

THE BOHUSLAV MARTINŮ FOUNDATION
THE BOHUSLAV MARTINŮ INSTITUTE
THE INTERNATIONAL MARTINŮ CIRCLE

MARTINŮREVUE

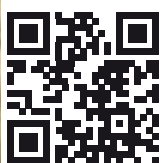
may—august 2014 / vol. XIV / no. 2

Julia Fischer at Prague
Spring Festival

Opera What Men Live By

Martinů: A Bridge Between
Two Cultures

Peephole into the Bohuslav
Martinů Center in Polička



BOHUSLAV MARTINŮ IN THE YEAR OF CZECH MUSIC &

BOHUSLAV MARTINŮ

DAYS

2014

PROLOGUE

14+15+16 SEPTEMBER 2014

9.00 pm · Lesser Town of Prague Cemetery
Eva Blažičková – choreographer
MARTINŮ · *The Bouquet of Flowers*, H 260

7 OCTOBER 2014 · 8.30 pm · HAMU, Martinů Hall, Prague

Concert in the occasion of 100th anniversary of Josef Páleníček's birth
Smetana Trio, Wenzel Grund – clarinet
MARTINŮ · *Piano Trio No 2*, H 327
(+ PÁLENÍČEK, JANÁČEK)

2 NOVEMBER 2014 · 7.00 pm · National Theatre, Prague

Ballet ensemble of the National Moravian-Silesian Theatre,
Nataša Novotná – choreographer
MARTINŮ · *The Strangler*, H 314
(+ SMETANA, JANÁČEK)

2 DECEMBER 2014 · 5.00 pm · Hall of Prague Conservatory

Concert Marking the 40th Anniversary of the Dvořák Society
for Czech and Slovak Music – programme see page 3

BOHUSLAV MARTINŮ DAYS

30 NOVEMBER 2014 · 7.00 pm · HAMU, Martinů Hall, Prague

Concert of the winners of Bohuslav Martinů Competition
in the Category Piano Trio and String Quartet

2 DECEMBER 2014 · 7.30 pm · HAMU, Martinů Hall, Prague

Kühn Children's Choir, choirmasters: Jiří Chvála, Petr Louženský
Panocha Quartet members (Jiří Panocha, Pavel Zejfart – violin,
Miroslav Sehnoutka – viola), Jan Kalfus – organ, Petr Kostka – recitation,
Ivan Kusnjer – baritone, Daniel Wiesner – piano
MARTINŮ · *Three Sacred songs*, H 339, *Opening the Springs*, H 354
(+ J. NOVÁK, KURZ, TEMPL)

5 DECEMBER 2014 · 7.30 pm · HAMU, Martinů Hall, Prague

Academic Chamber Soloists, Leoš Svárovský – conductor
Štěpán Drtina – cello, Hana Hrachovinová – harp
MARTINŮ · *Toccata e due canzoni*, H 311
(+ ŠAROUN, FELD, VON WILM)

10+11 DECEMBER 2014 · 7.30 pm · Municipal House, Smetana Hall, Prague

Prague Symphony Orchestra, Tomáš Brauner – conductor
Roman Janál – baritone, Tomáš Jamník – cello
MARTINŮ · *Concerto No 1 for Cello and Orchestra*, H 196
(+ KLUSÁK, DVOŘÁK)

15 DECEMBER 2014 · 7.30 pm · St. Vavřinec Church, Prague

Soňa Červená – recitation, Karel Košárek – piano
MARTINŮ · *Film en miniature*, H 148, *La revue de cuisine*, H 161
(+ ULLMANN, KUBELÍK)

17+18+19 DECEMBER 2014 · 7.30 pm · Rudolfinum, Dvořák Hall, Prague

Czech Philharmonic, Jiří Bělohlávek – conductor,
Martinů Voices, Lukáš Vasilek – choirmaster
Ivan Kusnjer – baritone, Jan Martiník – bass, and others
MARTINŮ · *What Men Live by*, H 336
(+ DVOŘÁK)

www.martinu.cz



Česká filharmonie



Contents

3 highlights

4 news

5 incircle news

6 opera
**BOHUSLAV MARTINŮ'S SOLDIER
AND DANCER**
OLGA JANÁČKOVÁ
THE SOLDIER AND THE DANCER IN PLZEŇ
EVA VELICKÁ

8 portrait
GEOFF PIPER
MARTINA FIALKOVÁ

10 festivals
**JULIA FISCHER AT PRAGUE SPRING
FESTIVAL**
FRANK KUZNIK
TWO STARS ENCHANT THE RUDOLFINUM
PRAVOSLAV KOHOUT

12 research
WHAT MEN LIVE BY
GREGORY TERIAN

14 reviews
JULIETTE IN BREMEN
MIRANDOLINA IN MUNICH

16 project
**BOHUSLAV MARTINŮ:
A BRIDGE BETWEEN TWO CULTURES**
JULIA FADY-WELTERLEN
FOUR MARTINŮ CANTATAS
LUBOŠ STEHLÍK

18 research
**THE LEGEND OF THE SMOKE FROM
POTATO FIRES**
PAVEL ŽŮREK

19 peephole into the bohuslav martinů
center in polička /9

concerts

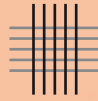
8 September 2014

> Suntory Hall, Tokyo, Japan
www.tmsso.or.jp

Symphony No. 4, H 305

Bouquet of Flowers, H 260

Yukiko Šrejmová Kinjo, Markéta Cukrová,
Peter Berger, Adam Plachetka (Soloists)
New National Theatre Chorus
Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra
Jakub Hrůša (Conductor)



Tokyo
Metropolitan
Symphony
Orchestra

15 + 16 + 17 October 2014

> Rudolfinum, Dvořák Hall, Praha, CZ

Symphony No. 4, H 305

Czech Philharmonic
Jiří Bělohlávek (Conductor)

2 December 2014

> Hall of Prague Conservatory, Praha, CZ

Concert Marking the 40th Anniversary of the Dvořák Society for Czech and Slovak Music

K. Janovický: *Preludium and double Fugue for String Orchestra*
K. Janovický: *Piece for cello and piano* (2013)
(in the occasion of 80th anniversary of Graham Melville Mason)
A. Dvořák: *Trio g minor, Op. 26*
B. Martinů: Trio No. 2 d minor, H 327
J. Hanuš: *Sonata quasi una fantasia for Oboe and Piano Op. 61*
A. Dvořák: *Serenade E major Op. 22 for Strings* (excerpts)
Quattro String Orchestra,
Marek Štílec (Conductor)
Orbis trio, Vilém Veverka, Martin Kasík, Jitka Vlašánková

11 + 12 December 2014

> Janáček Theatre, Brno, CZ
www.ndbrno.cz

The Epic of Gilgamesh, H 351 – premiere of the Critical Edition

Adriana Kohůtková (Soprano),
Peter Berger (Tenor),
Jiří Hájek (Baritone),
Adam Plachetka (Basbaritone),
Czech Philharmonic Choir of Brno,
Petr Fiala (Choirmaster)
Brno Philharmonic
Aleksandar Marković (Conductor)

operas

8 + 10 + 11 + 19 + 30 November 2014,

2 December 2014

> Bayerische Staatsoper, München, Germany
www.bayerische.staatsoper.de

Mirandolina, H 346

Christian Stückl (Director),
Oksana Lyniv (Conductor)

BAYERISCHE
STAATSOPER

21 September / 9 November 2014

> J. K. Tyl Theatre in Plzeň, CZ
www.djkt-plzen.cz

The Soldier and the Dancer, H 162

Tomáš Pilař (Director), Petr Kofroň (Conductor)

20th MARTINŮ FESTTAGE 2014

15-29 November 2014

Basel, Switzerland

www.martinu.ch



15 November

> Stadtcasino Basel/Festsaal
KAMMERORCHESTER BASEL – CHRISTOPH POPPEN
JUILLIARD STRING QUARTET
Concerto for String Quartet and Orchestra, H 207
Sinfonietta "La Jolla", H 328

19 November

> Museum Tinguely
"RENDEZ-VOUS MIT MARTI... NOUS"
Tanz & Perkussion
Improvisation on Martinů's **Film en miniature, H 148**

23 November

> Museum Tinguely
ENRICO PIERANUNZI / PIANO
VERONICA HARCSEA / VOCAL
Songs by Honegger, Poulenc and Martinů

25 November

> Stadtkino Basel
ANDREAS HOMOKI PRESENTS: **JULIETTE**

29 November

> Stadtcasino Basel / Hans Huber Saal
DORIC STRING QUARTET
ROBERT KOLINSKY / PIANO
Piano Quintet No. 2, H 298

120th anniversary of Charlotte Martinů's birth

MONDAY 21 JULY 2014 marked the jubilee 120th anniversary of the birth of Martinů's wife Charlotte Martinů (née Quennehen), a lifetime companion of the composer who established the Bohuslav Martinů Foundation in Prague. ■
More info: www.martinu.cz



NEW PUBLICATIONS



New publication on Martinů in Spanish
JAROSLAV MIHULE: Bohuslav Martinů - Símbolo y música.
1 a ed. - Buenos Aires: Ekumene - Comenius Cultural Center, 2012, 580 p.
Translated by Helena Voldánová
ISBN 978-987-9484-32-6

ROBERT C. SIMON:
Bohuslav Martinů: A Research and Information Guide
Routledge 2014, 284 p.,
ISBN-10: 0415741947

This annotated bibliography uncovers the wealth of resources available to prospective researchers and supports emerging scholarship and inquiry into the life and music of this Czech composer. It includes all secondary sources on Martinů and his music, as well as chronology of his life and a complete list of works.

