

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

martinůREVUE

may—august 2013 / vol. XIII / no. 2

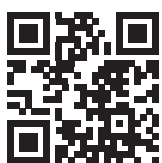
edition of the last piano
concerto

ballet “who is the most
powerful in the world?”

martinů on stravinsky

events / news

—Expanded edition with previously unpublished photos of Martinů!



A Czech-Slovak Opening of the Springs in Prague for Checomacoco

/ MARTINA FIALKOVÁ

ON 30 MAY, the International Czech Club, whose mission it is to deepen contacts with our compatriots living abroad, held a Czech-Slovak concert at the Czech Museum of Music in Prague. In the first part of the event, the female choir of the Czech Society in Košice, Slovakia, under the chorus master Olga Varinská performed songs by Antonín Dvořák, Leoš Janáček and folk songs. The second part was given over to Bohuslav Martinů's cantata *The Opening of the Springs, H. 354*, which has been part of the ensemble's repertoire for several years. The choir was accompanied by three members of the Martinů Quartet from Prague and the pianist Zuzana Žegleňová. The soloists were Barbora Sopková (soprano), Dominika Sokolská (alto) and Marián Lukáč, a member of the Opera of the State Theatre in Košice, who gave a brilliant



delivery of the baritone part. The performance was conducted by the charismatic and empathic Igor Dohovič, also from Košice's State Theatre, who has worked with the choir for a long time.

The cantata, however, has another extremely important "soloist" – the narrator whose words accompany the entire piece, poetically describing the ancient pagan custom of the purification of springs following the winter, involving children and a "little queen". For serious reasons, the narrator from Košice had to cancel his appearance and therefore it was necessary to find someone to replace him at short notice. The unexpected and rather critical situation was soon tackled by Prof. Ivan Štraus, chairman of the Bohuslav Martinů Foundation and an outstanding violinist teaching at the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague, who offered to stand in. And he acquitted himself brilliantly. Showing great respect for the role, in a pleasant and vibrant voice he forcibly accompanied the ensemble. I was most impressed by the very end, when the narrator and the baritone, bolstered by the instrumentalists and choir, concluded the cantata with an old man, a wayfarer, reminiscing about his youth and the annual rite of the "opening" of the springs. This is perhaps the confession of the composer, as well as the poet. After the last notes had faded away, the simplicity and genius of both the music and words caused a deep silence in the concert hall before the long, torrential applause that ensued.

In conclusion, I would like to point out that the concert had not only an international but also a charity dimension. The revenues from the voluntary entrance fee were donated – by agreement of all the performers – to the Checomacoco civic association. The money will serve to support the education of two students from an indigenous community in Paraguay in which descendants of the Czech explorer A.V. Frič live. ■

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festivals

LUCERNE FESTIVAL

31 August 2013 / 3 pm

LUCERNE FESTIVAL

> Lucerne, Switzerland > www.lucernefestival.ch

Who is the Most Powerful in the World? / H. 133

arranged for saxophon quartet by Christoph Enzel
clair-obscur (Saxophon Quartet)
Samuel Zumbühl (Narrator)



7 September 2013 / 1 pm

JARMILA NOVOTNÁ FESTIVAL 2013

> Liteň Castle, CZ > www.zamekliten.cz

New Chap-Book / H. 288 (Songs on Moravian Poetry)

arranged for Voice and Orchestra by Jiří Teml (premiere)
Harmonia Mozartiana Pragensis
Prague Conservatory String Quartet
Petr Louženský (Conductor)
Lucie Hilscherová (Mezzo-soprano)



10–23 November 2013

19. MARTINŮ FESTTAGE 2013

> Basel, Switzerland > www.martinu.ch

10 November > Gare du Nord, Basel

Kammermusik

Martinů Quartet

13 November > Kunsthalle, Basel

Zweidual

Video Project

17 November > Museum Tinguely, Basel

Jazz

Domenico Scarlatti and Bohuslav Martinů
Enrico Pieranunzi (Piano)

20 November > Museum Tinguely, Basel

Die Küchenrevue

Family Concert

23 November > Stadtcasino Basel

Camerata Salzburg
Christopher Hogwood (Conductor)
François Leleux (Oboe)

BOHUSLAV MARTINŮ DAYS 2013

1 December 2013 / 7.30 pm

> HAMU Prague, Martinů Hall
www.martinu.cz

Concert of the Winners of Bohuslav Martinů Foundation Competition in the Field of Violin

