christian humanism. Blahoslav was also the archivist, secretary, and historian of the Unity of the Brethren, writing a number of religious and educational treatises and contributing to the development of his mother tongue with a translation of the New Testament and a book on Czech grammar. He also entered the history of Czech singing: he was the main editor of two of the most important editions of the Unity of the Brethren hymnbook, printed in 1561 in Szamotuły, Poland, and in 1564 in Ivančice, Moravia, contributing his own spiritual songs to both.

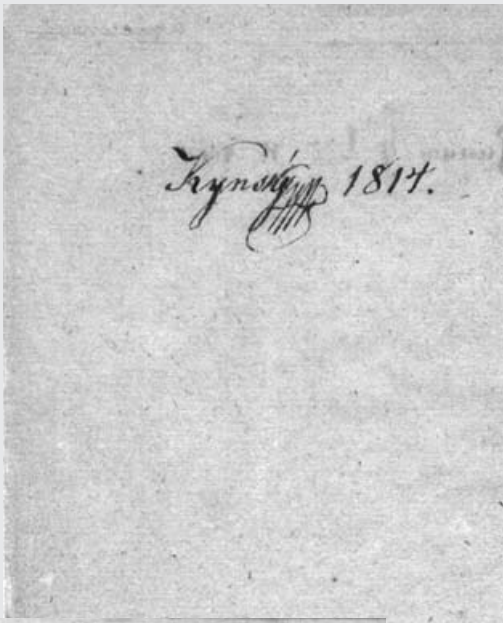
Blahoslav's *Musica* is a textbook presenting the foundations of music theory which the author created following the example of similar German textbooks during his editorial work on the hymnbooks of 1561 and 1564. It was to be an aid for those singing from these hymnbooks, but today, it is a unique historical document and the oldest known music theory work in Czech. Blahoslav published the work in 1558. At the time, however, he also compiled two extensive and historically valuable additions – instructions for singer and instructions on the composition of sacred songs – which he then appended to the second edition of the book in 1569. This second extended edition forms the basis for this new facsimile publication of *Musica*.

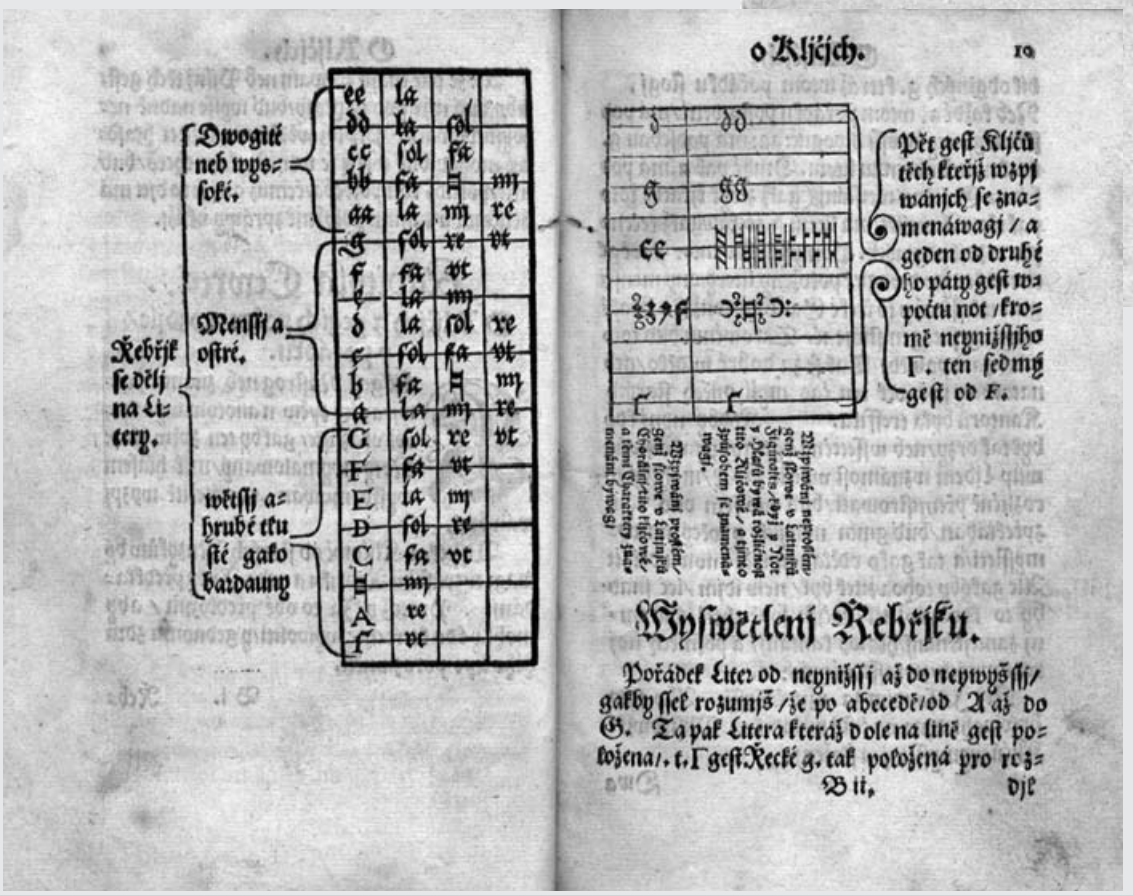
Facsimile editions of sources in Czech music have a long history, but to this day, they remain rather exceptional occurrences. The first editions of entire books appeared between the wars, initiated by Czech librarians: these were excellent reproductions

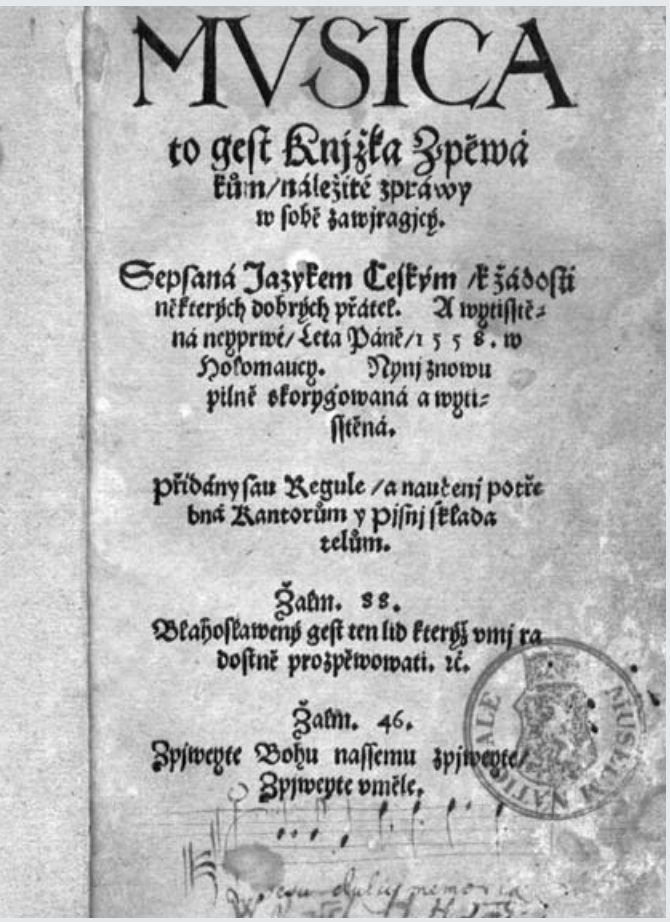
of the Brethren hymnbooks printed in 1531 and 1541, published within the *Monumenta Bohemiae Typographica* edition (1926–1931). Several music sources were then published by the National Library's post-war series, *Cimelia Bohemica*, between 1967 and 1972. Individually, however, only a few of these items were published before the end of the 20th century. Among the most valuable is the facsimile of *The Czech Lute* (*Loutna česká*) by the south Bohemian organist Adam Michna z Otradovic (published by Martin Horyna in 1984). This new facsimile of Blahoslav's *Musica*, which is a reconstruction of the original form of the book, was published in Prague by KLP – Koniasch Latin Press. Musical facsimiles are not rare in the production of this publisher – active since 1993 –, who has brought them out in various forms and functions deserving of greater attention. Among these is a facsimile edition of Komenský's last edition of the Unity of the Brethren hymnbook from 1659, to which we devoted several pages in a previous edition of Czech Music Quarterly (see 2019/1). Blahoslav's *Musica* is another extraordinary publication, both in its selection of model and in its realisation. This excellently prepared book in pocket-size format was primarily intended as an exclusive souvenir for the guests of the Prague Spring music festival – it is dedicated to its seventieth anniversary. The book's potential reach, however, seeing as it provides a full English translation of the Czech commentary, is considerably broader, as this title is among the essential sources of Old Czech music and its author among the key figures of Czech history. This is also why this tome has a considerable bibliography of secondary literature. It is worth mentioning that Blahoslav's *Musica 1569*, the first music theory book in Czech, also became the subject of one of the first monographs of Czech musicology. In 1896, Otakar Hostinský,

one of the founders of Czech musicology, published a complete and commented edition, along with an anonymous Brethren *Muzika* from 1561, whose author hid under the name Josquin. Hostinský was mostly an aesthetician and a critic of contemporary music, but in this case, he admirably entered a very particular topic from the history of music theory. In 1923, the second classic in the field, Vladimír Helfert, also wrote a valuable study on the sources of Blahoslav's *Musica*, and musicologists' interest today is undiminished.

In our context, it is worth mentioning the work of professor Thomas Sovík (*1953), an American of Czech heritage who wrote a dissertation on both the Musicas analysed by O. Hostinský (Ohio 1985), thus launching his now extensive academic career. The results of this dissertation were published in print in Kosmas (vol. 6, 1987). In 1991, in Denton, Texas, Sovík published the first edition of Blahoslav's *Musica* from 1558 and the so-called Josquin *Muzika* from 1561 as two books. These are paperbacks providing English translations of the texts, with commentary,






MVSICA
to geſt Knjžka Zpěwá
kům/náležité zprawy
w ſobě zawjragjcý.
Sepſaná Jazykem Ceſkým /k žádoſti
některých dobrých přátel. A wytiſtě-
ná nyprwé/ Leta Páně/1558. w
Hokomaucy. Nynj znowu
pilně skorygowaná a wyti-
ſtěná.
přidány ſau Regule /a naučenj potře
bná Kantorům y pjſnj ſkláda
telům.
Žalm. 88.
Blahoſtawený geſt ten lid kterýž umj ra
doſtně prozpěwowati. tj.
Žalm. 46.
Zpjwegte Bohu naſſemu zpjwegte/
Zpjwegte umělě.

complemented by black-and-white reproductions of the Czech original. Thanks to Sovík, Blahoslav's *Musica* made it far beyond the Atlantic and any interested parties can now read its first edition in English.

The epilogue to the new facsimile, published in Prague in 2016, contains more detailed information on this and other literature relating to Blahoslav's *Musica*. Written by editor Petr Daněk, this epilogue is a brilliant work of musicology: on a mere twenty-two pages of octavo size, he presents rich information, clearly summarising and newly extending the topic, documenting everything with a detailed bibliography. The conciseness of this exegesis is supported by the footnotes, taking up at least half of the text, often creating what is akin to miniature dictionary entries.

The introduction briefly presents Jan Blahoslav and his oeuvre, as well as a short overview of his activities in the field of spiritual song. *Musica* is introduced as part of Blahoslav's work on the Brethren hymnbook, as well as in the context of European music textbooks from the 16th century, expounded on by the extensive note no. 15 (which contains an interesting final hypothesis that in 1558, Blahoslav probably "did not know any German music textbooks"). In a similar manner, note no. 16 summarises the conclusions in the literature about the competing Brethren Josquin *Muzika 1561*, which is also newly framed as an inspiration to the second, extended edition of Blahoslav's treatise. This is followed by detailed bibliographic descriptions of both editions of the *Muzika* including an interesting history of the individual copies, as well as the first detailed comparison of the 1558 version with the 1569 reedition. This complex view of a small, specialised handbook is then complemented by a reflection on its practical use and terminological contributions, concluding with a remarkable finding by the author about the connection between Blahoslav's "regulae for singers" with the tradition of Czech verse teachings for church singers.

The new facsimile is a perfect imitation of the original: printed in the original pocket-book format on quality toned paper, it is neatly bound in solid brown panels. All this is crowned by the beautiful original cover art by Jana Koksteinová (Jiří K. Kroupa, the second editor, provides a detailed note on her inspirations in his final commentary). If the term "cimelia" began appearing in the names of Czech facsimile series in the sense of a rarity or jewel in book form, then this facsimile – in addition to its historical value – is also a gem of a book: bibliophilia of the highest rank; a book as a rare item for collectors.

In conclusion, let us put to mind that this facsimile (and the reproduction of the 1659 Komenský hymnbook) is only a sample of the broader and multi-genre productions of Prague's KLP – Koniasch Latin Press, which last year inconspicuously entered into its second quarter-century of activity. Its productions are usually recognisable at first sight given the perfect outward appearance, but they are also accompanied by repeatedly outstanding editorial work on the texts. They can also boast realisations of the most editorially demanding tasks, such as Petr Voit's large syntheses on Old Czech book printing and the like.