Robert Simon is the Music Librarian at the University of Notre Dame, Indiana, USA. He has worked extensively on the music of Bohuslav Martinů, frequently collaborating with the Bohuslav Martinů Institute in Prague, and currently serves as Chairman of the International Martinů Circle. ■



IMC NEWS

martinů strings prague and jaroslav šonský to tour slovakia and hungary

LED BY Jaroslav Šonský, the 12-member ensemble is an exponent of the Czech string tradition, which has always been characterised by musicality, melodiousness and a distinct Slavonic sound. Martinů Strings Prague (MSP) is made up of superlative instrumentalists who have gained experience both as soloists and in the finest Czech orchestras and chamber ensembles. The violinist Jaroslav Šonský, MSP's founder and artistic director, and also a member of the Board of the International Martinů Circle, is a seasoned soloist, chamber player and music manager. Based in Sweden, he travels to Prague to work with his ensemble. 2014 has been designated the Year of Czech Music, and also marks the 55th anniversary of Bohuslav Martinů's death. As part of the Year of Czech Music

programming, MPS is scheduled to tour Slovakia and Hungary from **7 to 11 October 2014**. All the concerts on this tour will include two Martinů works: *Serenade No. 4 (Divertimento)* for string orchestra, H 215, and the *Concerto for Flute, Violin, Piano and Strings*, H 252 in a new arrangement made by Šonský and approved by the Bohuslav Martinů Foundation. MSP will be joined by two young soloists: the flautist Jana Jarkovská and the pianist Bohumír Stehlík - both winners of several international competitions.

In Slovakia, Martinů Strings Prague will open the 21st edition of the Days of Czech Culture in Košice, a city with a large ethnic Czech population. The festival will also take place in other towns in Eastern Slovakia, with MSP scheduled to give a performance in Prešov too. The tour will continue in Hungary, where concerts will be held under the auspices of the Czech Centre in Budapest in Old Buda and in Pécs, a major cultural centre in the south of the country. The two concerts are significant contributions to the Year of Czech Music. The prologue to the MSP tour will take place at the Czech Museum of Music in Prague on Sunday **5 October 2014**.
/ Martina Fialková

NEW CDs

FROM BOHEMIA TO WESSEX Cello Music from the Twentieth Century

John Barton Armstrong, Bohuslav Martinů, Peter Thompson.
Bohuslav Martinů: *Sonata No 2 for Cello and Piano*, H 286
Lionel Handy - Cello, Nigel Clayton - Piano
Sleeveless RECORDS 2014, LC 20736. Recorded 2013
Distribution: Fand Music Press, www.fandmusic.com

MARTINŮ CELLO SONATAS 1-3

+ Sibelius, Mustonen
Bohuslav Martinů: *Sonata No 1 for Cello and Piano*, H 277,
Sonata No 2 for Cello and Piano, H 286,
Sonata No 3 for Cello and Piano, H 340
Steven Isserlis - Cello, Olli Mustonen - Piano
BIS Records AB, BIS-2042 SACD. Sweden, 2014. Recorded 2013.



MARTINŮ REVUE (formerly Bohuslav Martinů Newsletter) is published by the International Martinů Circle in collaboration with the Bohuslav Martinů Institute in Prague with the financial support of the Bohuslav Martinů Foundation. **Published with the financial support of the Ministry of Culture of Czech Republic, code No. MKCRX006Z32Y**

Editors

Zoja Seyčková & Lucie Harasim,
Bohuslav Martinů Institute
Justin Krawitz (English language editor)

Publisher's Office

International Martinů Circle, o.s.
IČ: 22688846
Bořanovická 14, 182 00 Praha 8-Kobylisy,
Czech Republic
e-mail: incircle@martinu.cz
www.martinu.cz

Translation Hilda Hearne

Photographs

The Bohuslav Martinů Foundation's
and Institute's archive, collections of the
Bohuslav Martinů Center in Polička

Graphic Design David E. Cíglér

Printing BOOM TISK, spol. s r.o.

The Martinů Revue is published
three times a year in Prague.

Cover

Bohuslav Martinů with friends,
Switzerland, Alps, 1948



ISSN 1803-8514
MK ČR E 18911

www.martinu.cz

THE PREVIOUS ISSUE



THE BOHUSLAV MARTINŮ CENTER IN POLIČKA

offers an interesting, inter-actively conceived exhibition on the composer's life and work. The modern display of Bohuslav Martinů's life and work is located in the historical building of the former council school, which Martinů attended as a child. Consequently, the project also comprises a reproduction of Martinů's classroom, complete with period painting and furniture. The centre also contains an audio-visual hall and study room.

Bohuslav Martinů Center
Tylova 114, 572 01 Polička
tel.: +420 461 723 857
www.cbmpolicka.cz



incircle news

IMC BOARD MEETING 2014

THIS YEAR'S BOARD MEETING will be held on **16 December 2014 at 10 a.m. at the Martinů Foundation Hall in Prague** (Bořanovická 14, Praha 8). This coincides with the opening of a new production of the opera **WHAT MEN LIVE BY** – concert performance (see page 12).

We would like once again to express our gratitude to Mr. Geoff Piper for his great efforts and long-term work as a member of the IMC Board. You can read Martina Fialková's portrait of this assiduous Martinů supporter on page 8.

CONCERT IN JAPAN

CONCERT in which the IMC will participate will be held in **JAPAN, 8 September 2014, Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra, Suntory Hall, Tokyo – Martinů: Symphony No. 4, Martinů: Bouquet of Flowers** (see page 3).

Jakub Hruša, President of the IMC, will conduct a performance of Martinů compositions and will meet the new member of our Board, Mr. **PETR HOLÝ**, the former director of the Czech Centre in Tokyo. More information about the concert and the new IMC Board member will follow in the next issue of the Martinů Revue.

We would like to express our gratitude to Mari Tokuda, Regional Board member in Japan, for translating the IMC leaflet into Japanese.

Jana Honzíková

CD BOHUSLAV MARTINŮ DAYS 2012

Bohuslav Martinů: Symphony No. 5, H 310,
rec. 1948 by NBC Orchestra
and Ernest Ansermet

Bohuslav Martinů: Cello Sonata No. 2, H 286,
Václav Petr – Cello,
Alena Kohoutová – Piano



NEW E-SHOP PURCHASE

From Autumn 2014, new promotional materials will be available for purchase via the Bohuslav Martinů e-shop. In addition to publications and CDs already available for order, there will be Martinů badges, cotton bags and t-shirts.



DON'T MISS

CONCERT MARKING THE 40th ANNIVERSARY OF THE DVOŘÁK SOCIETY FOR CZECH AND SLOVAK MUSIC IN THE UK, in which the IMC will participate. During the course of this event, there will be a meeting of members of the Dvořák Society for Czech and Slovak Music in the UK, the Antonín Dvořák Society in the Czech Republic and the International Martinů Circle.

► **2 December 2014** · 5 pm · Na Rejdišti 1, Prague 1 · **Hall of Prague Conservatory, Prague.**



Jakub Hruša,
President of IMC

Magdalena Kožená,
IMC Patron

International Martinů Circle

GENERAL INFORMATION

Members receive the illustrated *Martinů Revue* published three times a year plus a special limited edition CD containing world premieres, historic performances and archival recordings from the annual Martinů Festival not obtainable commercially.

The IMC is supported by the Bohuslav Martinů Foundation and Bohuslav Martinů Institute in Prague.