11+12+13 December 2013 / 7.30 pm

> Rudolfinum, Dvořák Hall, Prague
www.martinu.cz

Double Concerto for Two String Orchestras, Piano and Timpani / H. 271

Anton Bruckner: *Symphony No. 9 D Minor*
Czech Philharmonic Orchestra
Kent Nagano (Conductor)



opera

5+7 December 2013 / 6.30 pm

> Antonín Dvořák Theatre, Ostrava, CZ
www.ndm.cz

Mirandolina / H. 346

Robert Jindra (Conductor)
Jiří Nekvasil (Director)
Daniel Dvořák (Stage Designer)



ballet

28 November 2013 / 10 am

1 December 2013 / 4 pm

2 December 2013 / 10 am

> Ponec Theatre, Prague, CZ > www.divadloponec.cz

Who is the Most Powerful in the World? / H. 133

Prague Chamber Ballet
Hana Polanská Turečková (Choreographer and Director)
(see more info on pp 16–19)



patrick lambert at 70

ON REACHING this milestone, Patrick feels that he should be counting his blessings; important among them being the joy and enrichment that Martinů's music has given him over the years. He also considers himself fortunate to have had inspirational parents. From his half-Irish father, an analytical psychologist, he gained an understanding of the human condition, and a moderate dose of Celtic blood. From his mother Barbara Kirkby-Mason, a pianist and composer well-known in the piano teaching world for her beginner's books, he gained his love of music. Earliest musical memories are of drifting off at bedtime to the distant sounds of her piano playing and of being allowed to operate the gramophone and being thrilled by Dvořák's *New World Symphony* magnificently performed by the Czech Philharmonic on pre-war HMV 78s.

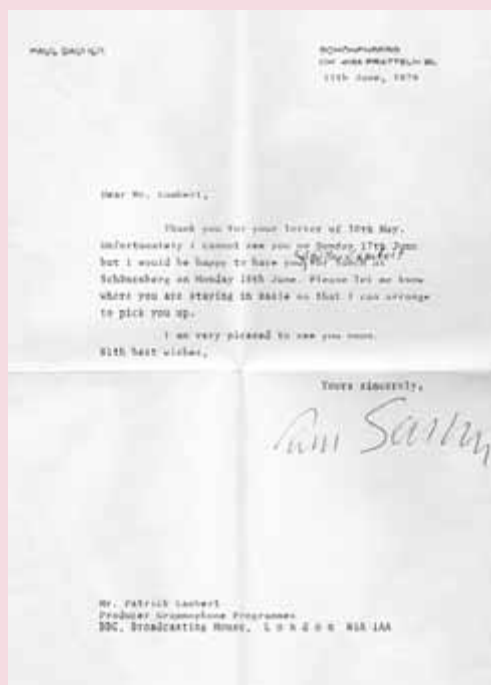
Patrick was born on 15 June 1943 in Salisbury and has lived in London since the early 1950s. He undertook his university education at Trinity College Dublin, where he became Chairman of the Gramophone Society. His first encounter with Martinů's music was through the acquisition of Karel Ančerl's LP recording of the *5th Symphony* and, fired by enthusiasm, he successfully cam-



Patrick, with his wife Jarka and his son Roderick

aigned for this work to be included in an invitation concert given by the RTE Symphony Orchestra in the TCD examination hall.

Joining the BBC in September 1968, Patrick first trained as a studio manager, but after 5 years he joined the production side, rising to the position of senior producer in Radio 3's Music Department and also presenting programmes on air. In 1983, he received a Sony Radio Award for the "best classical music programme" of that year. Patrick became known for championing Slav and especially Czech music, creating a number of series featuring conductors such as Talich and Kubelík and introducing many Czech composers little known at that time, such as Suk, Novák and of course Martinů, whose music was only begrudgingly acknowledged by the programme controllers of the day.



Although Patrick had visited the Prague Spring Festival in the early 1960s, he gained a deeper insight into the Czech world after meeting his future wife Jaroslava who left her country in the wake of the Soviet-led invasion in August 1968. Since their marriage in December 1970, Patrick has been a regular visitor even during the grim period of 'normalization'. Over the years he has built up a large archive of recordings and books on Czech music. His study door bears the inscription "Český ráj" (Czech paradise).

As a result of his radio series profiling Paul Sacher's commissions, Patrick was invited by the Swiss conductor to Schonenberg in June 1979 to inspect the original manuscript of the *Double Concerto* and to see Martinů's grave on his estate. Soon after his visit the composer's body was disinterred and removed to Polička, much against Sacher's wishes.

For the Martinů centenary in 1990, Patrick presented a four-part radio series "A View from the Tower" and produced studio recordings of the *Concerto Grosso* and *Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra* for transmission on the day of the anniversary. That year he also presented a paper "Martinů's search for truth and meaning of life" at the Martinů conference held in Prague in May and, five months later, "Desperately seeking Julietta" at the conference organised by Washington University in St. Louis. Both papers were published in the journal of the Dvořák Society of G.B. On a subsequent visit to Prague, he was informally presented with a Martinů medal.