Finally, it is also remarkable how important their published titles from the sphere of the humanities are, including some of the best works in contemporary Czech musicology. Today's digital age brings a number of doubts about the sense and necessity of the printed book. The representative sample from contemporary Czech book culture published by KLP is one answer to these doubts.

by Jiří Pešek

The German Edition of Tomislav Volek's Selected Writings: A Historian's Perspective

Tomislav VOLEK, Mozart. Die italienische Oper des 18. Jahrhunderts und das musikalische Leben im Königreich Böhmen. Mit der Don-Juan-Studie von Vladimír Helfert, (ed.) Milada Jonášová – Matthias J. Pernerstorfer, Wien, Hollitzer Verlag 2016, 1103 pages. ISBN 978-3-99012-300-3

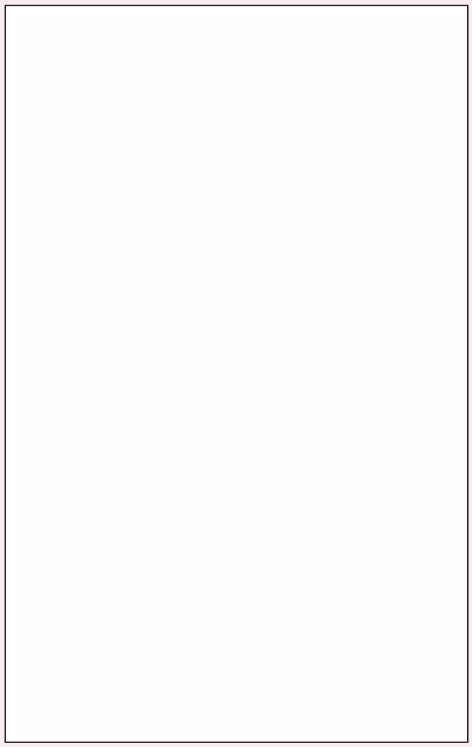
Tomislav Volek (b. 1931) is probably the most important living Czech expert on the music of the 18th century. His 80th birthday provided the occasion for the publication of a German edition of his selected writings. As the name suggests, the two mighty volumes have come to include primarily his research into musical theatre of this period, particularly Mozart and the conditions of his fulminant successes in Prague, also relating more broadly to musical life in late Baroque and Classicist Bohemia. Volek actively participated in preparing the two-volume set of fifty-two essays (of which twenty-three have been newly translated into German).

It is also in response to his wish that the book includes – somewhat inorganically – an edition of the German translation of an essay by the founding figure of Baroque music research in the Czech lands, Vladimír Helfert (1886-1945), about the first known opera on the theme of Don Juan and its performance in Brno in 1734. Volek accompanied the study – which opens the introduction of the first volume – with a short but accurate portrait of his great predecessor, for whose work he was an ideal follower. Milada Jonášová then compiled Volek's biography.

As a researcher, Volek is characterised by a long-standing interest in sources. The entire collection contains barely any analyses of pieces. Instead, we are confronted with the results of fifty years of methodical and innovative archival research. From the first impulse – essentially a coincidence – in the mid-'50s, Volek systematically investigated the broadly conceived musical culture of "Mozart's time". His studies – generally short in scale – present a number of discoveries of sheet music, libretti and other texts linked to music, but particularly a large mass of archival material for the biographies and musical practice of the period in question. The significant characteristic of Volek and his texts is a complex perception of period musical culture outside nationalist clichés, and therefore a willingness and capacity – or rather scholarly competence – to see not only "Czech" music and "Czech" musicians, but all the (predominantly German- or Italian-speaking) musicians, singers, and musical entrepreneurs who created the specific musical culture of Prague, the Czech lands, and the Austrian Empire in the 18th century.

Following the aforementioned opening section, the extensive collection is divided into five parts. The first is on the subject of musical theatre in the 18th century. Volek focuses on the importance of Italian opera for Czech music of the 18th century, particularly as regards the cultivation of Prague's audiences. He contributed to this topic in a number of minor papers, most systematically in a text about the transformations of Prague audiences between the 1830s and the beginning of the 19th century (pp. 147-155). The author explains why Mozart's operas, usually met with misapprehension or even displeasure in Vienna – perhaps due to the public's aversion to Italian – weren't particularly successful in Paris or London either when the composer tried to conquer these territories (p. 148), but did find phenomenal and permanent success in "provincial" Prague. Volek's thesis is that the reason for this was this particular "provinciality" of Prague, but twisted into a structurally modernising bonus.

Most European metropolises and residential cities in the 18th century had "court operas", seen more as components of monarchal representation directed by the court than seats of living music.



The participation of the general public at their performances was ruled out or minimised. However, in 1723, Prague saw the enormous success of the coronation opera *Costanza e Fortezza*. A year later, the ambitious Count František Antonín Špork (Franz Anton Sporck), hungry for public acceptance, established and meagrely financed until his death in 1738 a private opera theatre in the New Town of Prague, which he entrusted to an Italian impresario and pragmatically made open to the general public. He made no encroachments on the repertoire.

Prague thus saw the development of a uniquely liberal musical institution open to the public which richly received contemporary Italian works, brought Italian musicians and singers to Prague, and which was in no small measure financially dependent on the favour of the paying public, which it also educated and helped grow.

This situation was clearly attractive for the Prague-settled landed gentry and particularly the refined bourgeoisie. It allowed the Italian opera in Prague to bridge over the period after Sporck's death without losses. In 1739, the city and two aristocrats established the "Divadlo v Kotcích", administered by the Old Town municipal hall and leased out to interested parties from the ranks of theatre entrepreneurs.

Volek reminds us that the interests of parties competing for the license were a significant element (p. 308). This reality allowed the Italian opera in Prague to continue in well established practices. Volek claims that Prague was the first city north of the Alps that began developing operatic theatre in this new and modern artistic form. Opera then got its ideal foundations, of course, after the opening of Nostitz's theatre in 1783, while there were other smaller aristocratic opera scenes operating in Prague, though without regularity. The topic of Italian and Austrian entrepreneurs presenting Italian opera in Prague then extends into the second part of the book[1].

Already in his youth, Volek was analytical in demonstrating the dependence of the developments in Prague's business on the interests of the "undistinguished" audience (though only for the late period of Italian opera in Prague). He did so in an extensive material study on the repertoire of the Nostitz Theatre in 1794 and 1796 to 1798 (pp. 177–294). Based on surviving overviews from the theatre's ticket office, he proves here that there wasn't much success in selling the expensive boxes (financially available only to the higher nobility), but the stalls and the balconies were sold out repeatedly. The high number of performances of Mozart's and other "Italian" operas attests to great interest in this music, or rather about the quantity of Prague's (paying!) operatic public at the time.

When Mozart came to Prague in 1787 to present his opera buffa *Le nozze di Figaro* (not exactly successful with the Viennese court), the audience welcomed it with delight. Volek also demonstrates that Mozart didn't come to Prague "blindly", but that the contacts of the Dušeks with the music scene in Salzburg – specifically with Leopold Mozart – were long-standing, arising from Josefina Dušková's family ties in Salzburg.

Volek also explores the period when this attitude of favour for Italian opera in Prague began changing, and – shortly after Mozart's death – subsiding, based on a transformation of the audience. But even from the beginnings of Nostitz's theatre, there were productions of German operas or "Singspiels" – even, absurdly, with a 1794 performance of Mozart's German-libretto *Magic Flute* in an Italian translation with additional recitatives typical of Italian operas (p. 153). But the 1790s inaugurated a process – according to Volek linked to changes in the make-up of Prague's inhabitants and thereby the opera-going public – of rapid transformation towards a dominance of "Viennese Singspiel". Thanks to the interest of the aristocracy and part of the educated bourgeoisie, however, the Italian opera survived

1) A key study is *Die italienische Oper in Prag bereitete Boden für die Rezeption der Opern Mozarts*, pp. 303–314.

until 1807, when it finally ended for good. Volek – without providing arguments – claims that this was also a time of the demise of the educated public (p. 154), a period of the nationalisation of culture, and a rejection of previous cosmopolitan attitudes.
The second part of the book, all on the topic of Mozart, is internally divided into three sections. The first and largest of these contains a study on Mozart's work for Prague and his reception there. This is followed by a lengthy paper on "Mozartianas" in Czech and Moravian archives (pp. 487–550). The third section, with its somewhat incomprehensible title ("Artistic Freedom") contains, most importantly, a valuable biography of Josefina Dušková (Josepha Duschek und Salzburg, pp. 551–566).
A key text of this part of the book, which collects essays on Mozart's "Prague" operas *Don Giovanni, La Clemenza di Tito,* and *The Magic Flute* (which had its premiere in Czech as early as 1794 – cf. pp. 431–438), is the extended material study "Die Bedeutung der Prager Operntradition für das Entstehen des *Don Giovanni* und *Titus*" ("The Importance of the Prague Operatic Tradition for the Creation of Don Giovanni and Titus", pp. 315–386).
Here, Volek summarises once again the importance of the Czech tradition of Italian opera for Mozart's warm reception, documenting in detail how and where his operas were born, what influence the composer had on the libretti based on literary sources, as well as the financial conditions Mozart worked under, including how necessity and time constraints led him to reduce the number of arias or move the musical centre of gravity of the opera. With Tito, the "Figaro history" repeated: the court shunned the opera (for Empress Maria Ludovika of Austria-Este, a Spaniard by lineage, this was "German smut") and Prague audiences loved it, keeping the opera on the repertoire until 1807.
A short entry on Mozart's compositions for Czech church choirs is very interesting (pp. 459–464), drawing out the fact that arias from Mozart's operas were gradually adapted (with new lyrics) as religious chants for church use. The Don Giovanni aria *Deh, vieni alla finestra*, for instance, became the hymn *Venui Creator Spiritus*.
The third part of the book is on "music in the Kingdom of Bohemia". This title, it seems, does not aim to suggest that Prague does not form part of the kingdom, but rather to emphasise that in a number of essays, the author also focused on musical life at aristocratic residences outside of Prague, dealt with more general musicological questions, or followed Czech musical migration, i.e. Czech musicians who were active outside the kingdom ("Zum Problem der böhmischen Musikeremigration im 18. Jahrhundert" – "On The Problem of Bohemian Music Migration in the 18th Century", pp. 629–650).
In this part of the publication, however, there are also a number of entries on Prague. The point in reprinting these essays – some of them half a century old and not quite worked through in their arguments – lies in their mediation of valuable sources (extensive citations, editorial appendices, and image facsimiles) to the international academic community. However, this reviewer, as a historian of culture, is grateful for this reminder of the existence of these unfairly forgotten articles also to the Czech academic community, and not only musicological.
In this section of the book, Volek demonstrates the impact the reforms of Maria Theresa and Joseph II had on musical life in Prague and Bohemia, removing the existing institutional-financial pillars of musical life (abolishing church fraternities, monastic orders, but also limiting the religious and cultural activities of guilds) without offering substitute platforms for maintaining professional musical culture.
In a land where the patronage of the court and court circles were substituted by organisations and institutions linked to the Church, or by the initiatives of the landed gentry, these reforms – often ill-planned, overly centralistic, and hastily established – had devastating effects on culture. Exhaustion from wars with the French, a struggle with the ever more suspicious censorship, and, under Francis I, the unending police bullying (even the pub society of operatic actors fell under suspicion of Freemasonry and subversive activities), and of course the waning of representative expenditure of the bourgeoisie and the aristocracy – all this severely limited the still strong Prague community of musicians and opera singers and actors.
Another of Volek's source studies also has a more general cultural history dimension, dealing with Prague concert life between 1774 and 1805 (pp. 717–742). Volek uses gubernial acts (according to the editors, these were shredded in the 1960s) related to the permission to put on musical performances in Prague to reconstruct three decades of Prague concert life, as well as the practice of letters of recommendation written by figures dominating the field in Prague (Dušek, Koželuh, Mašek) appended to the requests. The acts prove that Prague experienced an extraordinary concert boom between 1786 and 1791. A drastic reduction of (not only) concert life was brought about by the establishment of the "musical tax" in 1708.

2) Volek took an intense interest in pictorial documentations of musical activities at the turn of the '60s and '70s. The result – also published in German and English – was a book: Stanislav JAREŠ – Tomislav VOLEK, *Dějiny české hudby v obrazech. Od nejstarších dob do vybudování Národního divadla [The History of Czech Music in Images. From Ancient Times to the Construction of the National Theatre]*, Prague 1977.

The short fourth part of the book discusses iconographic sources from music history[2]. The most interesting of the essays presented here is the study on the music of the Prague processions in the 18th century (pp. 751–767). Mostly, these were processions linked the many Church celebrations throughout the year, processions to accompany the birthdays of members of the ruling family, the inauguration of high Church dignitaries, pleading processions for the victory of the Habsburg army, and the like. Accounting records show that performing on these occasions was the main source of income for a number of Prague musicians, especially the "guild" of trumpeters and "military drummers" (i.e. timpanists) (p. 753).

The most interesting thing about the essay is a reminder of the grand Jewish processions – documented graphically in great detail – which took place in 1716 and 1741. The first took place to honour the birth of the long-awaited successor to Charles VI, archduke Leopold, who unfortunately died before his first birthday. The second procession, no less grand, walked through the streets of the Jewish Quarter in honour of the future emperor, Joseph II. In both cases, Christian musicians were hired for the procession and accompanied it from ad hoc richly decorated triumphal gates.

The fifth part bears the title of "Composer", and here Volek purposefully surpasses the 18th century. In addition to his important topics (the works of Jan Dismas Zelenka, Antonio Vivaldi, and Christoph Willibald Gluck), the author devotes four essays to the Lobkowicz patronage of Ludwig van Beethoven and the relationship between these two figures. After that, however, the texts entirely abandon the preceding period limitations: we are reminded of Volek's ancient interest in Bedřich Smetana and his partial reliance on Richard Wagner, i.e. Volek's one-time disputation with the opinions of Zdeněk Nejedlý[3]. There is also a reprint of a text that proved fateful – in the negative sense – for Volek: a short presentation from 1969 on the relationship between music and politics (pp. 987–991). Volek considers music an essential attribute of every human society in history. He sees it as a space of human freedom whilst also pointing out the political ambivalence of musical expression. He explored this question in more depth through a study of the identical approaches to music under Nazism and communism (the Zhdanov Doctrine).