MEMBERSHIP & SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

- **YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION:**
25 EUR / 30 USD / 18 GBP / 450 CZK
- **SUBSCRIPTION FOR CORPORATE MEMBERS: 100 EUR**
includes 10 copies of each *Revue*
PLUS 3 copies of the special limited edition CD
- **SPECIAL RATE for music students**
under 25 years of age:
10 EUR / 250 CZK
- **SINGLE COPIES OF THE REVUE:**
80 CZK / 3 EUR / 4 USD + postage

For further details and for single copies of the *Martinů Revue* contact:

Jana Honzíková

phone: +420 773 656 586

e-mail: incircle@martinu.cz

The International Martinů Circle, o.s.
Bořanovická 1779/14
182 00 Praha 8-Kobylisy, CZ

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

- > Rob Collis, London, Great Britain
- > Ana Janků, Czech Cultural Centre of Argentina, Buenos Aires
- > Severin Kolb, Zürich, Switzerland
- > Fons de Kort, Hillegom, Netherlands
- > Ray Latham, Great Britain
- > Christian Poltéra, Zürich, Switzerland
- > Joeri Wilms, Belgium

bohoslav martinů's **soldier**

/ OLGA JANÁČKOVÁ

BOHUSLAV MARTINŮ'S first opera, *The Soldier and the Dancer*, H 162, to J. L. Budín's libretto based on Titus Maccius Plautus's comedy *Pseudolus*, has been performed very rarely on Czech stages, with merely three productions until very recently. Completed in 1927, it was premiered the following year in Brno, yet its score would gather dust for almost four decades in the archives of the Bohuslav Martinů Center in Polička until it was resurrected and staged by a theatre in Olomouc in 1966. The next productions took place in Ostrava in 1990 and at the State Opera Prague in 2000. The

opera's strength, as well as handicap, is its kaleidoscopic nature, reflecting its interwar origin in a buoyant burlesque mixture of musical and theatre forms. Neoclassical restraint is combined with opera buffa, operetta, comedy from Ancient Rome until Martinů's time, opera, ballet, mime, jazz, inspirations of all sorts, theatre within theatre. The action features animated objects (lanterns, the Moon, five ducats), mythical characters (the Man in the Moon), and historical figures (Cato, Plautus, Molière), with theatre-makers and other persons who under "normal" circumstances remain concealed to the audience (the director, prompter, critic) appearing in the story too.



the soldier and the dancer in plzeň

/ EVA VELICKÁ

THE PRODUCTION of Bohuslav Martinů's *The Soldier and the Dancer* that opened on 25 January 2014 at the J. K. Tyl Theatre in Plzeň is a major contribution to the Year of Czech Music 2014, not only because the work is performed rarely indeed, but because it is the very first of the composer's sixteen operas. Accordingly, *The Soldier and the Dancer* (1926–27) marked the start of Martinů's long journey in search of an ideal operatic form. The piece was created in the first years of the composer's time in Paris and the works dating from this period reveal his endeavour to reflect various contemporary musical trends and influences.

The Soldier and the Dancer is a distinctive example of his integration of these influences within the setting of a three-act comic opera. In tandem with the librettist Jan Löwenbach (nom de plume: J. L. Budín), Martinů strove to conceive a "new opera buffa", yet the fruit of his labour was misconstrued by contemporary critics, who, following its 1928 premiere in Brno, often labelled the opera a "revue". This historical background is essential for the proper understanding of every new staging. The opera can, of course, be perceived as a madcap revue from the "roaring twenties", one made up of variegated musical numbers and blending Plautus's comedy *Pseudolus* with numerous alienating moments and new characters.

However, period documents and, most significantly, analysis of the score, indicate that this does not seem to have been Martinů's intention. He evidently wanted to create a feature-length comic opera – a contemporary one (including echoes of dance and entertainment music) yet at the same time a work drawing on tradition. With this in mind, it is a pity that the J. K. Tyl Theatre in Plzeň (much like the State Opera in Prague, in the 2000 production directed by David Pountney) resorted to deletions and transformed a comic opera in three acts into a performance in two parts. Of course, in this new form the dramaturgical concept of the whole, as Martinů intended it, is rather distorted. On the other hand, this move is quite understandable on the part of a contemporary theatre, with its objective being to keep the audience entertained throughout the performance. And indeed, the form chosen by the

and dancer



PHOTOS PAVEL KRIVÁNEK

The opera is a real treat for all those concerned – the conductor and stage director in particular! Yet the quick-fire alternation of various styles presents quite a challenge. Such an “operatic form” has to be laid out on a “tabula rasa”, without the burden of any conventions. Working on Martinů’s opera may be entertaining, but it is a very tough nut to crack. The staging team at the J. K. Tyl Theatre in Plzeň, however, could fully rely on the ability of the conductor and composer Petr Kofroň to negotiate the variegated progression of musical styles with the utmost certainty,

clearly drawing on his long-term training in and experience of contemporary music. Everyone could depend on his precise, almost militarily firm gestures, as well as his ever-present sense of humour, which undoubtedly serves as the basis for his unswerving stylistic-creative sense even in music as diverse and rhythmically complex as this Martinů piece. The young stage director Tomáš Pilař, too, has found in *The Soldier and the Dancer* an ideal artwork to showcase his talents, and it would seem that he had no serious problem coming up with an original concept for the production. If he

surmised that *The Soldier and the Dancer* is characterised by the supernatural, he has chosen to express this with the principle of the magic box that can contain everything contained in the opera, and much more too. Pilař spiced up the Budín-Martinů cocktail with a dash of Hans Christian Andersen’s fairy tale *The Shepherdess and the Chimney Sweep*, and compressed it into a story narrated by the Director, who brings onto the stage a little case from which he draws out the puppet of Punch-Pseudolus, whose marionette-like movements

/ TO BE CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Plzeň team does succeed in this respect. The opera production, directed by Tomáš Pilař and conducted by Petr Kofroň, primarily serves to entertain the audience, while presenting the quite unexpected traits of Martinů’s operatic language.

Beside the use of traditional operatic techniques (often in parodied form), manifestations of dance music and the influence of the jazz-band prove to be salient features of the work. Both the choir and the soloists acquitted themselves of this difficult task with aplomb. Especially praiseworthy was the performance of Jiří Hájek, portraying the lead character, the servant Pseudolus, who is the motivating force behind the entire action and who has to “pull the strings” as well as sing with the crowd. Extremely interesting and truly forceful was the treatment of one of the opera’s most effective

numbers, containing the song “When I danced in Arcadia”, sung by the female lead, Dancer Fenicie. This song subsequently “degenerates” into a wild Charleston, including the Black Woman’s coloraturas. In the performance I attended, the original coloraturas set by Martinů were replaced by jazz improvisations delivered by a non-opera singer (the renowned singer Dasha) clad in a costume made from bananas. This solution, together with numerous other details in the musical execution and stage direction, reveals that the staging team purposefully opted for this “playful” strategy, which is one of the possible, and relatively well-functioning, keys to the work’s apprehension. The only really disputable aspects are the framework of the production as a whole – a “dream” dreamt by the Old Man/Director – and the conception of the character of

Pseudolus as Puppet-Jester-Punch (with a wire sticking out of his head). These two aspects do not always make sense; I actually consider them redundant. Yet otherwise everything is harmonised into an impressive visual whole – in part fairy-tale, in part influenced by 1920s design – made up of a motley mosaic of ideas (splendid ballet numbers, witty use of, for instance, a picture with Martinů’s photograph on the stage, Mrs. Malina’s costume conceived as a cup of coffee with cream, striking lighting design, etc.). The new Plzeň production has proved that Bohuslav Martinů’s first opera is a truly alluring work, one that invites a number of possible interpretations and, most significantly, is able to entertain and delight the audience. ■

(Review of the performance on 23 May 2014)

can continuously imitate any characters, including the chorus. Everyone has to be able to act, sing, move, dance.

The sets, designed by Aleš Valášek, are transformed and re-arranged as required but are located on a fold-out box, just like the Director's case – only far larger. It provides ample space for anyone, and on top of it lives (mostly isolated from all the others) the Dancer Fenicie – a white swan. Kalidor the Soldier's task is to set the ballerina free. In Martinů's piece itself various items sing, but in costumes, created by Ivana Miklošková these were joined by a coffee cup in which Malina, the Soldier's mother, dwells. The costumes also underline the "woodenness" of the figures, mainly Kalidorus the little soldier and the central character of Punch-Pseudolus, while in other instances the designer highlighted the historical nature of the attire of the Greek soldier Harpax (and Pseudolus's friend Aloisie in his costume) but undercut it by comically padding the actor's biceps. In the respective passage, Fenicie and Kalidorus are doubled by a pair of ballet dancers. Dance plays a significant role throughout the production (choreography: Richard Ševčík).

The members of the staging team were not daunted in the slightest by the myriad ideas contained in this first opera of Martinů. As it should be, they united their creative alphabet with that of the composer and librettist, resulting in a performance replete with wonderful musical and theatrical ideas. After seeing the production's premiere (25 January 2014), it is difficult to judge each individual performance separately. I do, however, feel compelled to mention at least the impeccable singing, acting and dancing of Ivana Veberová (the Black Woman), as well as the performance of Jaroslav Someš, portraying the Critic and Molière. Both serve as prime examples of what perfect stylisations (including the costumes, of course) can be attained under the guidance of a superlative director, conductor and designers. A big thumbs-up to the staging team and to the Plzeň opera company! ■

The review is reprinted from the Czech music magazine Harmonie, Issue 3, 2014, p. 45, with their kind permission

AUTUMN 2014 PERFORMANCES

J. K. Tyl Theatre, Plzeň

21 September – 7pm

9 November – 7pm

Portrait

Geoff Piper

/ MARTINA FIALKOVÁ

ALMOST 40 YEARS ago Geoff Piper, a mild-mannered English gentleman, settled in Luxembourg, where he worked as a translator. His wife, a native Luxembourger, also earned her living through languages, which is quite common in the country. Geoff Piper worked for the Commission of the European Communities as a translator from French and German. Today, the retired couple live in a nice small house amidst greenery near the Czech Embassy. Yet Geoff Piper, an amateur cellist and pianist with a great passion for Czech music, owing to which he even decided to retire early, is by no means taking it easy. For almost two decades he has devoted a great deal of time, energy, as well as money, to organising musical events and promoting Czech music, with Bohuslav Martinů's legacy being one of his core activities. By means of this article, we would like to extend our thanks for his long-time work as a member of the Board of the International Martinů Circle.