Since his retirement, Patrick has written numerous reviews for musical journals, programme notes and CD booklets, as well as giving pre-concert talks. He has been an enthusiastic supporter of the IMC since its inception and has been a regular contributor to the Martinů Revue. He has recently completed a comprehensive survey of historic Martinů recordings for *Classical Recordings Quarterly*. Last November, he participated in a broadcast on Czech Radio 3-Vltava to mark the 90th anniversary of the BBC.

We wish him continuing happiness with many more birthdays to come.

Martinů Revue editors

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Who is the Most Powerful in the World?
Photo of the performance at Ponc Theatre,
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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

THE ANNUAL MEETING of the IMC Board will take place on Saturday, December 14th 2013 at the seat of the Bohuslav Martinů Foundation in Prague. This coincides with the Bohuslav Martinů Days concert that will take place on Friday 13th. Please let us know if you will be attending the festival – we might be able to arrange a special gathering of IMC members! Also, contact any Board member with ideas, suggestions, or concerns you have about the activities of the IMC. As always, our focus will be on growing the organization and promoting the study and performance of Martinů's music.

Robert Simon

CD BOHUSLAV MARTINŮ DAYS 2011

The 2011 Bohuslav Martinů Foundation CD is now available for IMC members.

BOHUSLAV MARTINŮ:

Les mains (Hands), H. 157bis

Ballet

PRAGUE CHAMBER PHILHARMONIC

Jakub Hrůša (Conductor)

Fantaisie et toccata for Piano, H. 281

Lenka Korbelová (Piano)

Nonet No. 2, H. 374

for flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, French
horn, violin, viola, cello and double-bass
HISTORICAL RECORDING 1960

Opening of the Springs, H. 354

Cantata for soli, female chorus
and instrumental accompaniment
Original text by Miloslav Bureš
HISTORICAL RECORDING 1955

CZECH SINGERS CHOIR

KÜHN CHILDREN'S CHOIR

Jan Kühn (Conductor)



2013 SUBSCRIPTION PAYMENTS

WE WOULD REQUEST members to forward their 2013 subscription payments through their usual channels. A list of our international contacts:

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- > **Lucie and Clemens Harasim (Germany)**, lucie@martinu.cz, +49 152 581 668 32

Members who pay their subscriptions via the Dvořák Society should continue to do so. Those wishing to pay in Czech currency or by cash should contact us at incircle@martinu.cz ■



Jakub Hrůša,
President of IMC

Magdalena Kožená,
IMC Patron

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

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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

- > Simon Schmid, Germany
- > Dennis Davis, London, UK

MARTINŮ ON FACEBOOK

A new project for the promotion of Bohuslav Martinů has begun.

All three "Martinů" institutions (IMC, BM Institute and BM Foundation) will join together to develop a new on-line strategy! See the new contributions, videos, photos etc. on these institutions' Facebook profiles – The Bohuslav Martinů Institute, International Martinů Circle and Bohuslav Martinů. Invite your friends to become a fans of Martinů's music. The Bohuslav Martinů facebook profile has already over 1500 fans! Visit

www.facebook.com/CzechComposer

martinů's final piano conce

/ IVANA TABAK

The last two piano concertos Bohuslav Martinů composed were the *Incantations (Piano Concerto No. 4)* and the *Piano Concerto No. 5*. Research towards the preparation of the critical edition of his works has yielded many questions concerning the latter, one of them pertaining to the Concerto's correct title and the person who had the final say ahead of the single publication of the score in 1959.

MARTINŮ HAD A CLOSE relationship to the piano throughout his life. Even though he travelled extensively and moved frequently from place to place, he was virtually "dependent" on the instrument when composing. His œuvre includes numerous works for solo piano. The best known are the cycles of piano miniatures *Puppets I, II and III* (H. 137, 116, 92) and his one and only piano sonata written for the famous virtuoso Rudolf Serkin (*Sonata for Piano*, H. 350). Five piano concertos can be found among Martinů's works. *The Concerto for Piano and Orchestra in B flat major*, H. 366, known under the title *Fantasia concertante*, is chronologically the fifth piano concerto Martinů composed and is also his last concertante piece for solo instrument and orchestra. As is the case with the majority of Martinů pieces, his concertos were written to commission for specific performers. In a letter dated 12 June 1957, Alfred Schlee, a manager at Universal Edition in Vienna, informed Martinů:

I talked in Zurich to the excellent pianist, Mrs. Margrit Weber. She would like to have a work for piano and orchestra composed by you, best of all a CONCERTINO for piano and orchestra of some 18–25 minutes duration.