The book's appendices contain selected bibliographies of Vladimír Helfert and Tomislav Volek, a list of illustrations, and four indices: of persons, of stage works, of other mentioned works, and finally of locations and institutions.

This extensive collection of Volek's works could perhaps be a little economical and thus more clearly arranged – particularly as concerns the conference papers, which repeatedly and usually without deeper arguments repeat the author's elementary theses. However, we also have to state that in its present form, the book is a challenge – and not only to musicologists – to open up expert dialogue on Baroque culture across disciplinary boundaries. In several texts, Volek repeated that he misses such dialogue. On the other hand, it seems problematic that the (often ancient) texts were reprinted without any accompanying commentary. Fifty to sixty years from first publication is a long time, and particularly after 1989, research into Bohemian-Moravian, Austrian, but also Saxon or Silesian Baroque culture and society has presented many new findings.

The valuable material studies from the '50s stand up to scrutiny better than many later conference papers, repeatedly reworking Volek's key theses. It is evident that his original narrative of musical developments in the period of around 1724 to 1807 will not be fundamentally questioned. But the reader asks, again and again, "why" it happened, what happened, and why it happened in this particular manner. Does the author stand behind all his opinions and interpretations half a century later? And why are developments described in Prague and Czechia unique to Central Europe? (Or, indeed, are they unique at all?)

The extent of the knowledge of Italian among fans of Italian operatic music from the ranks of Prague's bourgeoisie is a central question in the context of Volek's book. While among the aristocracy of the 17th – and to a large extent also the 18th – century, it was evidently a common language of both spoken and written communication, we lack similar evidence for the bourgeoisie. Italian-language literature is lacking from the library inventories of the Prague bourgeois. Did the new bearers of eight decades of enthusiasm for Italian opera not understand the content of the operas in the least? Or was a knowledge of Latin enough for the more educated members of the audience to glean a rough understanding of the context? This would mean that the Josephinist reforms of the end of the century, which forced a general transition from Latin to German, destroyed even this thin platform of communication between the stage and the seats? It is a shame Volek presents no opinion on these questions.

But a book that brings up questions and allows the international academic community access to the valuable results of years of archival research is undoubtedly useful. And seeing as these eminently readable studies were written with vigour and polemic zest, the volume also has a lot to say about the academic life of an important Czech musicologist.

3) Zdeněk Nejedlý (1978–1962), influential and controversial musicologist, historian, and journalist. After the communist putsch in 1948, he accepted the post of minister of culture in the Stalinist government.

CZECH MUSIC EVERY DAY

EVENTS AT HOME AND ABROAD IN THE SUMMER OF 2019

JUNE-AUGUST

This summer's most eagerly awaited and closely observed event in the field of contemporary music was – unsurprisingly – the tenth edition of the Ostrava Days biennial. Over ten days and sixteen concerts, the festival presented pieces by towering figures of the 20th and 21st centuries as well as composers at the beginning of their career, and also several world premieres by established Czech composers. Three of these were *concertante* pieces – the 1st movement of Petr Cígler's Horn Concerto, Michal Rataj's *MOVIS* for piano and orchestra, and *Wednesdays at RW on Spring Street* for violin and chamber orchestra by Petr Kotík, the festival's artistic director. The last two Czech world premieres were by Petr Bakla: *No. 4* for piano and *There Is An Island Above The City*, performed at the closing concert by the Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra.

As for opera, the most remarkable feat was the Czech premiere of the interactive opera *Be My Superstar* by Austrian-Czech composer Šimon Voseček. This work, based on Yann Verburgh's play *H.S. –Tragédies Ordinaires*, is intended for "anyone above fourteen years of age". Focusing on the topic of bullying, the opera was first produced under Alexandra Lacroix's direction at LOD Studio Ghent and at the Operosa Montenegro Opera Festival in Montenegro.

Czech music was also heard at one of the most prestigious musical competitions in the world, ARD in Munich, where the semifinals of the cello category included (as a compulsory piece) *Like Ella* by Martin Smolka.

22 June 2019, The Barns, Vienna, Virginia, USA. Wolf Trap Opera. **Viktor Ullmann: *The Emperor of Atlantis* (premiere of a new production).** Directed by: Richard Gammon, music director: Geoffrey McDonald. Following performances: 26, 28, and 30 Jun 2019.
23 June 2019, Piarist Church of the Finding of the Holy Cross, Litomyšl. Smetana's Litomyšl. **Slavomír Hořínka: *Ave Maria* (world premiere)**. Prague Philharmonic Children's Choir, artistic director: Pavel Peřina, conductor: Jiří Chvála.
29 June 2019, Assembly Hall, Chateau Kroměříž, Kroměříž. Forfest. **Jiří Lukeš: *Ichimoku cloud* (world premiere).** Ensemble Konvergence.
29 June 2019, Glyndebourne, United Kingdom. Glyndebourne Festival. **Antonín Dvořák: *Rusalka* (premiere of a new production)**. Directed by: Melly Still, music director: Robin Ticciati. Following performances: 4, 7, 11, 17, 20, 26, and 31 Jul, 7, 12, 16, and 21 Aug 2019.
30 June 2019, St. Maurice Church, Kroměříž. Forfest. **Radim Bednařík: *Meditation for Organ* (world premiere)**. Karel Martínek – organ.

PHOTO: KURT VAN DER ELST

Šimon Voseček: Be My Superstar

5 July 2019, Herkulessaal, Munich Residenz, Munich, Germany. Musica Viva. **Miroslav Srnka: *Speed of Truth* for clarinet, choir and orchestra (world premiere).** Jörg Widmann – clarinet, Chor des Bayerischen Rundfunks (choirmaster Peter Dijkstra), Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks, conductor: Susanna Mälkki.
20 July 2019, Holy Trinity Church, Kuks. Kuks Music Summer. **Eduard Douša: *Phantasia Kuksensis de Virtutis a Fuga baroque* (world premiere).** Wacław Golonka – organ.
7 August 2019, Large Hydraulic Hall – Masaryk Water Research Institute, Prague. Music for Sirens… micro-concerts with the emergency siren test. ***Sirene & Water* (world premiere).** Concept/music: Petr Hora. Josef Hřebík – accordion, Pavla Radostová, Bronislava Smržová – voice.
14 August 2019, LOD Studio, Ghent, Belgium. **Šimon Voseček: *Be My Superstar* (world premiere of an interactive opera).** Directed by: Alexandra Lacroix. Libretto based on a play by Yann Verburgh, *H.S. – Tragédies Ordinaires*: Aïda Gabriels, Alexandra Lacroix. Astrid Stockman (soprano), Logan Lopez Gonzalez (countertenor), SPECTRA, and electronics. Following performances: 21 and 22 Aug, Operosa Montenegro Opera Festival, Dvorana Park, Herceg Novi, Montenegro.
25 August 2019, Triple Hall Karolina, Ostrava. Ostrava Days. **Petr Cígler: *Horn Concerto, 1st movement,* Michal Rataj: *MOVIS – concerto for piano and orchestra* (world premieres).** Ondřej Vrabec – French horn, Daan Vandewalle – piano, ONO / Ostrava New Orchestra, conductor: Bruno Ferrandis.
28 August 2019, BrickHouse, Hlubina Coal Mine, Ostrava. Ostrava Days. **Petr Bakla: *No. 4* (world premiere).** Miroslav Beinhauer – piano.
30 August 2019, Triple Hall Karolina, Ostrava. Ostrava Days. **Petr Kotík: *Wednesdays at RW on Spring Street* (world premiere)**. Hana Kotková – violin, Ostravská banda, conductor: Petr Kotík.
30 August 2019, Church of the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary, Litoměřice. Litoměřické svátky hudby. **Jiří Kabát: *Vivat Litoměřice* (world premiere).** Pilsen Philharmonic, conductor: Jiří Kabát.
31 August 2019, Triple Hall Karolina, Ostrava. Ostrava Days. **Petr Bakla: *There Is An Island Above The City* (world premiere).** Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra, conductor: Peter Rundel.
4 September 2019, Jan Deyl Conservatory, Prague. Music for Sirens… micro-concerts with the emergency siren test. ***Staircase* (world premiere)**. Concept / music: Jiří Lukeš. Věra Kestřánková – bass clarinet, Štěpán Janoušek – trombone, Tomáš Mika – electric guitar.
10 September 2019, Prinzregententheater, Munich. ARD-Musikwettbewerb, cello category, semifinals. **Martin Smolka: *Like Ella (world premiere).*** A compulsory piece played by six semi-finalists including the winner, Haruma Sato.

by Dale Marrs

The Quarter-Tone Trumpet: A Czech Idea

Dale Marrs is an American trumpeter of Czech heritage who has spent many years as principal trumpet at the Stuttgart Philharmonic. In this article – an extract from his doctoral thesis on trumpet music in Czechoslovakia which he completed at the Staatliche Hochschule für Musik in Frankfurt am Main – Marrs discusses the origins and development of the quarter-tone trumpet, mostly in relation to the work of pioneering microtonal composer Alois Hába.

The term quarter-tone is commonly used to denote sounds of any size smaller than the semitone. In that sense, quarter-tones have traditionally been used to compose and perform microtones of indeterminate sizes. In the first half of the 20th century, the Czech composer Alois Hába (1893–1973) developed a tonal language based on precise quarter-tonal intervals. Hába, who had an extraordinary sense of pitch, recognised even as a child the microtones of the folk music of his southeastern Moravian homeland. After composition studies with Vítězslav Novák in Prague and Franz Schreker in Vienna, where Hába learned the craft of composing, he wrote, guided by his inner ear, his first composition in the quarter-tone system, the String Quartet No. 2. Op. 7 (1920). Starting with quarter-tone music, Hába went on to even smaller intervals, sixth-tone and finally fifth-tone music. The composer himself was able to sing precise microtonal intervals and play them on the violin. Since the basis of European music, including twelve-tone music, is semitone intervals, the idea of quarter-tone music – especially polyphonically composed – without sonic examples remains largely theoretical. For a comprehensive study of the quarter-tone trumpet, not only research and analysis of the compositions, but above all the examination of the instruments and the performance of existing works on a quarter-tone trumpet was essential. Two of the earliest compositions for the quarter-tone trumpet were documented with sound recordings. Experience gained in recording these quarter-tone pieces confirmed the expected reasons for the limited repertoire and the lack of acceptance of the quarter-tone trumpet.

In the early 1920s, an international group of microtonal pioneers in Berlin engaged in the construction of quarter-tone instruments. The focus of their work was the development and production of a quarter-tone grand piano. At the same time, they also planned the conversion of woodwind and brass instruments to quarter-tone capability. The most successful composer and the driving force of this group was Alois Hába. In 1923, Hába commissioned Bohland and Fuchs in Kraslice (Graslitz) to build the first quarter-tone trumpet.

Prior to that, there was no reason for trumpeters and trumpet makers to develop a quarter-tone trumpet, as there were no compositions for the instrument. In an attempt to address intonation problems, so-called compensation valves were added to the trumpet at end of the 19th century. The tubing added to these valves, however, was not equivalent to the length of a quarter-tone, and they were employed only to correct the extremely out-of-tune valve combinations.

In the concept of a lecture delivered in 1924, Hába noted that Jaromír Kolář, Professor of trumpet at the Prague Conservatory of Music, claimed to be able to play quarter-tones on his usual trumpet.

On the trumpet, it is possible to alter pitches by a quarter-tone up or down by means of lip strength and/or breath control. However, quarter-tones thus produced are difficult to perform accurately and experience a loss in tone quality.
Hába treated all twenty-four quarter-tones equally and composed rapidly changing notes at arbitrarily wide intervals with the expectation that all the quarter-tones would be performed accurately. Hába and his students did not notate *glissandi* or approximate pitches in the trumpet parts of their quarter-tone compositions. These works can only be realised on quarter-tone trumpets. In the case of keyboard instruments (harmonium, piano, grand piano) and woodwind instruments (only the clarinet was constructed as a quarter-tone instrument at the time), the instruments were given keys or holes which allowed individual quarter-tones to be played. Hába, who did not play the trumpet, was not advised by a trumpeter or trumpet maker in the ordering or the construction of the trumpet – unlike the keyboard instruments and the clarinet.

Instead, Hába accepted the proposal of a Berlin colleague, Willy von Möllendorff (1872–1934), the inventor of a quarter-tone keyboard, who wrote in 1917 "trumpets [...] need only a single new valve".

Following Hába's order a (quarter-tone) valve was to be added to the usual three valves of the standard trumpet. Basically, Hába was of the opinion that financing the development of the quarter-tone trumpet would be more difficult than the construction of the instrument. In order to meet the demands on trumpet makers for the composer of quarter-tone music, Hába required the construction of an instrument with several specifications.

Unfortunately, there are a number of weaknesses in Möllendorff's simple solution: a construction in which all quarter-tones are formed with a single valve cannot produce in-tune pitches in all valve combinations over the entire scale of the instrument.

Instead, the already problematic intonation of the standard trumpet becomes even worse. Furthermore, the quarter-tone valve extends the length of the trumpet tubing. This means that any employment of the quarter-tone valve lowers the pitch – raised quarter-tones are not possible. Additionally, the quarter-tone valve in Hába's concept is activated

Alois Hába

with the little finger of the right hand, which makes the fingering technique more difficult.
When the first quarter-tone trumpet was completed by Bohland and Fuchs in 1924, Hába commented "Bude potřebí malých změn kvůli čisté intonaci" ("It will require small changes for a pure intonation"). This diplomatically formulated verdict was certainly correct. Hába's extraordinary hearing, which was documented on a number of occasions by his colleagues and pupils, was his only verifiable competence in judging a trumpet. Improvements to the instrument are not known and the Bohland and Fuchs quarter-tone trumpet is unfortunately considered lost. For the period between 1924 and 1930, there are no documents or prototypes of a quarter-tone trumpet. Hába doubted the skills of the trumpet makers, but not his concept.