What was the initial impulse that led Geoff Piper to Czech music? Back in 2007, in his first interview for Czech Dialogue magazine, he said: "In 1995 Luxembourg was European City of Culture. I was given a lot of money to organise something in the musical line and conceived the idea of inviting musicians from seven different countries (Belgium, the Netherlands, Great Britain, Germany, France and, of course, Luxembourg). The last choice fell on the Czech Republic. This was really a coincidence because I had no contacts there, but a friend who was learning Czech arranged a meeting for me with Mrs Benešová in the Rudolfinum. This lady recommended me a youth orchestra from the music school of Prague 1; the teachers who came to Luxembourg were Eva Bublová (violin), Martin Škampa (cello) and Martin Bally (piano). The orchestra played beautifully and one year later I invited these teachers to play in Luxembourg."

Although by the time Geoff Piper had been performing for years with an amateur sym-



phony orchestra, he knew no more about Czech music than most musicians do. Yet when he began collaborating with Czech musicians this changed, and today Mr Piper has a truly remarkable grasp of the Czech music scene. He founded a non-profit association whose aim it is to present Czech music in Luxembourg, yet it pursues other activities too... Mr Piper co-finances recordings of Czech music; until recently, he organised summer courses for amateur musicians in the Czech Republic with Czech tutors, and he has also played a major role in the publication of a Czech-English music dictionary. He was the main representative of the large-scale international Martinů Revisited project in Luxembourg in 2009. Mr Piper is or has been a member of a number of Czech music societies; until recently he was a member of the Board of the International Martinů Circle, and his name is familiar among Czech musicians.

CONCERTS GALORE

As everyone who has ever worked in this area is well aware, organising concerts requires an enormous amount of effort and work, which may not always be visible but still has to be done. It requires not only time, but also persistence, enthusiasm and diplomacy. Geoff Piper only invites artists he knows personally to perform at concerts. MusicEnterprise represents a number of them in Luxembourg: Jitka Čechová, the Smetana Trio, Miroslav Sekera, the Kaprálová Quartet and other distinguished figures. The MusicEnterprise website even contains brief and apposite references to other musicians and ensembles, as well as the Czech institutions and publishers that have proved to serve well for other organisers

in Luxembourg. Geoff Piper, however, does not only promote concerts in Luxembourg, he has also financially supported small performances and events organised by non-profit organisations in the Czech Republic with which he has collaborated. A case in point is this year's third edition of the mini cycle Music Without Borders, organised in Prague by the International Czech Club, which also featured a number of Martinů pieces. But there are many others who are obliged to Mr Piper for his help. Owing to him, several really nice chamber concerts have taken place within the annual meetings of the Board of the International Martinů Circle, which afforded its foreign members the opportunity to get to know the artistry of superlative Czech musicians, including the clarinetist Ludmila Peterková, the pianist Ivo Kahánek, the baritone Roman Janál, and many others.

CD RECORDINGS

MusicEnterprise has sponsored a number of CDs featuring Czech music as performed by Czech (and Slovak) artists and released in the Czech Republic. These include recordings produced by Czech Radio and ArcoDiva. A unique position is occupied by a CD containing Bohuslav Martinů's cantata *The Opening of the Wells, H 354*, performed by the Ostrava University Choir. Under the guidance of Jan Spisar, the chorus sings it in English (the existing translation being slightly amended by Geoff Piper, the famous baritone solo being entirely recast by Karel Janovický); Geoff Piper also undertook the role of narrator. Yet the full list of recordings Geoff Piper has supported is simply too long for the limited scope of the present article.

GRATIAS AGIT

As he began devoting himself to Czech music, Geoff Piper also started to study Czech. As a professional translator with a good natural sense for languages, he mastered its rudiments within a short time and is able to communicate in Czech. Mr Piper is also an ardent reader of magazines dedicated to Czech culture,



Geoff Piper with his wife

published either in English or Czech. At this juncture, we would like to thank Mr Piper for his permanent support for Czech Dialogue magazine, focused on Czechs and Czech culture abroad. In 2009, he received the Gratias Agit award for his selfless long-term promotion of Czech culture abroad. The Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs annually bestows the honour on Czech compatriots and foreigners whose activities help promote the good name of the Czech Republic abroad. Musicians who have received the award include Graham Melville-Mason, Vilém Tauský, Jaroslav Šonský, Karel Janovický, Antonín Tučapský, Magdalena Kožená and Serge Baudo.

Since receiving the award, Geoff Piper has not rested on his laurels and continues to work on behalf of Czech music. 2010 saw the publication of the aforementioned new Music Dictionary, whose much desired Czech-English section he co-created, as well as financially supported. The English-Czech version, compiled by Jan Spisar, was first issued in Ostrava back in 1996. At the same time, Ostrava hosted the English-language world premiere of Martinů's cantata *The Opening of the Wells*, delivered by the Ostrava University Choir, conducted by Jan Spisar. The performance was captured on the aforementioned recording (still available at the Bohuslav Martinů Institute).

ALWAYS ON THE GO

Over the past few months, Geoff Piper, the mezzo-soprano Eva Garajová and other artists have been preparing a new music festival in the Czech Republic, whose first edition is

scheduled to take place at the beautiful Karlova Studánka spa. In the role of its honorary director, Mr Piper intends to provide support to the finest Czech musicians. There is little doubt that the festival's inaugural edition will feature numerous pieces by Bohuslav Martinů, whose anniversary we are celebrating within the current Year of Czech Music. Geoff Piper has said of his relationship to Martinů: "As I came to know his music better, I appreciated it more and more; it was then that I joined the International Martinů Circle. When I think of Martinů, I always think of the tower in Polička (I have climbed up it, though I should not like to do so today!) and particularly the ticking of the clock. For me, no other composer has a rhythmic drive to equal Martinů's!"

MusicEnterprise continues to invite leading Czech artists to Luxembourg. Czech music has thus been performed at two romantic local chateaux, at concert halls of European institutions, and churches. And what are the audiences like? In one of his interviews, Geoff Piper put it as follows: "Demanding. The concerts are attended both by the locals and persons working for EU institutions, who are used to seeing a plethora of Europe's top musicians." His faith in the quality of Czech music and its performers has also helped the young generation to showcase their artistry and gain recognition. And owing to Geoff Piper, Bohuslav Martinů, too, has found many new admirers.

We are greatly indebted to Geoff Piper for his indefatigable work. We wish him plenty of success in his further activities, satisfaction in his personal life and, last but not least, good health. ■

julia fischer

/ FRANK KUZNIK

TEN YEARS AGO Julia Fischer was in a CD shop in Vienna when she came across a recording by Russian violinist David Oistrakh of Bohuslav Martinů's *Sonata for Violin and Piano No. 3, H 303*. She had never heard the piece before. When she played the disc, it was like a religious experience.

"I was immediately taken 100 percent by the piece," she said at a Prague Spring press conference on Tuesday morning. It launched her into an exploration of Martinů's music, which turned out to be a perfect fit with her style and tastes.

"From the first second I heard this music, it seemed so natural," she said. "Shostakovich I had to find out how to play. Martinů feels like the most natural thing in the world."

Fischer's position as artist-in-residence at this year's festival gave her a chance to play two Martinů works – the sonata with piano accompanist Milana Černjavská on Monday night (26 May 2014), and the composer's *String Quartet No. 5, H 268*,



with her string quartet on Tuesday night. For the audiences, it was a rare opportunity to hear the Czech composer played by a world-class artist who understands and cares about his work.

For the performer, it was an opportunity she seldom gets. As an example of how difficult it can be to program Martinů, Fischer offered a story about a concert several years ago at the Théâtre des Champs Elysées in Paris, where she

two stars enchant the rudolfinum

/ PRAVOSLAV KOHOUT

THE VIOLINIST JULIA FISCHER and the pianist Milana Černjavská gave a recital of ineffable transcendence and power at the Dvořák Hall of the Rudolfinum in Prague on 26 May 2014. Unless you possess the talent of the Czech poet Seifert, Fischer's artistry is difficult to describe. And writing a review of such a phenomenon is just as absurd as trying to voice your opinion of a kiss given by a beautiful girl. At the very most, you can say "I would have liked it to have gone on longer..." The Julia Fischer miracle contradicts the egalitarian theses championed by the advocates of

fashionable theories, proving that in many respects, including in talent, ability and nature, people simply are not, and cannot be, equal. Precious few are as exceptionable as she is, yet she should serve others as a source of inspiration and hope for that which is possible. This was undoubtedly one of the reasons why her Prague Spring festival audience was a veritable display of Czech violinists. Well, I wouldn't be at all surprised if some of those virtuosos present were to glue up their violin cases with a quick grip adhesive and start earning their living by selling Fischer recordings. The concert was a true musical fairy tale. The two magicians first conjured with Felix

Mendelssohn-Bartholdy's three-movement *Sonata in F major*, which was written at the same time as his celebrated violin concerto and is closely akin to it. The composer, however, never published the sonata, and it brought to light by Yehudi Menuhin only in 1953. Similarly to his concerto, Mendelssohn's typically bright, pellucid Romanticism with an almost Mozartean airiness reveals his experience with the violin. The interplay between the pianist and the violinist at the concert was ideal, as though all the tones were led by a single, precisely responding nerve centre of one creative being. And this applied to the entire evening. Although Černjavská was a little bit overshadowed by the glaring sparkle of Fischer, she too is a distinct star.