Martinů wrote his *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra* from September 1957 to January 1958 in Schönenberg, near Pratteln, Switzerland, where he spent the last months of his life.

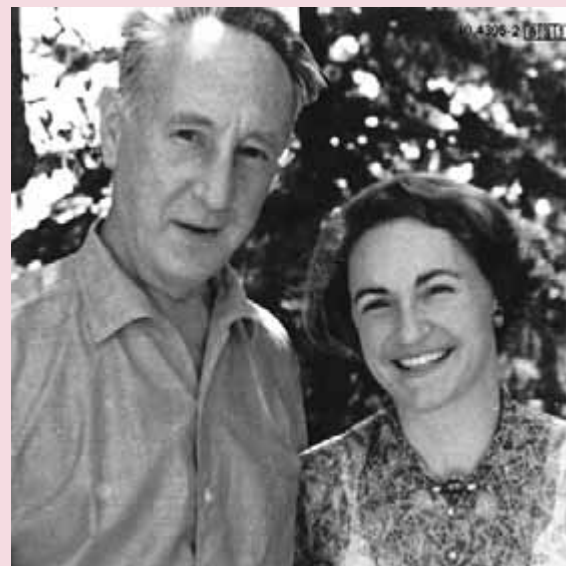
During this time, Martinů wrote letters to his family in Polička and to Frank Rybka, giving them accounts of his work on the piano concerto, and in a letter to the Webers dated 22 December 1957 he mentioned "*le Concerto*". Soon after the piece was completed and prior to the premiere scheduled for 31 January 1959, Universal Edition in Vienna undertook the work's publication. The frequent correspondence between Martinů, Margrit Weber and Universal Edition (Alfred Schlee, Ernst Hartman, Hans Erismann, Dr. Philip, S. G. Harpner, Alfred Kalmus) documents the intensive communication between the composer, the pianist and the publisher. Ernst Hartman's letter dated 1 June 1958 bears the first evidence of Martinů's idea to name the piece *Fantasia concertante*.

The title for the work which you have proposed seems very good indeed and we shall now definitely call it "Fantasia concertante", so it cannot be mixed up with your former Piano Concerto.

Afterwards, this "new" title of the composition can be found in period sources. Serving as an example is the list of corrections*) compiled by Martinů so as to compare the type-set conductor's score and orchestral parts with his autograph shortly before the concerto was published. In November 1958, Martinů received from the publisher a contract for the "*Fantasia concertante Bb*".

The *Concerto's* first orchestra rehearsal took place in December 1958 in Winterthur. This event initiated a heated discussion pertaining to the composition's title waged in the same month between Martinů and the Universal Edition representatives Hans Erismann and Alfred Schlee. In the end, the composer had to admit that their proposal was pragmatic and that the work was a piano concerto, not a fantasia.

"...The title of the Fantasia concertante has been changed, since we have arrived at the conclusion that it is a full piano concerto, so the first name will remain, please correct it then...", Martinů imparted on 11 January 1959 to his friend Miloš Šafránek, the author of a Martinů monograph. S. G. Harpner's 22 December order addressed to Universal Edition's production department also con-



Bohuslav Martinů and Margrit Weber, probably 1957

tains a note on the piece's changed title, *Klavierkonzert in B*.

The *Concerto's* world premiere was given on 31 January 1959 in Berlin. Margrit Weber, to whom the work is dedicated, performed it with the accompaniment of the Radio-Symphonie-Orchester Berlin (formerly RIAS), conducted by Gotthold Efraim Lessing. The composition was referred to in the first programme as *Fantasia concertante*, which took Martinů by surprise, as evident from his letter to Miloš Šafránek.

The subsequent correspondence between Martinů, Margrit Weber and Hans Erismann reveals that musicians had shown great interest in performing the concerto and that within the communication between Weber and the publisher there arose the idea of presenting the work under both titles. Weber intended to perform the concerto as *Fantasia concertante* and at the same time was willing to relinquish the rights to it to another pianist, who would play the composition under the title *Concerto in B* (fr.). Martinů, however, was fiercely opposed to the concerto being presented by other pianists, since he had granted the exclusive performance rights to Weber:

The Concerto is yours, written for you. You should keep it for yourself. Other pianists will have time to play it after you, later. You told Charlotte that you wanted to speak

rto and the dispute about the work's title



Title page and the first page of the copy of the autograph score of the Piano Concerto No. 5 (deposited at the Wienbiblothek, Vienna)

to Universal and make this work available to others. Don't do it, retain the rights for yourself. It would not be pleasant if someone played the concerto before you, in Boston or elsewhere.