The instruments of the first performance of a composition to require the use of the quarter-tone trumpets – Hába's quarter-tone opera, *Matka* (*Mother*) – were completed late in 1930 by F. A. Heckel in Dresden and delivered to Munich for the premiere of the opera on May 17, 1931. There, Hába saw – and heard – the Heckel quarter-tone trumpets for the first time. The F. A. Heckel firm was one of the most famous workshops for the construction of rotary-valve trumpets in the first half of the 20th century. Although Heckel was interested in the new instrument – and offered to build it free of charge – Hába did not accept concept proposals from

PHOTO: PRAGUE CONSERVATORY

Heckel's quarter-tone trumpet in C

the experienced trumpet maker. Most surprising is Hába's commission for quarter-tone trumpets in C tuning – the Bb trumpet is still the standard instrument of most trumpeters today. As far as we know, Hába's active participation in the development of the quarter-tone trumpet ended with the production of the Heckel quarter-tone trumpets. A Heckel quarter-tone trumpet with four rotary valves in a row, built according to Hába's instructions, is now in the possession of the Prague Conservatory of Music. With the permission of the Directorate of the Prague Conservatory of Music and the Music Collection of the National Museum (where the trumpet currently resides), it was possible to measure and play the instrument. The expected "intonation weaknesses" were verified with the aid of an electronic tuning device.

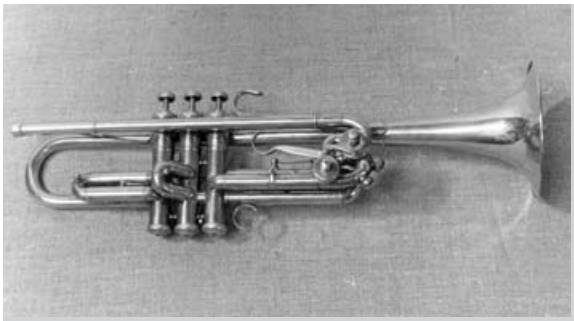
There were three more productions of the quarter-tone opera *Matka*: in 1947 and 1964 in Prague and in 1964 in Florence, Italy. One of the instrumentalists of the Prague performance in 1947 was Josef Bubák, trumpeter in the Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra and a composition student of Alois Hába. Bubák patented his own quarter-tone trumpet model, which according to his son was also equipped with four valves in a row.

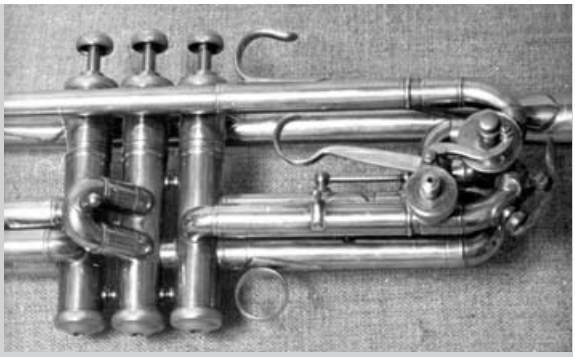
When Bubák was asked to lend his quarter-tone trumpet for *Matka* performances in 1964, he declined. His plan to serially produce the instrument for folkloristic purposes did not come to pass. Even the prototype has been lost. It can be assumed that Bubák – as well as his orchestra colleagues and trumpeters of folk music – played Bb trumpets. In view of this, it can be assumed that Bubák's "patented" quarter-tone trumpet, which was built by Lidl in Brno, was in Bb.

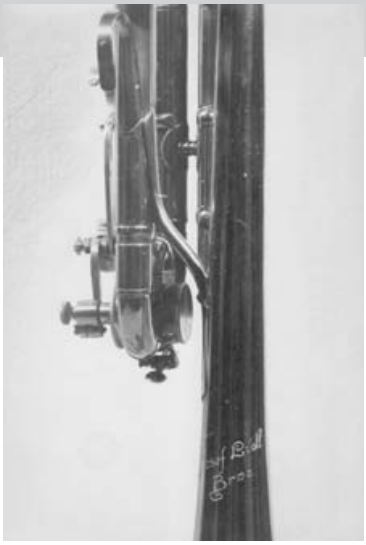
Two quarter-tone trumpets in C made by the Josef Lidl company in Brno were used in the performance of *Matka* at the Prague Spring Festival in 1964, the performances in Florence, Italy that same year, and in subsequent recordings. However, these instruments were made according to a different construction concept. Photos of one of these trumpets show a standard C-trumpet with three piston-valves and an additional rotary valve installed in the tuning slide. The quarter-tone valve is operated with a finger of the left hand so that the finger technique of the right hand is not affected. It is also possible, thanks to the external shape of the piston-valve trumpet, to adjust the first and third valve combinations with the left thumb and the little finger to correct intonation. The current location of the trumpets is unknown.

The last quarter-tone trumpet made in a Czech workshop is a quarter-tone trumpet in C produced by the Amati firm in Kraslice. The instrument was developed and manufactured in 1976 at the order of the author – but without his involvement in the design of the instrument – in the Amati workshop. Unlike the other quarter-tone trumpets of that time, the Amati quarter-tone trumpet has only three valves. The form of the instrument is also

PHOTO: CZECH MUSIC INFORMATION CENTER







Quarter-tone trumpet in C manufactured by the Josef Lídl company in Brno

unique: equipped with three piston-valves in the standard arrangement, it is wound such that the tuning slide runs parallel to the third valve slide. With a lever attached to the tuning slide, the trumpeter can lower the overall pitch of the trumpet up to a quarter-tone with the fingers of the left hand while playing. Unlike other quarter-tone trumpet makers, who added another valve to one of their standard models, Amati created a new instrument.

After the one-off performance of the quarter-tone opera *Matka* on May 17th 1931, the quarter-tone instruments in Hába's quarter-tone compositions were not represented in the following years until 1943/44, due to the fact he composed predominantly vocal works during this period. We can assume, however, that at least the keyboard instruments were used as rehearsal and accompaniment instruments in the vocal works and for study purposes in the quarter-tone and sixth-tone music department which Hába led at the Prague Conservatory of Music. Decisive for the interruptions in the development of quarter-tone music were above all the prevailing political conditions in Czechoslovakia since the mid-1930s. The Prague Conservatory of Music, which was a high school, was not closed during the period known as the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. However, Hába had to "limit himself to teaching traditional music theory". Between 1939 and 1945 and again from 1948 to 1954, the music of Alois Hába was considered "degenerate" or, from 1948, "formalistic", and was neither publicly performed nor published.
Neither Alois Hába nor any of his over one hundred students wrote a solo piece for the quarter-tone trumpet. The same is also true regarding their works for chamber music. All told there are only six known compositions which involve the quarter-tone trumpet. Of the forty-six compositions in the quarter-tone system by Alois Hába, only two included the quarter-tone trumpet. The second is Hába's only piece of chamber music with the participation of the quarter-tone trumpet, the *Suita pro čtvrttónovou trompetu a pozoun* (*Suite for Quarter-Tone Trumpet and Trombone*) op. 56 – his 37th work in the quarter-tone system – written in January 1944.

The quarter-tone trumpets in the quarter-tone opera *Matka* fulfil the traditional role of two trumpets as upper voice partners in sustained brass chords and punctuators in aggressive or dramatic moments of the libretto. The quarter-tone trumpet part of the *Suita* is fitting of an independent work without the burden of an accompanying function, but displays only a few features of idiomatic or even characteristic treatment of the trumpet. Contrasting examples to this can be found in the exceptional trumpet parts that Baroque masters composed for the natural trumpet despite instrument's limited range of tonal possibilities.

With practical knowledge and consideration for the limitations of the quarter-tone trumpet, Hába and his students would have been able to compose more sophisticated – but playable – compositions for the instrument. For instance, they could have

PHOTO: MARTIN SEILER

Quarter-tone trumpet in C made by the Amati firm in Kraslice

used the high range of the trumpet to avoid the most out-of-tune valve combinations, which are found in the low register. The upper range of the trumpet is played with the use of fewer valves. Here, the finger technique is facilitated and the characteristic sound of the trumpet appears. Additionally, the pitches of the upper range are more closely spaced, making quarter-tones easier to produce and correct without relying on the use of the quarter-tone valve. Hába did not use the high range of the trumpet in his *Suita*.

It remains an open question whether Alois Hába received specialist information about the trumpet from his pupil Josef Bubák before composing the *Suita*.

Bubák, who was a full-time trumpeter in the Prague Radio Orchestra, completed his composition studies with Hába in 1941. He played the quarter-tone trumpet in the first – and probably single – performance of the *Suita* on March 31st of 1944 in the hall of the Prague City Library. The trombonist, Oldřich Říha, was not a student of Hába.

Of particular interest is the treatment of quarter-tone trumpets in the *Suita pro dva pozouny a dvě čvrttónové trumpety* (*Suite for Two Trombones and Two Quarter-Tone Trumpets*, around 1947) by Josef Bubák. As could be expected, the three short movements of this brass quartet show a greater understanding of the specific problems of the quarter-tone trumpet and a more characteristic treatment of the trumpet per se. To the experienced eye, the trumpet parts appear to have been written for the Bb trumpet. Bubák uses the upper range of the trumpet up to B6 in the first trumpet, while the second trumpet part largely avoids the particularly out-of-tune valve combination in the low register of the trumpet. Fast sixteenth note passages including quarter-tones are played either on a repeated note or in the trombone parts. Unlike Hába's *Suita*, Bubák extended the dynamic range from *p* to *fff*. The fact that Josef Bubák did not write any further compositions for the quarter-tone trumpet can be interpreted as an indication of the problems of the instrument.

Karel Reiner, Hába's most important pupil, was exemplary in terms of compositions for wind instruments. Although Reiner did not play a wind instrument, the majority of his compositions included them. Reiner always consulted professionals in order to adapt his works to the characteristics of each instrument. One possible exception is to be noted is the *Sonatina pro trubku a pozoun ve čvrttónovem systému* (*Sonatina for Trumpet and Trombone in the Quarter-Tone System*, 1946), which Reiner composed for his friend and classmate Josef Bubák on the occasion of the birth of his son as a gift – possibly as a surprise.

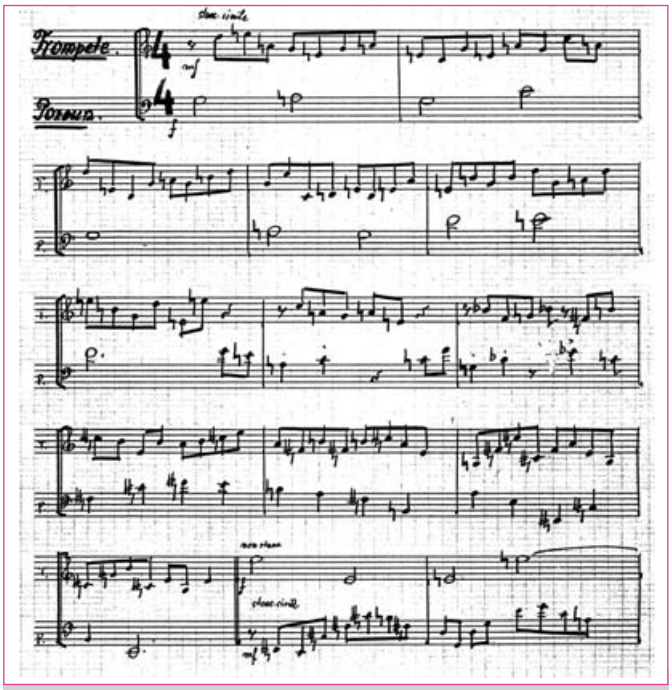
Reiner arranged a Czech Christmas carol, invented a lullaby with a folkish character, expanded a typical little dance, which is partly written in 5/8 metre, and finally rounded off the work with a parody of the famous march *In the New Life* by Josef Suk, in a mixture of humorous irony and caricature. The result is four short independent compositions in which the brass instruments are treated effectively and professionally.

The *Sonatina* was never performed in its original instrumentation. In 1988, it was performed with two pianos tuned a quarter-tone apart. In this arrangement, the tonal character and vocal guidance of the original cannot be sustained because in some instances, both the trumpet and the trombone play

independently whereby both voices contain quarter-tones.
The *Suita* (1944) for quarter-tone trumpet and trombone by Alois Hába and the *Sonatina* (1946) for trumpet and trombone in the quarter-tone system by Karel Reiner were recorded for the first time in their original instrumentation by the author of this article on the Amati quarter-tone trumpet together with the bass trombonist Todd Burke. The sound experience of the original instrumentation creates the possibility of experiencing the musical sense of the quarter-tone intervals, which cannot be conveyed through a visual examination of the score. In both compositions, the quarter-tones are used to create melodies with new intervals.

The already limited interest in quarter-tone music – and consequently in quarter-tone instruments – had faded even before Hába's death in 1973. The 14th String Quartet, written in 1963, is Hába's last quarter-tone composition. With Hába's retirement in 1953, the department for quarter-tone and sixth-tone music at the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague was finally dissolved.
Hába's importance for the history of the trumpet in the 20th century is based on the fact that the first quarter-tone trumpets were built according to his instructions. Equally important is the fact that the first composition in which the quarter-tone trumpet was expressly prescribed was composed by Alois Hába.