Pablo de Sarasate means for the nineteenth century what Giuseppe Tartini means for the

at prague spring festival

f

informed the promoter that she wanted to play Martinů. "Go ahead," he told her. "But I'm not going to put his name on the program. If I do, nobody will come."

At her recital on Monday night in Prague, Fischer went so far as to rearrange the order of the pieces – a last-minute change announced in an insert in the program book – so that she and Černjavská could play the Martinů sonata not second but last. "I wanted the audience to leave the hall with the sound of Martinů in their ears," she said.

Which was not exactly how things worked out. The audience was so taken with the women's

playing that it called them back for three encores, and left the hall with the sounds of Ysaÿe, Kreisler and Sarasate in their ears. But their rendition of the Martinů sonata was riveting, a virtuoso performance that was by turns dramatic, impressionistic, humorous and vividly colorful in the work's final, jazzy movement.

The Tuesday concert offered an impressive display of versatility, with Fischer playing first violin in string quartets by Beethoven and Martinů, and piano in Dvořák's *Piano Quintet in A major*. Her keyboard work was lyrical and graceful, and her ensemble's light, brisk treatment of Beethoven's *String Quartet No. 4* was elegant and finely detailed. Martinů, however, was once again the centerpiece of the concert, with the quartet playing a fierce, driving version of his *String Quartet No. 5*, skillfully accentuating its dissonances and percussive effects.

There was another reason Fischer programmed so much Martinů this week: She is making a film about the composer with Brian Large, and needs to start taping performances of his

work. She is planning to shoot part of the film in Polička, his birthplace, and will return to Prague in March next year to perform his *Violin Concerto No. 2, H 293*, with the Czech Philharmonic.

If Fischer had an epiphany when she discovered Martinů's music, then apparently her conversion was total. In discussing her reasons for making the film, she was quite clear about her goal: "I want to show people that he was one of the greatest composers of the 20th century." ■

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEWS with Julia Fischer (in English) can be heard here:

www.festival.cz/en/news_detail/julia_fischer_exclusive_interviews

The performance of *Violin Concerto No. 2, H 293*, by Julia Fischer with Czech Philharmonic will take place at Rudolfinum in Prague on 11, 12 & 13 March 2015.

musicality, whose beauty can only be unveiled by brilliantly faultless overcoming of the technical pitfalls. And Julia Fischer did so with a natural lightness of breath. Tartini's *Sonata in G minor, "Le trille du diable"*, is a delicacy beloved not only by violinists but painters and writers too. Legend has it that the devil himself played it to the composer in a dream, and the piece places extreme technical demands even on today's musicians (also owing to Kreisler's cadenza). But perhaps not even Old Nick himself can play it in the manner it was delivered by Fischer.

The highlight of the evening for me, however, was the performance of Bohuslav Martinů's *Sonata for Violin and Piano No. 3, H 303*. The extensive, four-movement work is challenging not only in its individual instrumental parts, but also, and above all, when it comes to the

understanding and comprehensible rendition of the contents of the multi-layered score as a whole. Yet Julia Fischer and Milana Černjavská gave the impression of playing a single instrument, bringing forth from the piece colours and shapes previously unthought-of. In their hands, the dreamily playful poet Martinů unexpectedly disclosed his manly ebullient side. I would implore the two ladies to record this musical gem as soon as possible. Alongside Jiří Bělohlávek's splendid account of *My Country*, the concert given by Fischer and Černjavská was, in my opinion, clearly the climax of this year's Prague Spring festival. ■

Reprinted from music journal Harmonie, No.6/2014, with their kind permission

eighteenth. Both demonstrated new possibilities in violin technique and composition, both shifted the limits of performance requirements. Sarasate's *Danzas españolas, Op. 23*, and *Caprice Basque, Op. 24*, are a dangerous balancing act encased in the fervent vivacity of Spanish



what men live by

/ GREGORY TERIAN

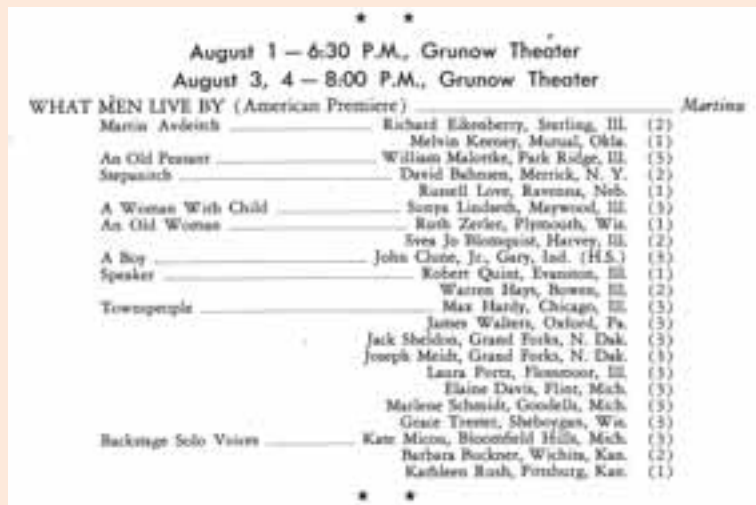
AS ANNOUNCED in the previous issue of the Revue and also in this issue on the page 2, there is to be a concert performance of Martinů's chamber opera *What Men Live By*, H 336, during the festival Bohuslav Martinů Days in Prague in December 2014.

Fifty-five years have elapsed since the composer's death and one would have expected all his mature works to have been committed to disc by now.

listed a performance in New York City in May 1953. Halbreich (1968 & 2007) endorsed the date and indicated that it was a television production. The opera was allocated Halbreich's catalogue No. H 336. *The Marriage* being designated as H 341. Both works were published by Boosey & Hawkes in 1953.

An extensive search of contemporary notices in the American musical press failed to identify any performance of *What Men Live By* in May 1953.

cited 20 May 1955 as the date of the first performance. A subsequent trawl of relevant American press notices established that the Hunter College Opera Association had performed the work on that date in New York as part of a triple bill of new works by Martinů, Tcherepnin and Meyerowitz. The supporting orchestra was directed by Francois Jaroschy. Although announced as the New York premiere, it appears to have been the first realisation of the opera with orchestral support and as such, effectively, a world



▲ Interlochen, Grunow Theatre: Programme of the premiere, 1954

Surprisingly, a few outstanding gaps in the recorded repertoire remain, the pastoral opera being one of them. In 2007 Supraphon planned to record the work coupled with *The Strangler*, H 317, a ballet score from 1948 (also unrecorded), but the project was abandoned.

The year 1951 saw the advent of the television opera. The outstanding success of Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors* led other composers to engage with the new medium. It coincided with a vogue in one-act chamber operas, the format being popular with opera workshops, particularly in America.

What Men Live By was completed in early 1952. It was based on a fable by Tolstoy about a cobbler's dream of a visitation by Christ and related happenings. The English language text was devised by the composer himself. Of approximately 40 minutes duration, it was planned as a companion piece for *The Marriage*, H 341, which followed shortly after. Both were conceived in the wake of a successful theatre adaptation of the *Comedy on the Bridge*, H 247, originally composed for radio back in 1935. In an article by Ross Parmenter published in the New York Times on 13 April 1952 the composer outlined the circumstances leading to the creation of the new work.

Whereas *The Marriage* achieved an early production by NBC Television on 7 February 1953, performance details relating to *What Men Live By* have remained obscure. Šafránek's 1964 biography

Additionally, Boosey & Hawkes have kindly produced copies of some internal correspondence dating from April-June 1953 which indicates their intention to publish the score in the latter part of 1953. The correspondence relates to ownership of the copyright of the translated text.

It was already known that there had been a staging of the work the following year during the annual National Music Camp at Interlochen organised by the University of Michigan. Further enquiries established that this had been a small-scale student workshop production with piano accompaniment in lieu of an orchestra. It was billed as the American premiere and took place on 1 August 1954 at the little Grunow Theater which had an audience capacity of no more than 250.

At this stage of my enquiries I chanced on a 1994 edition of Baker's Concise Musical Guide which



Scene from the American premiere of *What Men Live By* at the compact Grunow Theatre. Interlochen, home of an annual student arts camp, is a picturesque small town situated between two inland lakes near upper Lake Michigan.

REPRODUCED COURTESY OF THE INTERLOCHEN CENTER FOR THE ARTS

premiere. The performance took place at the Hunter College Playhouse. It was not televised or broadcast and there is no extant recording.