The piece is last mentioned in the correspondence on 29 February 1960, half a year after Martinů's death. A letter signed by Dr. Alfred Kalmus, a representative of Universal Edition, was addressed to Charlotte and its purpose was to inform her about the contracts her late husband had signed with Universal Edition. Interestingly, Martinů's fifth piano concerto is mentioned in the letter under both titles – *Fantasia concertante* (Piano Concerto in B Flat).

Owing to an accidental error, a misunderstanding within the Universal Edition team or the publisher's commercial assumption, the one and only existing publication of the concerto, the orchestral score and the piano reduction dating from 1959 bear the title *Fantasia concertante* with the subtitle *Klavierkonzert in B*. The piece is also referred to using the same title by Jaroslav Mihule in his monograph *Martinů: osud skladatele* (Martinů: The Fate of the Composer) and by Miloš Šafránek in his book *Domov, hudba a svět* (Home, Music and the World). On the other hand, Harry Halbreich's catalogue of Martinů's works mentions it as the *Konzert für Klavier und Orchester Nr. 5, in B-Dur*, with the additional title ("Fantasia concertante").

The period correspondence, however, bears witness to the fact that Martinů's definitive decision regarding the piece's name does not coincide with any of the mentioned combinations of the two titles commonly used in the literature. Owing to the influence of the publisher and performers, the composer gave up the idea of calling the work *Fantasia concertante*. Hence, its one and only correct title is *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra in B flat major* (No. 5). ■

* The composer's list of corrections, Bohuslav Martinů – UE, undated. Universal Edition archives, Vienna, Martinů folder, a copy maintained at the Bohuslav Martinů Institute.

1924/ martinů on Stravinsky

BOHUSLAV MARTINŮ too looked up to composers he considered his models. While studying in Prague, he admired Josef Suk, yet the major impact on his development was the Paris of the 1920s and 1930s, where he studied with, among others, Albert Roussel. Martinů was a representative of the young post-war generation of artists who after 1918 clearly renounced Romanticism. They abandoned the idols of the pre-war era – Richard Wagner, Richard Strauss, Gustav Mahler and even Claude Debussy – and turned instead to works by Darius Milhaud, Arthur Honegger and, above all, Igor Stravinsky. Martinů was fascinated by Stravinsky and his entirely novel musical style. He was thoroughly familiar with the Russian's creations and attended performances of his works, including those of the ballets *Les noces* and *Petrushka*. We would be hard pressed indeed to find a Czech composer whose life and work were more similar to Stravinsky's than those of Martinů. Both of them left their homeland when relatively young and spent the major part of their life abroad; both of them reflected a distinct national trait in their music, one prevailing at a certain time. And both Stravinsky and Martinů passed through various creative periods (embracing jazz, folk music, Neo-Classicism).

Martinů gave accounts of all his musical encounters with Stravinsky in 1924 in articles for journals in Czechoslovakia (*Listy Hudební matice*, *Národní a Stavovské divadlo*, *Tribuna*). He wrote five articles for *Listy Hudební matice* alone, with the most significant being the text on Stravinsky below, which we bring you in an abridged version.

IGOR STRAVINSKY

(Martinů wrote the article in 1924 and in the same year it was published in Listy Hudební matice)

Stravinsky occurs at the borderline of two epochs. The Romantic (subjectivist) epoch, slowly dying away, and a new (objectivist) epoch, seeking paths to a novel expression of the spirit. The Romantic epoch accomplished



Igor Stravinsky, c. 1930

its mission, yet, all the obstacles notwithstanding, it lingered too long after its apex. The struggle against this music, nowadays waged by Stravinsky, was launched a long time ago. Schönberg was the first to take note of the erroneous direction in which music had gone, but he found it difficult to overcome the heavy German Romanticism innate to him. Other attempts too have rather remained merely endeavours for a new musical expression than a firm, convincing proof of a new trend. There is the case of *Les Six*: while they can be credited with a number of more or less successful

attempts, much boldness and strength, their work suffers from plenty of excesses and extremes, and lacks a logical system and creative development. Some of the compositions written by *Les Six* are really intriguing and forceful, yet others speculate with modernism and, many a time, sensationalism. Nevertheless, their statement is supplemented by a new principle of the contemporary opinion of art.

It is precisely Stravinsky whose evolutionary line, despite all the digressions, represents a fight, the only fight, for a certain idea. His works often markedly differ from each other,

yet each of them contains the same struggle, always expressed in a different way. His development is formed by a pointed, crooked line, but is still logical and organic in its consequences. Stravinsky is one of those persons who seek and once they have resolved a problem plunge into another one with the same gusto. In the case of Stravinsky, however, it is not a case of seeking or attempts; his works are definitive and purposeful.