The only other example of involvement with the quarter-tone trumpet during the Czechoslovak era was initiated in the 1960s by the well-known jazz trumpeter Jaromír Hnilička in Brno. Hnilička had a quarter-tone trumpet with four rotary valves in Bb tuning built by the Josef Lidl firm in Brno. Although the common jazz trumpet is equipped with piston valves, Lidl chose the German rotary-valve design because the difficulties in fitting the fourth valve could be better accommodated by the rotary-valve instrument. The Hnilička quarter-tone trumpet was a one-off and at the same time the last quarter-tone trumpet made by Josef Lidl.
The *Studie pro čvrttónovou trubku* (*Study for Quarter-Tone Trumpet*, 1964) was the result of a cooperation with the Brno "Third Stream" composer Pavel Blatný. The fact that the trumpeter, instrument maker, and composer all lived and worked in Brno was a fortunate coincidence and is unique in the history of the quarter-tone trumpet in the Czechoslovak era.
The appearance of Jaromír Hnilička and the Gustav Brom Big Band with the Blatný *Study* at the Prague Jazz Festival in 1966 triggered the continuing international interest of jazz trumpeters and solo trumpeters in modern music in the quarter-tone trumpet. Shortly after this performance, a quarter-tone trumpet was built for the American trumpeter and ethno-musicologist Don Ellis in the USA. In 1966, Pavel Blatný composed *Pour Ellis* for him. Even though Ellis credited Hnilička as being the first to perform on the quarter-tone trumpet, Don Ellis remains best known in conjunction with the instrument. Jaromír Hnilička did not continue to play the quarter-tone trumpet. He wrote that playing together with ordinary trumpets was difficult and listeners often thought he was playing out of tune.
Unfortunately, the limited information concerning the origin of the quarter-tone trumpet is incomplete, if not misleading. This article is based on the hope of making a contribution to the real history of the instrument.
The lasting importance on the Czech origins of the quarter-tone trumpet lies in its historical value. Considering the physical limitations of the natural trumpet, the vagaries of changes in style during the Classical era and the largely military role in past ages, the opportunity for the trumpet(-er) to participate in a chapter of 20th century musical history should not be ignored.



Alois Hába: Suite for quarter-tone trumpet and trombone, Op. 56 from 1944 (Allegro risoluto)

by Dina Šnejdarová

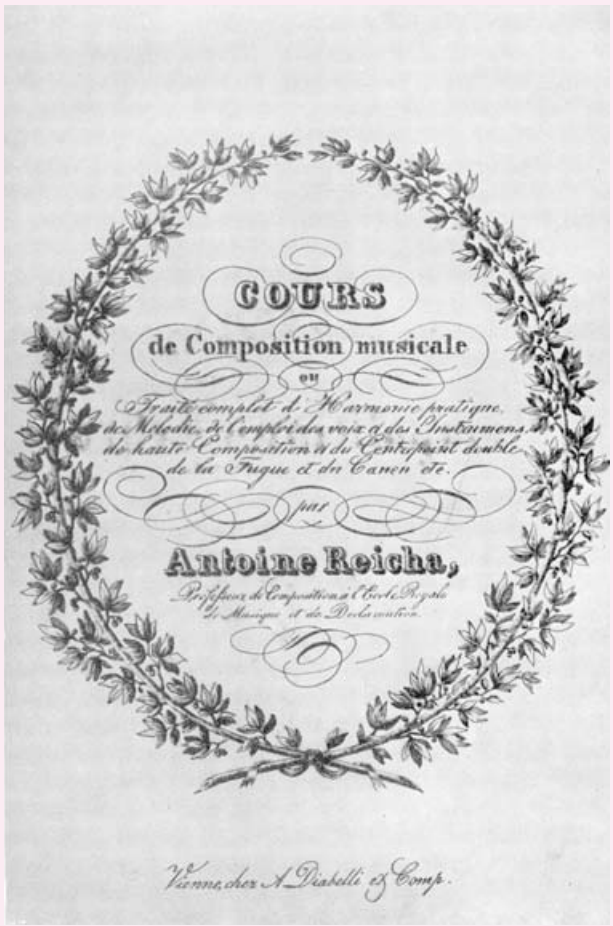
THE EXPERIMENTALIST THE EXPERIMENTALIST THE EXPERIMENTALIST **ANTONÍN REJCHA** THE EXPERIMENTALIST

In many cases, composers of Czech origins who left the Czech lands for a variety of reasons – religious, economical, or political – left behind an unforgettable legacy. One of the most remarkable representatives of this group was the naturalised Frenchman Antonín Rejcha (1770–1836), whom we see primarily as a composer for wind quintet, a theorist, and an exceptional pedagogue. If we look deeper into his life, we can also see an unlucky fellow, an unsuccessful opera composer, a daring musical experimentalist, and a deeply obstinate man.

Antonín Rejcha was born on the 26th of February 1770 in Prague to the town piper Šimon Rejcha. (The composer seems to have used the Czech version of his name until he left the country, when he adopted the German form, Anton Reicha. He later became a citizen of France: Antoine Reicha. In this text, we use the Czech variant of his name.) His father, as the oldest son in the family, bore responsibility not only for his offspring, but also for his siblings, which is why at the time, he supported his brother Josef Rejcha (1752–1795) and his studies in Prague. Josef was twelve years younger than Šimon and later became a successful musician who would prove to be a key figure in Antonín's life.

Only ten months after Antonín's birth, Šimon died unexpectedly and his mother remarried. Four years later, Josef left to take up a position at the court orchestra of the Ötingen-Wallersteins in Swabia. For little Antonín, this marked the beginning of a joyless period in which his enormous desire for learning and exceptionally rich fantasy found no response with neither his mother nor his step-father. Around the year 1780, he decided to run away from home in secret, travelling eighty miles to seek refuge with his grandfather in Klatovy, a town in western Bohemia.

At his grandfather's instigation, Rejcha continued a further hundred and eighty miles to Wallerstein to see his uncle Josef, at the time already an established cellist and composer. It wasn't just that the boy was musically talented – Rejcha's grandfather also decided that it was



Cours de composition musicale (1834)

time to repay the late Šimon for his care. Josef, together with his French wife Lucie Certelet, accepted his young nephew as his own and began diligently caring for his education. Antonín began playing the violin, keyboard instruments, and flute, he studied French and German, and took in all of the performances by the excellent Ötingen-Wallerstein orchestra, which at the time was sometimes referred to as the "Swabian Mannheim". In addition to his duties in the orchestra, Josef Rejcha also went on concert tours (which included a visit to Salzburg, where his playing caught the attention of Leopold Mozart), which led to an offer to take up the position of Capellmeister of the newly established orchestra (and later theatre) of Archbishop Archduke Maximilian Francis of Austria in Bonn. This confluence of coincidences led to Antonín's path crossing with that of his contemporary, Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827), only a few months younger.

New Desires

In 1785, Rejcha's entire family moved to Bonn. Antonín began working in the orchestra as a violinist and flute player, his new colleagues including violist Ludwig van Beethoven and his father Johann. The youths quickly became friends and absorbed all the stimuli the intellectually rich Enlightenment environment offered them. They visited the newly established university and we cannot rule out that they both attended composition lessons with the court organist Christian Gottlob Neefe (1748–1798).
Antonín worked diligently and persistently, carefully studying theoretical treatises on composition, of which the most available were probably *Abhandlungen von der Fuge* (*Treatise on the Fugue,* 1753) by Friedrich Wilhelm Marpurg (1718–1795) and *Die Kunst des reinen Satzes in der Musik* (*The Art of Strict Composition in Music*, 1771–1779) by Johann Philipp Kirnberger (1721–1783). At the university, he was captivated by lectures on Kant's philosophy and by mathematics, and he also applied himself to metaphysics, ethics, and literature.
Most of all, however, he wished to compose, despite his uncle's prohibition – Josef thought Antonín lacked sufficient talent and would simply be wasting his time. His nephew responded in his own particular way: he composed music in secret, and in 1787, he managed to get his first symphony – unfortunately lost – performed. Josef admitted the boy had talent after all, and so the doors finally opened to Antonín's longed-for career of composer. His uncle was a great inspiration, as was a meeting with one of the composer idols of the time – Joseph Haydn (1732-1809), who passed through Bonn at Christmas 1790.

But the idyllic times were disrupted by dramatic political events. The French Revolution literally broke into Antonín's life. He later wrote that the revolution "took away everything" – and particularly the possibility of becoming his uncle's successor (Josef Rejcha was childless). In 1794, the French Revolutionary Army occupied Bonn, the Prince-elector fled the city, and the future of the orchestra became uncertain. Josef Rejcha thus advised his nephew to go to Hamburg. Josef died the following spring and the young musician had to begin shaping his life without relying on family at all.

Searching for a Path

"My ambition is not only limited to occasionally entertaining an audience – I want to instruct them. That is why I work day and night and why I do not want to create works that simply appear and disappear like clouds above the horizon. I work for the future because I have the talent for it and I bear responsibility for it even now. I haven't the least desire for the ephemeral fame of so many of my colleagues who can barely catch their breath but leave nothing behind," Antonín Rejcha confesses in his autobiography (*Notes sur Antoine Reicha,* 1824). And it was probably Hamburg where this uncompromising position on life was born. Here, the composer continued as an autodidact in his favourite disciplines (mathematics, physics, astronomy, and philosophy), studying treatises on music theory, teaching, and considering how he might make composition teaching as effective as possible. He also decided he would only write following his own inner need and not for economic reasons – he would become entirely financially independent.

With this in mind, he began undertaking daring compositional experiments that included combining diverse instrumental colours or thinking through the possibilities of 5/4 metre. During his five years in Hamburg, he composed smaller instrumental and vocal works, two symphonies, and his first opera: *Godefroid de Montfort*. He also met Joseph Haydn for a second time.

Following recommendations from his friends, Rejcha left Hamburg in 1799 to visit Paris. He brought along two operas and two symphonies, with an aim to compose more works while there. Only the two symphonies, opp. 41 and 42, were successful – the Théâtre Feydeau and Salle Favart were closed shortly before the premiere of his new opera, *L'ouragan*.

In 1801, he decided – probably with no small measure of disappointment – to leave Paris for Vienna. To see Joseph Haydn, of course, who became his friend, mentor, and unofficial teacher. They discussed a number of compositional questions including the problems of the instrumental fugue, which was a great challenge to both of them. Rejcha also met Beethoven again, perhaps also perfecting his counterpoint skills with Antonio Salieri (1750–1825) and Johann Georg Albrechtsberger (1736–1809), one of the best composition teachers in Vienna. Rejcha gave private lessons, composed, and became more steadfast in his opinions. He denied, for instance, the alluring post of first Capellmeister and composition teacher at the Berlin court of Prince Louis Ferdinand of Prussia. During the seven years he spent in Vienna, Rejcha did not once stop experimenting – wildly at times. As if he wanted to return to the very roots of music and recast them into something entirely new. Long before the rise of dodecaphony and polytonality, he explored the possibilities of quarter-tones, of mixing two tonalities, of destroying the major-minor system, of using unusual intervallic spacings or asymmetrical rhythmic combinations.

Concurrently – as he was of a systematic nature – he searched for ways to give his ideas rules and order. Chaos did not belong in his world. Perhaps that is why of all compositional techniques, he found the fugue most congenial. The fugue brought calm to his mind, turbulent with fantasy. It was a bridge between music and mathematics, providing him with an ideal creative space. It was his meditation.

He introduced his new system of fugue-writing in a series of 36 fugues for piano (*Trente six fugues pour le pianoforte, composées d'après un nouveau système*, 1803). The set was dedicated to Joseph Haydn and aroused a secret jealousy in Beethoven. Although he made critical remarks in the sense that with Rejcha, a fugue is no longer a fugue, it seems that he let himself be inspired by the new system in his *Variations opp. 34* and *35*. The friendship between the two strong, distinctive personalities could no longer be the same as it was during their youthful days in Bonn, but there was still space for respect and conscious or unconscious mutual inspiration.

Rejcha appended a short theoretical text to the second edition (1805), in which he responded to all the voices criticising his contrapuntal techniques. If we ask after what made his fugues unacceptable to his contemporaries, the answer is hidden in the divergences with established Baroque rules, such as changes in character during the course of the piece, periodic themes in place of aperiodic ones, the minimalist theme on one repeated tone in no. 18, the introduction

to no. 27, the abundance of chromaticism or atypical interval spacings. In addition to the fugues, the year 1803 also saw the publication of the *Practische Beispiele* (1803) with twenty-four experimental pieces imbibed with a mathematico-philosophical foundation arising from Kant's philosophy.

In Vienna, Reicha wrote over fifty pieces. These include operas – once again unsuccessful –, the oratorio *Der Neue Psalm*, a *Requiem* (the influence of G. F. Händel is palpable in both), six string quintets, one piano concerto, and a cantata, *Lenore*, a work which met a fate similar to that of his operas: In Napoleon-occupied Vienna, the cantata could not be performed – the censors would not allow the poem by Gottfried August Bürger (1747–1794) from 1774. This story, inspired by the Seven Years' War (a conflict involving the central European powers which took place between 1756 and 1763) and the philosophy of Johann Gottfried Herder, is a ballad on a fear of fate determined by supernatural powers – in this case, Lenora, a girl who waits in vain for her fiancé to return from the war. She argues with God, she blasphemes despite her mother's warnings, and she is inevitably punished for it. A rider – the dead groom – appears on the stage, takes the bride to the cemetery, where Lenora dies in a twirl of ghosts, never once abandoning hope for forgiveness.