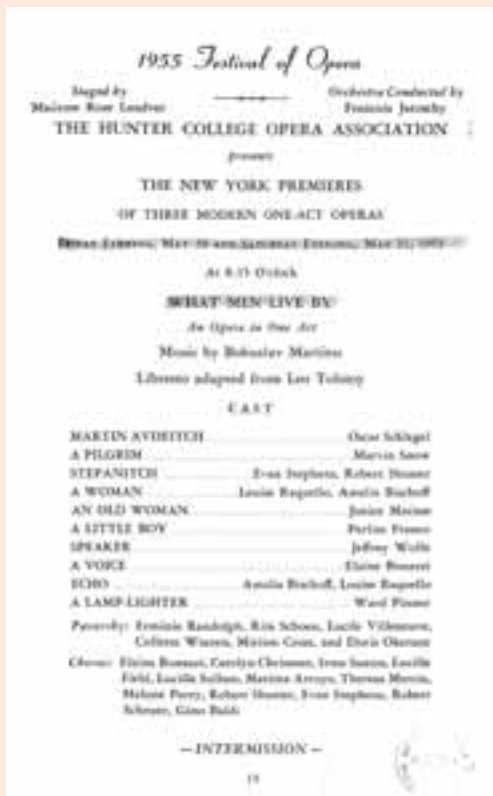
The new work attracted some positive reviews. Howard Taubman (NY Times) remarked on its mood "overflowing with melodic and rhythmic feeling evoking the composer's homeland"; but he was critical of an over-robust approach on the part of the conductor

/ a rare revival of martinů's 1952 pastoral opera

THREE ONE-ACT OPERAS IN NEW YORK PREMIERES AT HUNTER COLLEGE FRIDAY



Marvin Snow and Oscar Schlegel, two of the cast as they appeared on stage for the premiere of *What Men Live By* at the Hunter College Theatre. With an audience capacity of 780, the theatre has hosted significant musical events in New York City



By in Brno using a Czech text with piano accompaniment. In a letter to Zouhar dated 11 March 1956, the composer set out his vision of the work along with performance suggestions:

"Many thanks for your letter and all the kind news about your endeavours to promote Martinů.

It gives me great pleasure. I am interested in your idea of promoting Tolstoy. It could be performed in a concert version with piano. It actually concerns a type of old play called Miracle, religious and at the same time folk plays that can be performed anywhere, in fact it is not a theatre play as such, it is static and something like the legend of Dorothy.

My own and main condition is that it must not be played "pathetically" but joyfully. That is why it is called opera-pastoral. The text tends a lot to be very serious and "deep" but that was not my plan. For me it is a rather cheerful work and the listener must not feel a religious-like moral but joy. The moral is precisely in joy...

With regard to the concert direction aspect, I think that the piece should actually be performed on stage without scenery ... the actors would not act but sing and reduce gestures to the most essential...

The small chorus would be somewhere on stage. As regards costumes, I think they should be everyday "civvies", i.e. not in dinner jacket, but neither somehow costumed. This is also explained in the text by the speaker. So that is maybe everything I would want"

Initially it seemed that Martinů's aspirations for his new chamber opera would be realised. It was staged by a number of American colleges and

nal English language version for the first time in many years, in performances of unmatched quality.

With a world premiere recording to follow, all Martinů enthusiasts will soon be able to experience the spirit of joy which the composer sought to create in his unique vision of a pastoral opera. ■

Hunter College Theatre: Programme of the performance



Performance in Plzeň, 1964: Karel Křemenák – Avdžiči, Jiří Berdych – old pilgrim, Karel Klátil Jr. – a little boy

PHOTO VĚRA CALTOVÁ

and hoped that the volume would be toned down in later performances! In passing, it should be noted that Jaroschy was born in Prague and was a product of the Prague Conservatoire where he had studied with Zemlinsky. An impressive CV listed performances with Radio Prague and the Berlin State Opera and he was credited with introducing Janáček's *Jenůfa* to Paris audiences after the war.

The following year Martinů's friend Zdeněk Zouhar instigated a performance of *What Men Live*

universities. With the passage of time, however, interest waned and performances became few and far between. In Czechoslovakia there were productions by the opera houses at Plzeň (1964/65) and Brno (1974/75 & 1989/90) using a Czech text but no recordings appear to have survived.

With artists of the calibre of Jiří Bělohávek and the Czech Philharmonic and with an all-Czech cast, the forthcoming festival performances in Prague will present a rare opportunity of hearing the origi-

The author wishes to acknowledge assistance from the following:

Karl Miller, Byron Hanson, Interlochen Arts Center archivist, Professor Julio Hernandez-Delgado and Maria Enaboifo, Hunter College Libraries, City University of New York (archive & special collections), David Allenby, Boosey & Hawkes, London, Zoja Seyčková, Bohuslav Martinů Institute, Prague

Juliette in Bremen

The premiere of the opera *Juliette, H 253*, in the Theatre Bremen was a success. We present some excerpts from the review in the *Neue Musikzeitung Online*.

THE SEARCH FOR REALITY IN DREAMS AND VICE VERSA – MARTINŮ'S OPERA "JULIETTE" AT THE THEATER BREMEN

Premiered in Prague in 1938 and seldom staged since then, "Juliette" occupies an entirely singular aesthetic position in the history of opera: progress in music, whatever we may mean by it, was not exactly Martinů's forte. Yet his musical phraseology is replete with colourful consonances, surprising configurations and combinations of instruments. Martinů engages the accordion



PHOTOS THEATER BREMEN

and solo piano, combining this seeming heterogeneity into monumental orchestral eruptions, reckoning with spatial perspective. At this juncture, we feel obliged to compliment the Bremer Philharmoniker under the baton of Clemens Heil, who brilliantly combined the individual sonic layers, while at the same time keeping them transparent. In the German premiere of the opera's French version, Heil has left an imposing artistic footprint. (...)

The story of the bookseller Michel, who seeks his beloved in a town in southern France and duly ascertains that its inhabitants have no conception of time and lack memory, is characterised in John Fulljames's production by the comical as well as the ominous – both central motifs of a dream. Michel becomes less and less certain of being just in a dream, into

which the audience is gradually drawn too. And in Act 3, in the office of dreams, where dreams are ordered and sold and where suddenly everyone is looking for Juliette, Michel no longer knows whether he still wants to go back. All of a sudden, he hears some indescribably beautiful music, like in paradise. The whole story can thus begin anew. (...)

The creative team, made up of John Fulljames (stage direction), Johanna Pfau (set design), and William Galloway and Joachim Grindel (lighting design, which played an especially significant role in the production), has succeeded in evoking the dreamy world in the form of an eerily illuminated hotel. The body language of the performers is splendidly ambiguous: especially impressive is Nadja Stefanoff as Juliette. Until the very end, the audience does

not know whether she represents reality or fiction. Hyoyong Kim, portraying Michel, renders his great role with the utmost mastery, particularly in terms of his vocal performance. (...)

/ UTE SCHALZ-LAURENZE

www.nmz.de/online/mit-den-traeumen-auf-der-suche-nach-der-realtaet-und-umgekehrt-bohuslav-martinus-oper-juliette

Juliette

Theater Bremen
Clemens Heil (Conductor)
John Fulljames (Director)
Premiere: 29 March 2014

Mirandolina in Munich

On 30 April 2014, a new production of Martinů's opera *Mirandolina* was premiered in Munich. We have selected a few press and radio reviews.

SELDOM PERFORMED OPERA STAGED IN MUNICH FOR THE FIRST TIME

The Czech composer Bohuslav Martinů based the libretto of his 1953 comic opera *Mirandolina* on Carlo Goldoni's comedy *La locandiera*. Although completed some 60 years ago, the work was only premiered in Germany recently, at the Stadttheater Gießen. In April, *Mirandolina* was first staged at the Bayerische Staatsoper in Munich.

THE COMIC OPERA MIRANDOLINA IN BRIGHT, FANCY COLOURS!

The stage director Christian Stückl set Bohuslav Martinů's comic opera in the present day, transferring the action to a holiday paradise somewhere in Asia. This paradise, however, occasionally turns into hell.

The glaring yellow programme hurts the eyes, as does the multi-coloured stage at the



▲ J. Stewart (Conte), Y. Sokolik (Ortensia), R. Wilson (Deianira), M. Celeng (Mirandolina), M. Grills (Fabrizio)

◀ R. Wilson (Deianira), J. Stewart (Conte), M. Grills (Fabrizio), Y. Sokolik (Ortensia)

PHOTOS WILFRIED HÖSL



The director of the production, Christian Stückl, Artistic Director of Munich's Volksoper, seemed to be less interested in the subject of Goldoni's play than in showcasing young singers from the Opernstudio, which trains talent from all over the world. (...)

The young British-Russian conductor Alexander Prior, who has been pursuing a sensational international career, is evidently fond of Martinů's opera, a blend of modern 20th-century music, Czech symphonism and folk songs, French Impressionism and Stravinskian Neo-Classicism, which gives rise to utterly new sound colours. (...)