Stravinsky is not fond of mystery. "Mystery is still Impressionism", as he himself put it. "Let us try to know everything and, above all, not to conceal anything." He is a fierce opponent of Romanticism and subjectivism. German music is alien and unattractive to him, its emotions calculated and "fabricated". Stravinsky is positive and direct. Life is full of beauty around him, yet not engineered, mysterious but simple, the natural beauty of things themselves. That is where his music stems from. We feel its almost intimate touch, the fundamental question devoid of all veils. It is not a game but the expression of a man who loves life unaffectedly, simply and sincerely. His music is complicated, yet not wilfully obscure. His disavowal of subjectivism is absolute. He coalesces with life and embraces all its components with equal attention. Stravinsky does not avoid anything in which he feels a manifestation of life.

That is why he often startles with the harshness, even brutality, often indiscriminateness, he applies when composing his works. He is vehement, curt, rugged, but his expression is convincing.

By abandoning all embellishments, the veils of Romanticism, the mollified expression of Impressionism and renouncing subjectivism, Stravinsky has entirely naturally and logically returned to absolute music, to purely musical values. So as to attain this, he ruthlessly undercuts the current status of music, which precisely owing to Impressionism is threatened by disintegration of form. He confronts the dominating atonality with exact expression of tonality. He confronts rhythmic quandary and messiness with lawful rhythm. (...) This also in part reflects a person treasuring clarity, order and economy. His revolution is actually



PHOTO: BIBLIOTHEQUE NATIONALE, PARIS

Vaclav Nijinsky as Petrushka

a revolution of return. He does so, however, in his singular, often bewildering manner, and employing all the technical resources he has available. Basically, it is a return to old orders and rules of music. Yet Stravinsky is a man of the present and his music mirrors this present. We must bear in mind that his *Sacre du printemps*, today considered the basis of contemporary expression and actually still the greatest work in this respect, was first performed back in 1913. At that time, the old style prevailed at large. The entire field was dominated by

Debussy, Mahler, Strauss, Scriabin. And at that time, Stravinsky appeared with an accomplished new style, differing from the period in all respects. (...) His style is full of strength, is valuable and precise. (...) Stravinsky places great demands, and he places them not only upon the orchestra and the conductor but the audience too. Everyone is his co-participant.

And it is also Stravinsky who returns to every part its justification, its reality, in the wake of the era of harmonic French Impressionism. Stravinsky surmounts harmony and, in accor-

dance with absolute music and in compliance with the current requirements for economy and reasonability, introduces a polyphonic current of real parts.

If I am to mention Stravinsky's development, it is possible to observe his progress up to *Petrushka*. Until this work, he displayed a certain dependence on Impressionism, as well as his teacher Rimsky-Korsakov and the later influence of Schönberg. Yet these compositions also anticipate the future accomplishments.

Petrushka is the first to show Stravinsky's approach, which culminates in *Le Sacre du printemps* and *Les noces*. Following these pieces, Stravinsky breaks away from applying Russian melodies, songs. Then came the *Histoire du soldat*, *Mavra*, the *Octet*, the *Symphony of Psalms*, the *Piano Concerto*, the *Concertino for String Quartet*, the *Cat's Lullabies and Songs*. (...)

I conclude with the wish that we get to know Stravinsky's entire oeuvre as soon as possible, form an opinion and our relation to it, as well as our relation to contemporary music as such. And this would not be possible without knowledge of Stravinsky, its leading figure.

Martinů's most profound musical experience during his first year in Paris was his encounter with Igor Stravinsky. He dealt with the composer and the works he had heard for the first time in five articles that astonished the musical circles in Prague. Martinů wrote about Stravinsky with convincing eloquence and in a passionate tone, bearing witness to the deep personal impression Stravinsky had made on him. Martinů discovered in Paris Stravinsky's pivotal works dating from his pre-war period – the ballets *Petrushka* (1911) and *Le Sacre du printemps* (1913) – which were unknown in Prague. He was also overwhelmed by the dance cantata *Les noces* and the ballet *Histoire du soldat*. Below is Martinů's text about a concert performance of *Petrushka*.

STRAVINSKY'S PETRUSHKA

(published in the journal *Národní a Stavovské divadlo*, 1924)

Petrushka ushered in a new musical era in France. Not only does the work present a new ballet style, the music itself reveals a new



Vaclav Nijinsky as *Petrushka*

approach and a new opinion of the world. It is Stravinsky's first work clearly and wittingly expressed in this direction, one that is also a breakthrough in his output and which serves as the basis for all his further activity. All the fundamental elements of Stravinsky's future works are brought out in *Petrushka*, albeit at many junctures in rough outlines. The piece is based on two principles: objectivity and dynamism.