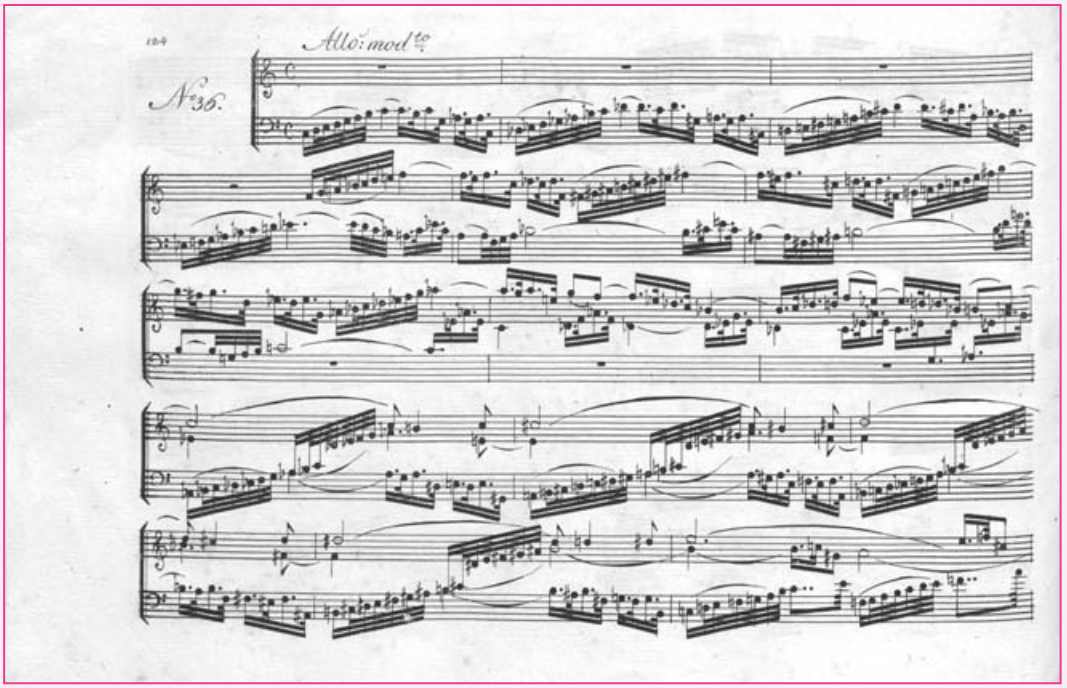
Lenore was impossible to put on in Vienna, so Rejcha attempted to present the work in Leipzig – without success. Napoleon's army was approaching the city, the composer was stranded there for four months without achieving his aims, and he then had to return to Vienna. He did not live to see a performance of the cantata, but his journey to Leipzig was not in vain. He stopped off in Prague on the way, deciding to visit his mother after twenty-six years. The emotional meeting was warmhearted but short – the composer stayed in Prague for only four days and never returned.

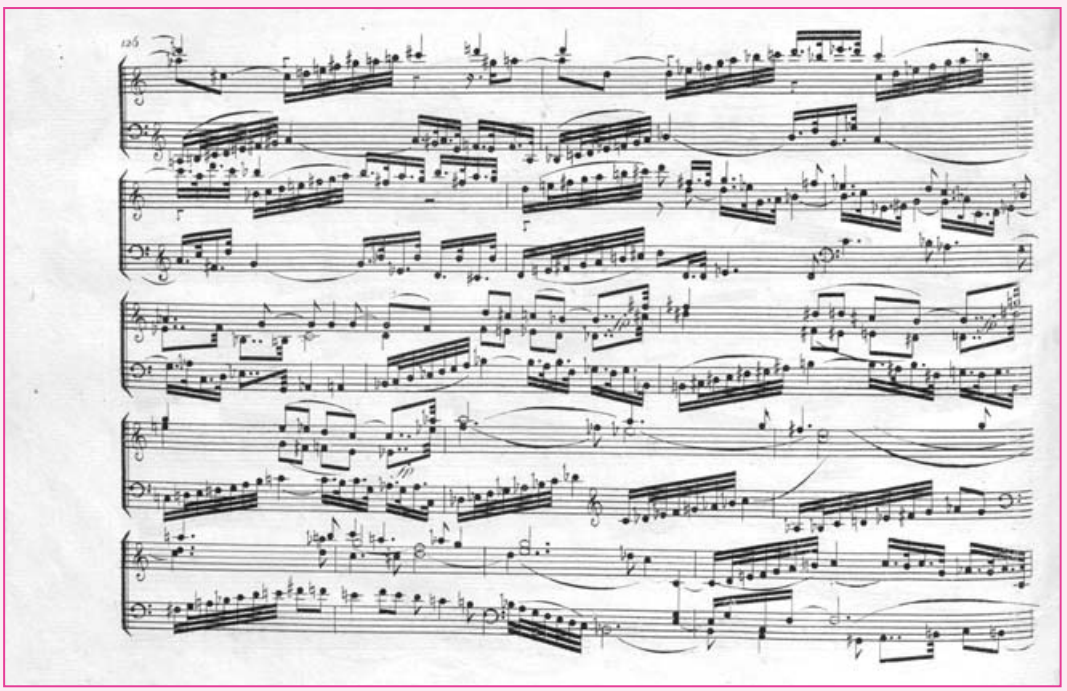
Douce France

Back in Vienna, Rejcha quickly understood that although Austria had signed a peace treaty with Napoleon, a war was on the horizon. He used his contacts with French composers and in the autumn of 1808, he left for Paris (Austria declared war on France on the 9th of April 1809). His second visit could not have been more different from his first. The Czech composer quickly fell in love with France: "I always loved France – it's where my dearest friends are. My customs, my great liveliness, how I see and feel – all this is in surprising accord with the nature of the inhabitants of this happy country," he later commented. And France seemed to feel the same way, as it was here that Antonín

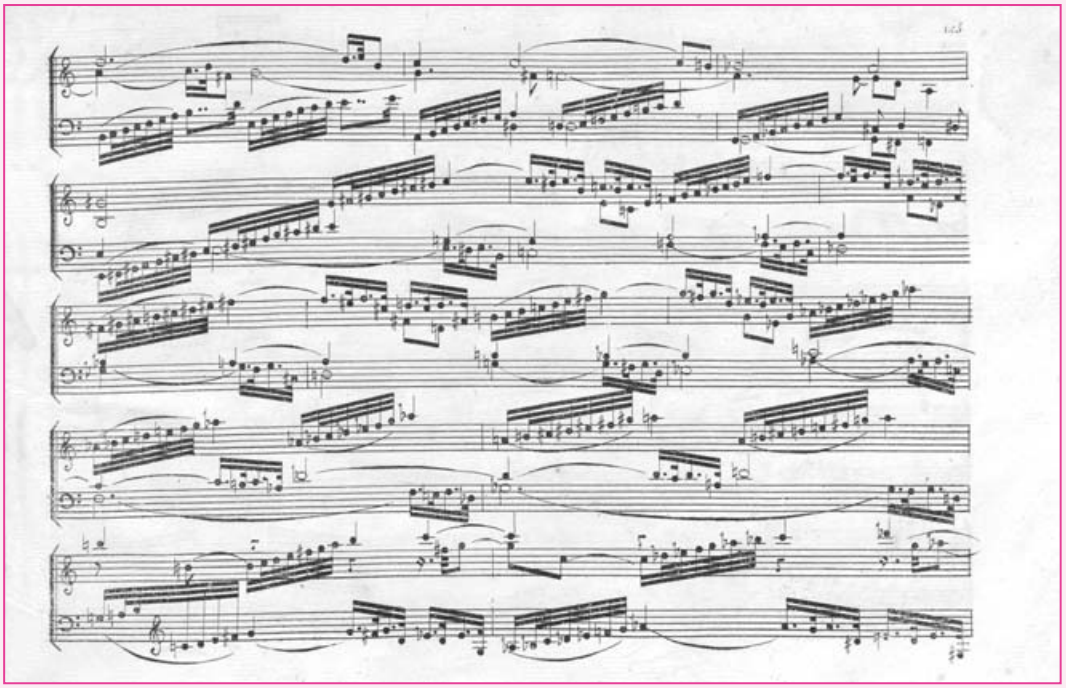

Trente six
FUGUES
pour le Piano-Forté
composées
d'après un nouveau système
par
Antoine Reicha.
à Vienne
M.S. 3244

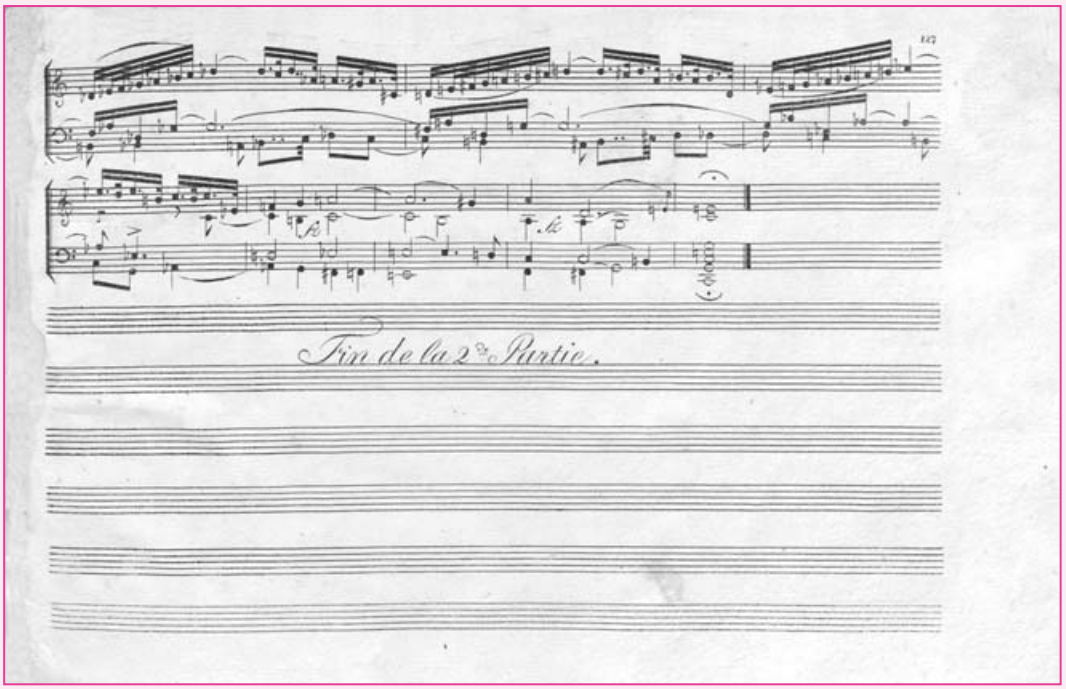
Trente six fugues pour le pianoforte, composées d'après un nouveau système, 1803

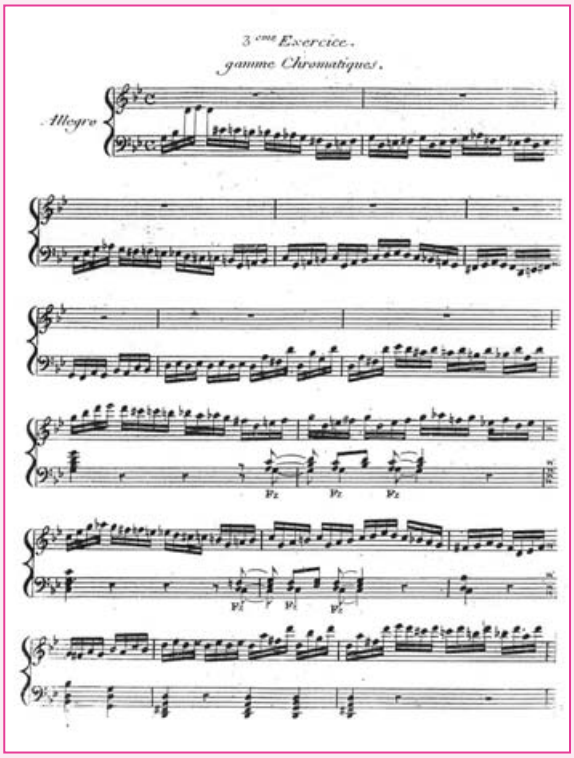


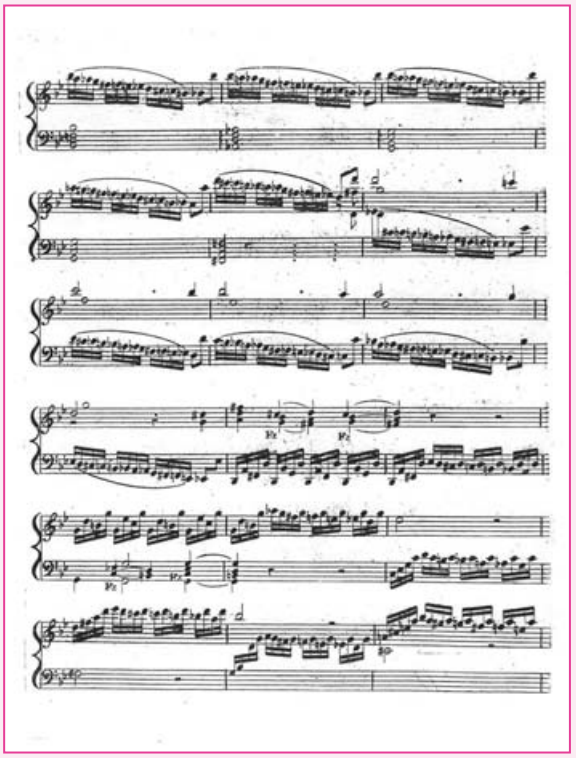


Fugue No. 36 from Trente six fugues pour le pianoforte




Fin de la 2de Partie.