/ BAYERISCHER RUNDFUNK

www.br.de/radio/br-klassik/sendungen/allegro/martinu-mirandolina-opernstudio-bayerische-staatsoper100.html

Cuvilliés-Theater, with the sets being designed in the same bright yellow and sharply illuminated. When the first protagonists appear in fancy costumes, it becomes clear that this is the work of none other than Christian Stückl and the designer Stefan Hageneier. Stückl's penchant for the spectacular and zany fits well with this light opera.

(...) Bohuslav Martinů wrote the libretto to *Mirandolina* himself, on the basis of Carlo Goldoni's comedy. The heroine inherits an inn and is immediately courted by several suitors, but she ultimately sets her sights on the Cavaliere di Ripafrata, who, however, is not overly interested in women. *Mirandolina* ends up marrying her servant.

Bohuslav Martinů accompanied the comic sketches and turbulent action with energetic

music, recalling Rossini, yet lacking orchestral coloratura. The vocally exaggerated sense of affect often used by Rossini is absent too, with the parts being easy to sing. Here and there, we can hear Bartókian dissonances in the orchestra. (...)

All the singers (members of the Opernstudio der Bayerischen Staatsoper) appearing in the production are new on the "market". Vocally equal to *Mirandolina* are Joshua Stewarts in the role of the "Conte" and Andrea Borghini, with her powerfully sonorous voice, as the "Cavaliere". The audience at the intimate Cuvilliés-Theater did not want the performers to leave the stage. Which of these young singers, we wonder, will be the first to be seen at one of the grand opera houses?

/ JÖRN FLORIAN FUCHS – DEUTSCHLANDFUNK

www.deutschlandfunk.de/opernkomoedie-mirandolina-alles-so-schoen-bunt-hier.691.de.html?dram:article_id=284160

Mirandolina

Cuvilliés-Theater, München
Opernstudio der Bayerischen Staatsoper
Christian Stückl (Director)
Alexander Prior (Conductor)
Premiere: 30 April 2014

what could connect the two cities

bohoslav martinů: a bridge between two cultures

"WHAT COULD connect the two cities of Prague and Aix en Provence?" This was the question that started it all. When Tamás Besskó, English teacher at the Primary School and Kindergarten, Prague 8-Ďáblice, wanted to create a two-year European Comenius project to connect his secondary school with a secondary school in France, little did he realize that his idea would take him, naturally, to Bohuslav Martinů, who would become a veritable bridge between these two cultures.

the culture of their two countries. Tamás took his students to the Martinů Institute and to Polička, while Julia's students visited the Martinů exhibit which had been borrowed by the University of Aix-Marseille from the Czech Embassy in Paris, got in touch with the Czech lecturer for basic Czech lessons and started learning about Martinů's life. The International Martinů Circle in Paris (notably Patrice Chevy) offered its advice, as did the Mouvement Janáček.

Next stop: Aix en Provence!

The second half of the project was focused on Aix-en-Provence. Because the connection was so strong between the two school groups, Julia invited a small number of students and their teacher Tamás, to visit Aix in October. They toured the town, saw the house where Martinů and Charlotte had lived in Aix (and where he had composed the *Sinfonietta giocosa*, *H 282*, among other works), and the city of Marseille, where, in 1940-41, Martinů was helped by numerous



While it is well-known in the Czech Republic that Martinů went to Paris in the 1920s where he discovered jazz and Stravinsky, his name was much less known in France. "Initially I had never heard of him," admits Julia Fady, English teacher at the International section of the French partner school, Collège Mignet, in Aix en Provence. "It was only after reading the biography by Guy Erisman that I realized how strong his connection was with France and Aix en Provence," she adds.

Both teachers began the project by motivating their students to find out more about Martinů and

To make the connection between the two cities clearer, Julia also began working on writing an original theatre play with her students about the life of Martinů, from Polička to Prague to Aix-en-Provence.

Finally, in July 2013, all 50 students met for the first time in Ďáblice where, for ten days, they worked together to create a little show for parents and fellow students. They performed their play, sang their songs, and some students even played some of Martinů's piano pieces. The show was a wonderful success, but the project was still only half-finished.

other artists, notably the painter Rudolf Kundera and the pianist Rudolf Firkušný, along with Edmonde Charles-Roux and the Countess Lily Pastré, to find transit out of Vichy, France. Julia also showed them the new Conservatoire de Musique Darius Milhaud (who was also a friend of Martinů and from Aix) where the group was scheduled to perform in June 2014 alongside the professional musicians of the Conservatory.

"M. Jean-Philippe Dambreville, the Director of the Conservatory, originally wanted to perform the *Sinfonietta*, because it had been written in Aix, but

four martinů cantatas

/ LUBOŠ STEHLÍK

WHEN the Prague Philharmonic Choir (PFS) is at the top of its game, its sound reminds me of that of a romantic organ. I really looked forward to its performance of four Bohuslav Martinů cantatas (*The Legend of the Smoke of Potato Fires*, *The Opening of the Springs*, *The Romance of the Dandelions*, *Mikeš of the Mountains*), with which the ensemble paid tribute to the composer's native Vysočina region. The cantatas have been delivered separately quite frequently, yet I had not heard them all together on a single occasion. Regrettably, on 5 June, during the third concert of the Prague Philharmonic Choir cycle, the Dvořák Hall of the Rudolfinum was only half-full. (Perhaps if the project had been part of the Prague Spring festival,

where it would have fitted splendidly, the concert might have been better attended.)

Although not every aspect of the performance was ideal, all in all it was a remarkable experience. The choir and its artistic director, Lukáš Vasilek, deserve high praise indeed, with many a detail in the phrasing and agogics being even more interesting than in the case of the authoritative interpreters of Martinů cantatas, Jan Kühn and Pavel Kühn (this applies particularly to *Mikeš*). An outstanding performance was given in the *Romance* and, above all, *Mikeš* by the tenor Martin Slavík, an invaluable asset of the PFS. Highly reliable was the sturdy support provided to the singers by the Zemlinski Quartet (František Souček, Petr Střížek, Petr Holman) and the pianist Marcel Javorček.



On the other hand, dull, or rather embarrassing, were the performances given in the *Legend* by the flautist Lenka Kozderková, the clarinetist Jan Pařík, the horn player Barbora Černá and the accordionist Josef Hřebík. Neither were the appearances of the solo singers – Eliška Demel Trnová and Lenka Bartošíková – highlights of the evening. The vocally interesting alto Ludmila Hudečková, however, with her secure intonation, presented herself in a far better light. With displeasure did I listen to the operatic style of the soprano Pavla Vykopalová (in the *Romance* and the *Legend*), which was at odds with Martinů's inspired music. (I fondly recalled the stylistically and vocally impeccable soprano Milada Čejková in Pavel Kühn's 1980s performances.)

The effect of the cantata *The Opening of the Springs*, perfect in its simplicity, depends to a great degree on the baritone and narrator. As has always been the case, Zdeněk Hlávka, a choir member and occasional soloist, put everything into his singing; he was

of prague and aix en provence

/ a bi-lateral european comenius project



realized it would be too long to prepare, so opted for the wonderful *La revue de cuisine, H 161*," Julia explains. Meanwhile, the project had expanded to include two more classes at Collège Mignet and 8 more songs by Martinů!

In June 2014, the whole group came together once more in Aix-en-Provence. The project now consisted of 140 students and 7 professional musicians! The performance was scheduled for the 20th of June in the Auditorium of the Conservatory. The house was full, the lights dimmed and... the magic began...

convincing and it was a joy to listen to him, yet sadly it must be acknowledged that his voice no longer possesses the qualities it did 20 years ago. A surprising disappointment, however, was the narrator Petr Štěpánek. Even though I would have been able to get over the fact that his eyes were virtually glued to the score (which certainly looked fairly silly), by no means could I forgive his sloppy pronunciation, intonation, wrong accents and tectonics of performance. I can't see anyone around today who could compete on the same level as the beautiful creations of Radovan Lukavský and Václav Voska.

The described shortcomings notwithstanding, the Prague Philharmonic Choir's final concert of the 2013/14 season was a resounding success. The choir continues to maintain its top international level and its choral cycle is a fundamental contribution to the Prague music season. We can only have to hope that the PFS will have enough money, given the parlous situation in the Czech Republic, to continue its unique series! ■

Reprinted from the Czech musical magazine *Harmonie* No. 7 /2014 with their kind permission

The show opened with a play in English: students need to write a report about Bohuslav Martinů and have come together in a library to work. Each begins by sharing what he or she knows, and the scene changes to the bell tower. We see Martinů's family casually chatting, when suddenly the music teacher arrives to give young Martinů a violin lesson. The violin solo from *Three Riders, H 1*, fills the air, while the actor mimes playing the violin. The music teacher shakes her head, astounded by this young virtuoso and the scene changes to the village of Polička. The villagers wonder how to send poor but talented Martinů to the Conservatory in Prague. All the villagers finally decide to contribute to help send him and he is warmly sent off to Prague. Now we are in the Conservatory and hear the beautiful strains of *Nipponari: Footsteps in the Snow, H 68*. Unfortunately, it is only a dream and Martinů is being chastised by his professor because he has not been practising. He is then thrown out of the Conservatory for "incorrigible negligence" and walks slowly off stage to the music of the *Moderato* from the *String Quartet, H 117*. The students return to comment on what has happened to him and take us to Paris where Martinů is just taking a seat at the Medrano Circus. Here he meets Charlotte and they fall in love accompanied by the *Andante* from *String Quartet No. 7, H 314*. But World War II has broken out and the couple must leave Paris. They rush to the train station amid the dramatic sounds of the *Poco allegro* of the *Double Concerto, H 271*, to find a ticket out. Their only hope: south, towards Aix en Provence! The play ends with the couple leaving France and heading to the United States, where Martinů becomes a world-renowned composer. The music of the *Sinfonietta giocosa, H 282*, sounds and all the young actors come on stage for their bows to the audience.