At the time when Stravinsky wrote the ballet, back in 1910–11, France was almost entirely dominated by the Debussy style, Germany by Richard Strauss, Russia by Scriabin, and musical composition tended to be aligned with the already absorbed Romanticism and even Impressionism. In our country, we had yet to get close to Suk and Janáček. In France, there were attempts at new musical, visual and literary expression. With regard to music, Stravinsky came up with *Petrushka*, and *Le sacre du printemps* shortly afterwards. Stravinsky was upbraided for the orchestra merely illustrating stage actions, being dependent on them; that is, the music in the ballet *Petrushka* was said to be essentially descriptive. Over time, however, this opinion completely died away. *Petrushka* is a work possessing purely musical values, and the recent concert performance has confirmed this judgement. Certainly, when performing the work on stage it was necessary to take the subject into account, yet the composer achieved this by purely musical means. The four tableaux *Petrushka* corresponds to the four movements of a sonata or symphony. They are the market, the fair with Russian dances and

undertones of French chanson and Viennese waltz; *Petrushka's* cell; the Moor's room; and the final section: the Shrovetide fair with the falling dusk and *Petrushka's* death. Accordingly, it is the progression of symphonic movements: allegro, lento, scherzo, allegro. The new feature of *Petrushka*, that which sets it apart from Stravinsky's earlier works, is, besides a unique manner of instrumentation, the novel polyphonic voice-leading with all the harshness and brusqueness that later on culminate in *Le sacre du printemps*. It is a return to diatonic and precisely periodised rhythm. In many respects, the manner of this work anticipated the future cantata *Les noces*, which is written almost diatonically. This new direction of Stravinsky's may have been caused by a musicality desiring lucid expression of a musical idea amid the atonal chaos that reigned after Impressionism. Or perhaps his relationship to the soul of the Russian people and their (diatonic) songs. Whatever the case may be, the Russian element is expressed here in new values that also build upon the results of Western culture. Nevertheless, it is not yet the sheer Russian tone permeating *Les noces*. *Petrushka* reflects the world of Russian merchants, the songs of Russian towns and markets partially Europeanised, whereas in the case of *Les noces* it is a rite, a sacrament based on old Russian church songs. ■

/ Edited by
Lucie Harasim Berná

a musical journey that is larger than life

eugene izotov on the oboe concerto

/ ROBERT SIMON

As I often remark to my European friends, hearing Martinů's music in the United States is a rare and delightful event, especially when performed by world class artists. I was ecstatic to hear that Eugene Izotov would be performing the *Concerto for Oboe, H. 353* with Riccardo Muti and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, their first performance of the work.

Mr. Izotov was generous enough to take time out of his preparations to speak with me about Martinů's *Concerto*, and give insight into his approach to the work.

Given the opportunity to perform a concerto with the CSO, what led you to choose the Martinů?

It's always an interesting choice for a soloist, discussing repertoire with Maestro Muti and deciding what to perform with the CSO. The selection for oboists is not as generous as it is for other winds, but the 20th century does give us more options.

Martinů intrigued me — I don't have much experience performing his music, but everything I have played is fascinating. The *Concerto* is concise, but amazing — a musical journey that is larger than life. I do not feel that the piece is about structure or organization, but emotion and open expression. It is very visual, very vivid, and takes unexpected, colorful, spicy turns. It is quite dramatic and completely accessible. While technically challenging, it is written very well for the oboe. In working with Tancibudek, Martinů shows great understanding of both the technical abilities and personality of the instrument.

Are you performing from the revised edition? And which cadenzas will you play?

I am using most of the corrections offered in the Bourgue revision, but I will only play the 1st cadenza. It's a terrific cadenza, that's poignant and determined. The purpose of the 2nd cadenza is to give the oboe more to do, but in discussing with Muti, I felt that it isn't necessary.

What are your thoughts on the *Concerto* and what do you think its highlights are?



PHOTO TODD ROSENBERG

Russian-born oboist Eugene Izotov has been the principal oboist of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra since 2005, appointed to this position by Daniel Barenboim. With Riccardo Muti (on the right).