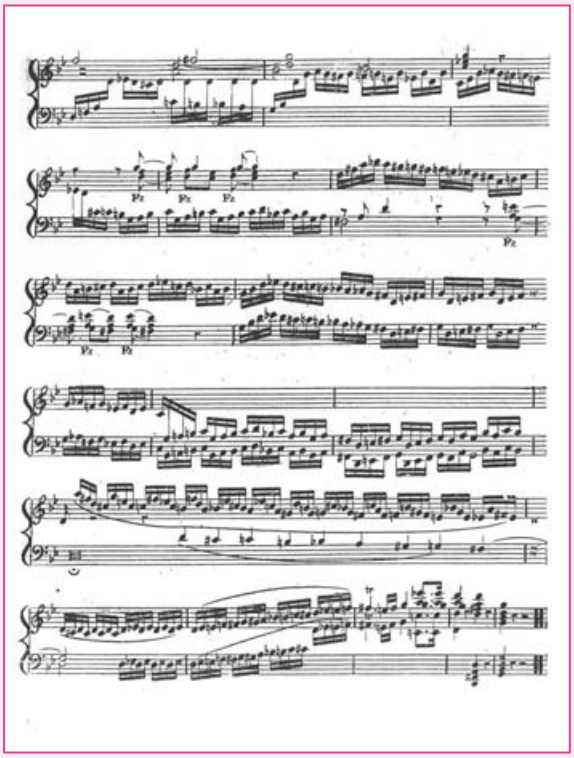


Exercise No. 3 from Etudes ou Exercises pour le pianoforte (1801)

Rejcha achieved his greatest success, appreciation, and personal happiness. With one fatal exception – opera. First, however, let us consider his theoretical activities. In Paris, the composer continued successfully with private lessons, and when he was accepted for a position as counterpoint and fugue teacher at the conservatory, he had already written textbooks on melody and harmony, preceded by a philosophico-aesthetic commentary, *Sur la musique comme art purement sentimental* (*On Music as a Purely Sentimental Art*, 1812–1814). Rejcha incorporated into it a "philosophy of feeling" following the example set by royalist writer Antoine de Rivarol (1753–1801), as well as elements of ancient theories. He also wrote in some detail on the traditional compositional problem of the relationship between poetry and music. He supported the opinion that French is the most universal of all languages – in Rejcha's opinion, its syntax is the only one to correspond to the requirements of common sense, with only the emotional language of music rising above it. The *Traité de mélodie* (*Treatise on Melody*, 1814) is Rejcha's attempt to create a system and set of rules for musical composition. Some of his colleagues, particularly François Joseph Fétis (1784–1871), had reservations about the text, reproaching the author for omitting the treatises of his predecessors (e.g. Johann Matheson's from 1737). Perhaps they were right to an extent, as Rejcha was an autodidact (to a degree), but on the other hand, he was undeniably one of the first to attempt to establish rules for musical-thematic work, including terminology. This was greatly appreciated by one of the great music theorists, Hugo Riemann (1849–1919).

In this treatise, Rejcha applies his deep knowledge of ancient literature, often helping himself along with analogies to sentence structure. He divides musical language down to its smallest particles – melodic atoms, let's say – which he calls *dessin* (in this context, musical figures). He searches for balance, regularity, and symmetry in melodies, appending many practical examples and instructions. Let us not be fooled by the author's cool logic, however – for Rejcha, emotion is essential. It determines whether compositional techniques are applied correctly. In his opinion, a musical idea should speak to our emotion and please our ear.

The following textbook, *Cours de composition musicale, ou Traité complet et raisonné d'harmonie pratique* (*A Course of Musical Composition, or, A Complete and Reasoned Treatise of Practical Harmony,* 1816–18) was so successful at the Paris Conservatoire that it quickly became



the officially used text. It was followed by *Traité de haute composition musicale* (*A Treatise on Advanced Musical Composition*, 1824–6), in which the composer discusses counterpoint, harmony, canon, fugues, musical form, and motivic work. His last book is *Art du compositeur dramatique, ou Cours complet de composition vocale* (*The Art of the Operatic Composer, or, A Complete Course of Vocal Composition,* 1833). These works were well received and within a few years, they were fully or partially translated into English, German, and Italian.

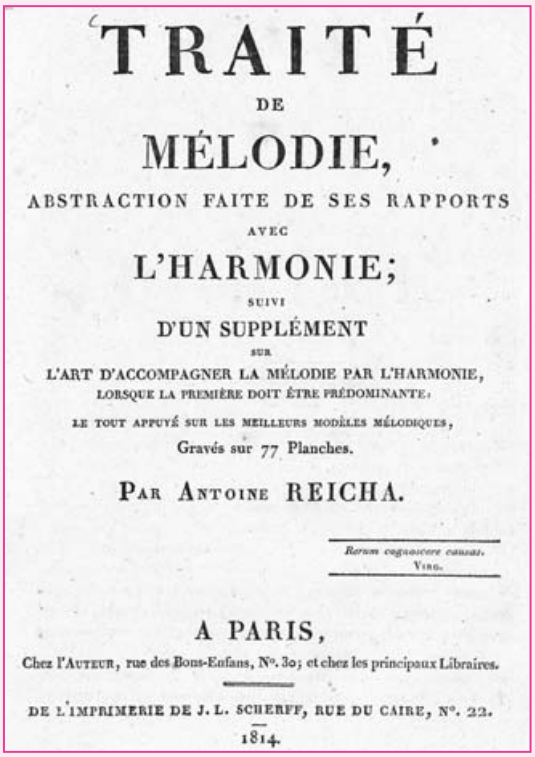
If we shift our attention from Rejcha the theorist to Rejcha the pedagogue, the word on the street in Paris was that his method was unrivalled as to effectivity – he had excellent results, he demanded hard work, set a lot of homework, but he was also progressive and (unlike his colleagues) open to the students. Among his pupils, whether at the conservatoire or in private lessons, were Hector Berlioz, Franz Liszt, Adolphe Adam, Henri Vieuxtemps, Charles Gounod, Louise Farrenc, and among the last, for just under a year, César Franck.

Rejcha's imprints on the work of his pupils are clear, whether these be Berlioz's fugue sections, asymmetrical metres, use of timpani, and emphasis on wind instruments, or Liszt's approach to experimentation. Liszt himself admitted that some of his ideas might have been influenced by Rejcha, and Maurice Emmanuel, composer and professor of history of music, in his 1930 biography of Franck, designated Rejcha as the teacher who had the most essential influence on the work of this composer.

As for Rejcha's oeuvre, his operas were not successful, as we've mentioned, and we can only speculate whether this was down to the composer, his librettists, or behind-the-scenes disputes. The composer had the most esteem for his operas *Sapho* (1822) and *Philoctète* (around 1822; only three choruses have survived). In *Sapho*, his contemporaries had the most admiration for the choral parts, the instrumentation, the comical dance entries, and the motivic work.

Rejcha's fame, however, was mostly down to his wind quintets for flute, oboe, clarinet, horn, and bassoon. Between 1817 and 1820, he published twenty-four pieces for this instrumentation, and he soon celebrated great successes, and not only in Paris: "If I am to believe all the congratulatory letters I have received, they have caused a sensation all around Europe," he wrote with appropriate satisfaction.

Today, we'd say they adequately filled a hole on the market – although Giuseppe Cambini's (1746–1825) quintets were already available, it was only Rejcha who



TRAITÉ

DE

MÉLODIE,

ABSTRACTION FAITE DE SES RAPPORTS

AVEC

L'HARMONIE;

SUIVI

D'UN SUPPLÉMENT

SUR

L'ART D'ACCOMPAGNER LA MÉLODIE PAR L'HARMONIE,

LORSQUE LA PREMIÈRE DOIT ÊTRE PRÉDOMINANTE;

LE TOUT APPUYÉ SUR LES MEILLEURS MODÈLES MÉLODIQUES,

Gravés sur 77 Planches.

PAR ANTOINE REICHA.

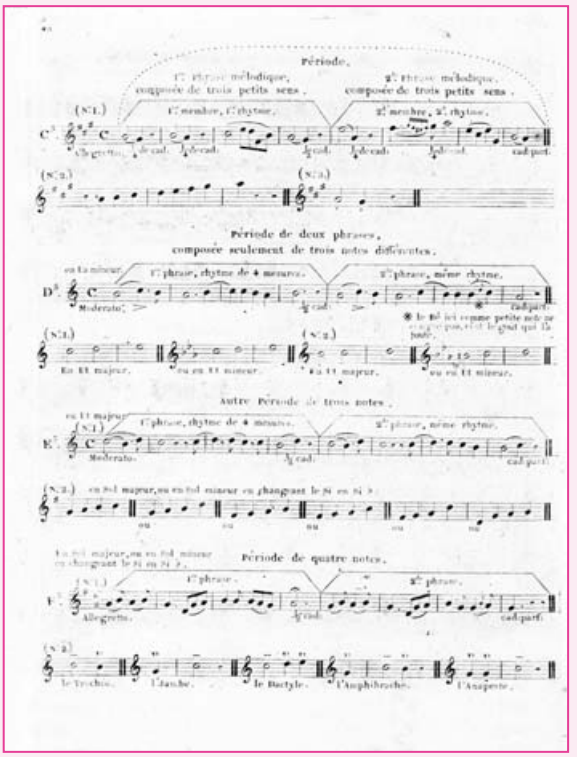
Rerum cognoscere causas.
VIRG.

A PARIS,

Chez l'AUTEUR, rue des Bons-Enfans, N°. 30; et chez les principaux Libraires.

DE L'IMPRIMERIE DE J. L. SCHERFF, RUE DU CAIRE, N°. 22.

1814.



Traité de mélodie (1814)

elaborated this form to such a level that we can refer to him as the founder of the genre. These quintets were an excellent blend of his outstanding knowledge of wind instruments, his tendencies to experimentation, and his maturity. It's no surprise he included many contrapuntal elements in the quintet, but there is also refined playfulness in the instrumental colours, there is elegance, lightness, humour, and virtuosity. Five of Rejcha's former students – by then already esteemed professors at the Paris Conservatoire – had a significant influence on spreading the fame of these pieces, being the first to perform them: Joseph Guillou (flute), Gustave Vogt (oboe), Jacques-Jules Bouffil (clarinet), Louis-François Dauprat (horn), and Antoine Henry (bassoon).

With these professional successes came private joys. In the autumn of 1818, Rejcha married Virginie Enaust, with whom he had two daughters, Antoinette Virginie and Mathilde Sophie. The composer educated his older daughter in music, and it is thanks to her that his autobiography, *Notes sur Antoine Reicha*, has survived: the composer originally dictated it to his student Henri Blanchard (around 1824), and Antoinette later copied it in its entirety. In 1829, he officially became a French citizen, two years later, he was named a Knight of the Legion of Honour, and in 1835, he became a member of the *Académie des Beaux-Arts*. His life ended on the 28th of May 1836.

Antonín Rejcha left behind over ten operas, twenty choral works, pieces for solo voice, nine symphonies which survive in their entirety, over ten overtures, a piano and clarinet concerto, chamber music including pieces for glass harmonica, twenty-four wind quintets, twenty string quartets, three string quintets, and a number of pieces for solo piano.

Throughout his life, he remained true to his principles: "I have no talent for entertaining company, and even less time to spend with company. I can't strive for something, plan intrigues, gain the favour of highly situated men, or spend part of my life in drawing rooms. This is why after twenty years spent in Paris I have no fortune, no high positions – but I have good friends here, I am loved and respected," he proclaimed around the year 1824. And he was right. He did not disappear from the encyclopaedias and textbooks, but today, a large part of his oeuvre is still waiting to be rediscovered.

Bedřich Smetana
My Country

Piano Duo Trenkner / Speidel (Evelinde Trenkner & Sontraud Speidel).
Text: EN, FR, GE.
Recorded: 2016, Konzerthaus der Abtei Marienmünster.
Published: 2017. TT: 80:00. 1 CD MD Gold MDG 930 1960-6.

Antonín Dvořák
Symphony no. 9
Slavonic Dances

Piano Duo Trenkner / Speidel (Evelinde Trenkner, Sontraud Speidel).
Text: EN, FR, GE.
Recorded: 2016, Konzerthaus der Abtei Marienmünster.
Published: 2018. TT: 80:37. 1 CD MD Gold MDG 930 2007-6.

The German piano duo **Trenkner & Speidel (Evelinde Trenkner & Sontraud Speidel)** is not as well known in our parts as the competing Israeli-German artistic and life partners Yaara Tal & Andreas Groethuysen. Unfairly, we might add, because like duo of Tal & Groethuysen – a generation younger –, which every year alternates album after album of original dramaturgy and well known piano four hands literature, Trenkner & Speidel are also letting out one interesting recording after another. The youngest recordings are two albums with Czech repertoire: Smetana's *My Country* in the composer's arrangement and Dvořák's *New World Symphony* in the composer's version for piano four hands and the *Slavonic Dances op. 46*, surprisingly not in the author's original, but in an arrangement by pianist and composer Albert von Doenhoff (1880–1940) made in 1914. Both CDs are linked by a propensity for meditative tempi and sweeping agogics which directly contradict today's rushed speed and spirit, sometimes also going against the interpretive tradition. Both women behind the keyboard stretch the listener's attention to its limits, like in the opening measures of Smetana's symphonic poem *Vyšehrad*, which can easily give one chills. While *Vltava* flows through the five-channel recording in a single legato stroke, in *Vyšehrad*, the pianists literally wait for every note. Despite the shaded dynamics, they do not lose sight of the pieces' dynamic structure, whether we are talking about *Šárka* or *From Bohemian Woods and Meadows*. The introduction of *Tábor* is gripped by a stifling atmosphere and the long withdrawals only serve to heighten the tension. A capacity for strong gradations over large durations is a great skill of the German duo, as is attested to by the firm rhythm and undisturbed direction of *Blaník* towards its closing measures. The younger of the two CDs under review contains Dvořák's *Slavonic Dances* and the *New World Symphony*. Among the thirty or so commercial recordings of the *Slavonic Dances*, this youngest will certainly not lose its way – thanks to, for instance, the perfect interplay in the sixth dance. Undoubtedly the peak of the album is the composer's setting of his 9th symphony. I dare say that compared to the competition, both performers managed to best force out reminiscences of the better known symphonic version of the work, grasping the *New World* as an autonomous form for four hands. It is the most "pianistic" of the extant recordings, in the Largo almost riskily radical in its extremely loose agogics and tempi. I unwittingly remembered Leonard Bernstein's recordings of the *New World*, which the Duo Trenkner & Speidel version matches in its broad tempi, risky agogics, and generous dynamics. The technicians at Dabringhaus & Grimm take considerable credit in the gripping result: thanks to their care, both recordings became true sonic experiences. It is unbelievable how much energy is given out by these two slight older women through the ice cold records in pleasant graphic packaging with solid accompanying texts.