The next part of the show was performed by the Czech students, who sang two songs beautifully

in Czech: *The Blacksmith* and *Children's Riddles, H 373*. Two of the Czech students sing professionally in the opera choir in Prague and added an elegant lyricism to Martinů's music.

Next, the French students sang four songs in English: *Four Songs on Czech Folk Poetry, H 282bis*, which had been written in Aix for Edmonde Charles-Roux, whose father was the former ambassador in Prague and who helped Bohuslav and Charlotte during their stay.

The third part of the show was sung in French by the Collège Mignet-Conservatory choir. They sang a capella *Songs for a Children's Choir, H 373*, then the magnificent part 7 of *Bouquet of Flowers, H 260: A Carol*.

The performance ended with the chamber orchestra of the Darius Milhaud Conservatory directed by Jean-Philippe Dambreville and the virtuoso *La revue de cuisine, H 161*.

The last part of the project was the placing of a commemorative plaque on the building where Martinů lived in Aix. "I wanted to have something permanent which would always be part of Aix," Julia explains. Unfortunately the Czech students had already returned to Prague, but a lasting trace of this project was put up officially on the 3rd of July with the owners, the principal of Collège Mignet, the young actors and their teacher all celebrating Bohuslav Martinů!

Above all this project introduced a new generation to Martinů's music and has genuinely connected two cultures. Martinů is a true bridge between France and the Czech Republic and we hope the relationship will be long-lasting! Many thanks to the European Lifelong Learning programme for funding this wonderful project.

/ JULIA FADY-WELTERLEN

the legend of the smoke from potato fires or martinů in nosek's personal effects

/ PAVEL ŽŮREK

LAST YEAR, while seeking out musical sources for the Bohuslav Martinů Complete Critical Edition, a period photocopy of a previously unknown copyist's manuscript of the *Legend of the Smoke from Potato Fires*, H 360, was



discovered among Václav Nosek's personal effects.

The Czech conductor and dramaturge Václav Nosek (1921–2000) and his significance in promoting Bohuslav Martinů's oeuvre and legacy, not only within the

context of Czech musical culture, need no further introduction. His long-term and unceasing interest in Martinů's music dramas and ballets lasted from the early 1950s, when he joined the National Theatre in Brno, until his death. Nosek's relentless and continuous endeavours culminated in several world premieres of Martinů works in Brno, including *Larmes de couteau* (Tears of the Knife), H 169; *Le trois souhaits* (The Three Wishes), H 175; *Plainte contre inconnu* (Accusation Against the Unknown), H 344; and the ballet *On tourne*, H 163.

Part of Nosek's personal effects is currently deposited at the Moravian Museum in Brno and the effects relating to music, filed in the Department of Music History, have yet to be processed. They contain period copies and copyist's manuscripts of scores of works by mainly 20th-century composers which Nosek performed or explored. Bearing witness to his analytical aptitude and giving insight into his creative thinking is a set of programmes for opera and ballet productions staged at the National Theatre in Brno into which Nosek noted down his reflections from the performances. Other materials and papers pertaining to Nosek and his work can be found in the Moravian Museum's Department of Theatre History.



In light of the intensity with which Nosek devoted himself to Martinů, it comes as no surprise that, in addition to the aforementioned programmes containing notes on the productions of the composer's works, his personal effects deposited at the Department of Music History also include two Martinů scores. What, however, is surprising is the fact that they are not period photocopies of scores of operas or

ballets but of the chamber cantatas to texts by Miloslav Bureš (1909–1968): *The Legend of the Smoke from Potato Fires*, H 360, and *Mikeš of the Mountains*, H 375. The reason why Nosek acquired photocopies of these works in particular, whether for the sake of study or intended performance, is not clear.

The photocopy of the score of *Mikeš of the Mountains* was made from the autograph, which is now deposited at the Bohuslav Martinů Centre in Polička under shelf-mark Ag 312. Its discovery, however, does not represent any considerable progress as to the source situation relating to this piece.

Totally different is the case of the *Legend of the Smoke from Potato Fires*. The copyist's manuscript from which the photocopy discovered in Nosek's personal effects was made hailed from the Czech Music Fund. To date, the original manuscript has not been found, nor has the copyist who made it been identified. Accordingly, Nosek's photocopy is currently the one and only item of proof documenting the existence of this unknown source.

Closer examination of the photocopy of the *Legend's* manuscript has given rise to several questions concerning the determination of the author of the inscriptions made in pencil in the original. Owing to Mrs. Jana Šulcová, daughter of Jan Kühn (1891–1958), who conducted the cantata's 1957 world premiere in Prague, we have identified one of the manuscripts. It belonged to Kühn's wife, the Czech chorus master Markéta Kühnová (1905–1994), and mainly contains performance instructions and notes.

These circumstances appear to be of major importance for the composition's new critical edition, since we have yet to find the score used by Kühn for its Prague premiere, as has been confirmed by Vít Zouhar, editor of the volume of chamber cantatas within the Bohuslav Martinů Complete Edition.

"Homo [...] fugit velut umbra, et numquam in eodem statu permanet." These are the words of a legend much older than that of Martinů and Bureš. Yes, a human vanishes like a shadow, does not last for ever, just like the smoke from potato fires. But one such has remained for us. Thank you, Mr. Nosek. ■

peephole into the bohuslav martinů center in polička /9

THE POLIČKA MUSEUM collections contain a small group of about 30 musical instruments. These include a special rarity: the guitar occasionally played by Bohuslav Martinů.

After World War I, an informal student association called "Guitar" was established in Polička and organised musical parties in the local pubs. At the time, Martinů was giving private music lessons in his native town. One of the members of the association, Václav Lichtág, recalls his teacher: "He would often join us students and accompany our vocal performances, either in the Jílek hotel, where a piano was available in the back room, or in summer in the U Slezáků open-air restaurant, on the guitar." In 1983, Lichtág and Karel Sommer, the last surviving members of the association, donated the guitar to the Polička Museum. Martinů dedicated a piano miniature, "A Parade of the Guitar", to the student club, yet it is not known whether it has ever been performed.

/ LUCIE JIRGLOVÁ



◀ A Parade of the Guitar, H 125bis, the autograph score of the 1920 piano piece "composed and dedicated to the Guitar association by its esteemed member, the music reporter Bogun Martinů."

BOHUSLAV MARTINŮ FOR SALE

BOHUSLAV
MARTINŮ
E-SHOP

BUY / publications, brochures, sheet music and other promotional materials relating to Bohuslav Martinů can be purchased via a new e-shop.

OBTAIN INFORMATION / The e-shop also serves as an information server. We will help you to find products that are not currently on our catalogue.

Books



Sheet music



CDS



Other



<http://eshop.martinu.cz>

join the international martinů circle

you will receive

three issues of **martinů revue** magazine
& an **unique cd** bohuslav martinů days 2012
with these recordings:



BOHUSLAV MARTINŮ
Sonata No. 2 for Cello and Piano, H 286
/ Bohuslav Martinů Days 2012
Václav Petr – cello
Alena Kohoutová – piano

BOHUSLAV MARTINŮ
Symphony No. 5, H 310
/ Historical recording, 24 January 1948, New York
NBC Symphony Orchestra
Ernest Ansermet – conductor



See www.martinu.cz International Martinů Circle section for information about IMC CD recordings and Martinů Revue from previous years.

e-mail incircle@martinu.cz

phone + 420 257 320 076

mobile + 420 773 656 586

www.facebook.com/InternationalMartinuCircle



SU 4145-2

Ravel, Shostakovich –
Complete Piano Trios / Smetana Trio
Jitka Čechová – piano
Jiří Vodička – violin
Jan Páleníček – cello



SU 4148-2

Stravinsky, Prokofiev / Piano Works
Veronika Böhmová – piano



SU 4159-2

Jan Novák / Choral Works
Martinů Voices,
chorusmaster Lukáš Vasilek
Clara Nováková – traverse flute,
Jan Vobořil, Petr Hernych,
Kateřina Javůrková,
Zdeněk Vašina – French horn

SUPRAPHON a. s. www.supraphon.com | info@supraphon.com **find us on facebook** www.facebook.com/SupraphonClassics
Distributed and marketed in the UK by RSK ENTERTAINMENT www.rskentertainment.co.uk | info@rskentertainment.co.uk
Distributed and marketed in the US by NAXOS OF AMERICA Inc. www.naxos.com | naxos@naxosusa.com