Martin Jemelka

Viktor Kalabis
The Complete Piano Works

Ivo Kahánek – piano.
Text: EN, GE, FR, CZ. Recorded: 2016–2018, Martinů Hall, Prague.
Published: 2019. TT: 2:04:30.
DDD. 2 CD Supraphon SU 4259-2.

We rarely encounter Kalabis' piano works on concert stages today, despite the fact that most of his pianistic oeuvre was published during his lifetime. This Supraphon double CD offers a unique opportunity to acquaint ourselves with all of the composer's pieces for piano, and what's more, in **Ivo Kahánek's** interpretation. The first disc contains three piano sonatas. The early three-movement *Sonata no. 1* op. 2, composed in 1947, is strongly influenced by neo-classicism in the spirit of Prokofiev. The two-movement *Sonata no. 2* op. 4, composed a year later, speaks an entirely different language. I consider its second movement, powered by a colourful narrative (sometimes almost ghostlike), one of Kalabis' most remarkable piano pieces (after all, the composer was apparently very fond of the sonata himself). The *Sonata no. 3* op. 57 is also in two movements, written much later, in 1982. It has a very effective and interestingly coloured slow opening movement. The verbose and formally excessive second movement is unfortunately not among the best of Kalabis' work for piano.
The second disc opens with the eight-part cycle *Akcenty* op. 26 (*Accents*, 1967). These

fresh, imaginative, and relatively short pieces have a comparatively transparent instrumental texture which occasionally seems to remind one of Scarlatti. The representative *Entrata, aria e toccata* op. 41 (1975) refers to its Baroque inspiration already in its name. The *Three Polkas* op. 52 (1979) are something of a curiosity in Kalabis' piano oeuvre. He was a great admirer and champion of the work of Bohuslav Martinů: after 1989, he became the president of the Bohuslav Martinů Foundation, he initiated the establishment of the Bohuslav Martinů Institute, as well as the instrumental competition bearing the composer's name. And in his *Three Polkas* – particularly the first and third – he admits to his great inspiration so vehemently and openly it's almost touching. Another curiosity on this recording is *Čtyři skrývačky pro Grahama* op. 71 (*Four Enigmas for Graham,* 1989). Kalabis dedicated it to the British musicologist Graham Melville-Mason, a great connoisseur and avid promoter of Czech music. The opening movement includes a cryptogram of his given name: *g-r(e)-a-h-a-m(i)*, which also makes an appearance in the three movements that follow. The last pieces on the disc are the *Two Toccatas* op. 88 (1999) and *Allegro impetuoso* op. 89 (1999). Kalabis composed the *Two Toccatas* for the Carl Czerny International Piano Competition. These are effective pianistic compositions without any higher artistic ambitions, more reminiscent of a musical mosaic or collage. *Allegro impetuoso* does have its own opus number, but it is not particularly different in character from the *Two Toccatas*. All of Kalabis' piano compositions have one thing in common: they're very demanding for pianists in all respects – technically and in terms of musical thought and expression. Ivo Kahánek devoted three and a half years of his life to this project, getting deeper into Kalabis' strange pianistic world than probably anyone before him. He plays these pieces with unusual understanding, admirable fantasy, rich nuances of attack and colour, an unwavering sense of humour and poetry, a safe feeling for solid architecture, and, of course, with brilliant, absolutely certain and sovereign technical sill. The pianist deserves our admiration all the more since Kalabis' piano pieces (essentially quite exclusive and often considerably sophisticated) are hard to make use of in on the concert circuit.

Věroslav Němec

Ivan Ilić
Reicha Rediscovered, Vol. 2

Ivan Ilić – piano.
Text: EN, DE, FR. Recorded: 2018, Potton Hall, Dunwich, Suffolk. Published: 2018. TT: 62:35. DDD.
1 CD Chandos CHAN 20033.

The second disc in a five-piece project by the Serbian-American pianist **Ivan Ilić** **Reicha** *Rediscovered* is at least as attractive and alluring as the first in the series. The artist now offers premiere recordings of the first thirteen of the famous (yet virtually unperformed) *Études dans le genre Fugué pour le Piano-Forte* op. 97. The title is, however, somewhat misleading. In truth, each etude (there are thirty-four altogether) consists of two parts: a prelude followed by a fugue (in its conception, then, this work of Rejcha's is similar to Bach's famous *Well-Tempered Clavier*). As on the first disc, the listener can admire Rejcha's remarkable creative fantasy and originality, perfectly mastered compositional craft, the spirit of his compositions, a likeable courage for a variety of experiments, and an unmissable sense of humour. The preludes themselves are often more characteristic pieces capable of existing autonomously, and could even serve as a small textbook of musical forms (the passacaglia of prelude no. 8, the canon of prelude no. 11, the minuet of prelude no. 13, the variation form and refined counterpoint of prelude no. 3). The fugues are no less original, perfectly worked out compositionally (Rejcha is considered one of the greatest masters of the fugue in the history of music) and often containing within them an unexpected surprise. We can best appreciate Rejcha's sense of humour in the comical and playful fugue no. 8, and particularly in the 13th fugue, whose dignified procession is continually interrupted by comical "trumpet" commentaries. After all, not even the 12th fugue from the *36 Fugues for Piano*, which is appended to the end of the recording, does not lack – with its 2/8 metre and a number of rests – humorous moments. Already on the first disc, Ivan Ilić proved that Rejcha's pianistic oeuvre is close to his heart and that he is excellently disposed for it: he plays with cultivation and without trying to assert himself, he retreats modestly into the background, giving as much space as possible to the composer. He can clearly, lucidly, and logically segment the musical text however complicated this might be, he works very subtly with dynamics and rubato and allows the listener to enjoy Rejcha's music in its purest form. It must be said the Ilić is a great connoisseur and avid champion of Rejcha's pianistic legacy. Not only did he write an illuminating booklet text for this album, he also offers several episodes of engaging commentary on Rejcha's life and work on YouTube, which I can also recommend.

Věroslav Němec

Tomáš Šenkyřík
Slavík (Nightingale)

Skupina.
Text: EN. Recorded: 1978, 2017, 2018. Published: 2019. TT: 48:27.
1 MC and digital release, https://skupina.bandcamp.com/album/slav-k

After a three-year break, this newest work by the Brno-based collective Skupina presents field recordings by sound artist Tomáš Šenkyřík. This new album is an in-depth exploration of the musical dimension of the song of the nightingale, one of the most famous singers in the animal kingdom. The recording is available as a digital download and a limited edition cassette. Side A captures the song of the nightingale in three locations

near Židlochovice in southern Moravia, combining into one track recordings from 1978, 2017, and 2018. Side B presents recordings from the same locations, but sans nightingale, capturing the rustle of trees and the crackling of ice on the Šatava river. At a time when bird numbers are rapidly falling for unknown reasons and speculations include electromagnetic radiation, pesticides, aridity, intensive agriculture, and aviation, Šenkyřík's recording inevitably takes on an environmentally critical dimension. It is not simply a commentary on the wider contexts of the life of a single species of bird, however. The musical dimension of birdsong has been developed by a number of composers, and in the case of field recordings, it is an overused natural phenomenon which easily acquires a kitschy character, especially when the artist wants to instantly teleport the listener to an imaginary space of virgin nature. Especially on the second side of the cassette, the layers of sound make it crucially complicated what we can admit as natural and as artificial. The rustles gradually layer over one another, acquiring unusual forms: the rush of water transforms into repeated plane fly-overs or the distant hiss of cars. All this makes it apparent that this is not a musical recording in the traditional sense of the world – not even repeated listenings allow one to get deeper into the recording and the sonic stream remains incomprehensible, which is what gives it its unnatural attraction. Šenkyřík's recording thus avoids kitsch, as it does not try to present the nightingale as soothing ambient sounds, instead gaining its engagement by pointing out the impossibility of identifying with inhuman birds. This thought is also extended by the text appended to the recording, in which Vít Bohal develops the ideas of Vilém Flusser. This philosopher, whose fate was very similar to the dynamics of migrating birds, is often referred to primarily as a theorist of visual media, despite the fact that he also worked on sound and music (see the mono-thematic double issue of Flusser Studies magazine). Flusser's work – in addition to radically disrupting the idea of philosophy as a primarily academic discipline for a few initiates – provides many impulses for thinking about the sonic dimension of language. He demonstrates that a musical conception of various forms of speech manifests itself when we *don't* understand: it's sonic and potentially musical component is developed when the recipient fails to decode a set of signs and ascribe meaning to them. In the case of birds – and perhaps in the world of different music in general – it holds true that we have to not understand first in order to truly know the music hidden in the sounds around us.

Jan Sůsa

Smetana Trio
Zemlinsky, Rachmaninov, Arensky: Piano Trios

Smetana Trio
(Jitka Čechová – piano,
Radim Kresta – violin,
Jan Páleníček – cello).
Produced by: Matouš Vlčinský. Text: CZ, EN, GE, FR. Recorded: 2018, Studio Martínek, Prague. Published: 2019. TT: 73:40. DDD. 1 CD Supraphon SU 4258-2.

On Tuesday the 23rd of April 2019, the Smetana Trio launched its newest recording in Prague's Church of St Lawrence on Hellichova Street, featuring three piano trios by three neo-Romantic composers: Anton Arensky, Alexander Zemlinsky, and Sergei Rachmaninov. This is the tenth project by the Smetana Trio on the best known Czech label, Supraphon, and it is also the first recording which the trio has made with its new member Radim Kresta, who replaced Jiří Vodička at the violin chair last spring. All three trios were composed at the end of the 19th century in the narrow space between 1892 and 1896, and they are all in minor keys. The first piece on the disk is the three-movement Piano Trio in D Minor op. 3 by Alexander Zemlinsky – the most grave, dramatic, and compositionally complex of the three works on the CD. It is followed by the darkened single-movement Trio élégiaque No. 1 in G minor (1892) by Sergei Rachmaninov, which despite its somewhat more lucid instrumental textures tails closely behind the first piece in terms of expressive weight. It is only the last movement, Anton Arensky's Piano Trio no. 1 in D Minor op. 32, that brings light and peace to this disc. It presents music of a generally lyrical character, sometimes almost reminiscent of salon music. We have had multiple occasions to learn that Romantic works are dear to the Smetana Trio, and this recording only confirms this – it seems to be bursting with emotion. They rush to us from the first movement of the Zemlinsky in large, immensely effective agogic and dynamic waves which rise suggestively in gradients so tense and riveting one almost cannot breathe. The ensemble is enormously in sync, which is why it can allow itself to work completely freely with rubatos and time. In tutti passages, they achieve almost orchestral sounds and colours, in lyrical sections, the artists move us their gentle sensitivity, and in the solos, their cantilena often sounds almost like the human voice. We shouldn't even have to mention the performers' impeccable technique: the recording offers numerous brilliantly played passages whose difficulty is akin to the most demanding solo concerti. Listeners that enjoy grand Romantic emotions should certainly not miss this CD. After all – I am not alone in my interest in this recording: it won the Smetana Trio the prestigious BBC Music Magazine Chamber Choice in June 2019.

Věroslav Němec

85th
concert season
2019/2020

Prague
Philharmonic
Choir

Prague
Salzburg
Hong Kong
Moscow
Hamburg
Bregenz

Prague Philharmonic Choir

Lukáš Vasilek / principal conductor

FOUNDER MINISTRY OF CULTURE CZECH REPUBLIC

www.**philharmonicchoir.cz**
facebook.com/**filharmonickysbor**
instagram.com/**praguephilharmonicchoir**

5th Benefit Concert of the Bohuslav Martinů Institute

8 November 2019 / 7.30 pm

The Kaiserstein Palace, Prague, CZ

PHOTO MARCO BORGGREVE

Pavel Haas Quartet

One of the "Top 10 String Quartets" (The Gramophone 2/2019)

PLEASE SUPPORT OUR PROJECT "The Bohuslav Martinů Complete Edition"

For anyone, who cannot attend, and would like to support our scientific work, is a possibility to send donations to:

Fio Bank, IBAN: CZ6420100000002300633685, SWIFT/BIC: FIOBCZPPXXX

RSJ GENERAL PARTNER

institut bohuslava martinů

NADACE BOHUSLAVA MARTINŮ

Bärenreiter Praha

SUPRAPHON

KAISERŠTEJNSKÝ PALÁC

more information: **www.martinu.cz**

e-mail: **martinu@martinu.cz**

24/11/2019
ASCOLTA (D)*
SATOKO INOUE (J)**

1/12/2019
TRIO CATCH (D)***
POING (N)

Pražský festival
soudobé hudby
Prague Contemporary
Music Festival

Contempuls[10]

**Czech premiere*
MARTIN SMOLKA / JIŘÍ ADÁMEK:
Vor dem Gesetz *(Before the Law)*
for 7 speaking musicians with side instruments,
based on a short story by Franz Kafka

***world premiere*
LUBOŠ MRKVIČKA: For Piano, Part K

****world premiere, commissioned by Contempuls*
JAKUB RATAJ:
IOI, Interludium – Origin's Ichor

With the support of the Ministry of Culture
and the Municipality of Prague
Festival partner
DOX Centre for Contemporary Art

www.contempuls.cz