The *Concerto* is a look at life and the changes in life. The first movement is harmless and happy. You hear bebop and jazz, but also plaintive folk melodies. Suddenly the second movement is much darker, and the dimension changes. It comes at you with a profound sadness and drama that you don't see coming, especially after the joyous and bubbly first movement. New voices enter in the orchestra as part of the story-telling, particularly the solo in the horn. These new voices bring bad news and the orchestral introduction ends with an unan-

swered question. The oboe enters, and is as if it is making it up, trying to find the answer, trying to find something that holds true. The orchestra joins and the story builds, ending with an outcry of frustration on one of the oboe's highest notes. Then comes calm, and a moment of absolution and religious truth. The second movement is the focal point, and it is so effective because of the outer movements. The third is ballet music — I hear *Petrushka*. It's very exciting and ends with a thrilling coda. ■

.....

IN HEARING MR. IZOTOV describe his narrative for the work and its visual aspects, I had new ears when I attended his performance on 8 June at Symphony Center in Chicago. Izotov's playing was brilliant and colorful, with soaring, expansive lines. His second movement, with excellent support from the CSO musicians, was transcendent. With masterful ease he maneuvered the technical challenges of the pleading, frantic passages; the glowing warmth of the movement's close made for an unforgettably beautiful contrast. I found myself following the exact story he had painted for me days earlier. It was the best performance I have heard of this marvelous work.

The Chicago critics agreed, praising the excellent playing of Izotov and the accompanying Chicago Symphony under the direction of Muti. However, criticism of the piece itself was varied as we find so often with those unfamiliar with Martinů's music. Lawrence Johnson of the Chicago Classical Review lauded the soloist's choice, calling Martinů "bafflingly neglected" whose works are "of a consistently high quality." Yet John von Rhein, writing in the Chicago Tribune said that Martinů's works are "cookie-cutter" and that the oboe concerto is "bland" and "among his lesser creations."

I will take a performer's opinion over a critic's any day, and I return now to Izotov, who said: Martinů has such a distinctive voice — a language of his own that you instantly recognize. In talking with others about performing Martinů, what I hear most often is "he really doesn't get performed enough." We in the Martinů community certainly agree, and we give heartfelt thanks to Eugene Izotov, Riccardo Muti, and the Chicago Symphony for bringing the music of Martinů to life. ■

For more information, please visit www.oboesolo.com

bohuslav martinů in never



↑ BM with his wife Charlotte Martinů in Camaret, France 1928



↗ ↑ BM with his wife Charlotte Martinů in Cavalaire, France 1931



↑ Together in the forest, USA, c. 1942



← Charlotte Martinů with Jan Zrzavý, Rue de Vanves, Paris 1934



↑ BM and Charlotte Martinů, Ridgefield, 1944



↑ ↑ ↗ BM and Charlotte Martinů in Rue de Vanves, Paris, c. 1934



↑ Place unknown, probably in the thirties

before published photos



✦ ✦ ✦ Charlotte Martinů and BM with Stanislav Novák, Bagatelle, France 1931



✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ BM and Charlotte Martinů in Juan-les-Pins, France 1933



✦ → Charlotte Martinů and BM in Venice, Italy 1934

✦ Baie de Bandol, 1932

ma chère charlotte...

...IS HOW THE YOUNG Bohuslav Martinů addressed his future wife. And it is also the title of an exhibition prepared by the Polička Museum to mark the 35th anniversary of the composer's wife death. Five years ago, the museum was being renovated and could not commemorate the 30th anniversary in a dignified manner. This exhibition goes some way to paying the debt it had towards Charlotte Martinů.

At the exhibition opening, which took place on 11 May 2013, Polička had the honour of welcoming venerable and dear guests. After several years, Charlotte Martinů's great-nephew Mr. Alain Bécourt, together with his son Sylvain, again visited the Czech Republic. We are delighted that they spent a few days in our country as guests of the Bohuslav Martinů Foundation and the Polička Museum. Mr. Bécourt provided invaluable assistance back at the time of the exhibition's preparations by kindly lending the Polička Museum some of the personal effects that belonged to his great-aunt, including, for instance, the scissors she used when working as a seamstress and the gold chain she always wore. What's more, he also helped to identify some of the persons in his family photographs. Those attending the exhibition's opening in Polička had the precious opportunity to hear Professor Jaroslav Mihule, a splendid speaker whose range of knowledge is simply astonishing. The attentive listener soon realised that his voluminous monograph, rounding off his lifelong Martinů research, is just the tip of the iceberg, representing an incredible connoisseurship not only of the composer himself but also the numerous people he met during his lifetime. The exhibition displays several hitherto unknown photographs from Charlotte Martinů's family album that have not previously been shown and published. Some of them are included in the summer supplement to this issue of the Martinů Revue.

The exhibition, which runs in Polička until the end of August 2013, presents Charlotte from various angles – as a nature lover, a seasoned traveller, as well as a reliable administrator of the composer's works after his death. A number of photographs capture her transformation from a humble seamstress working in a workshop into an elegant lady who fitted very well into her husband's circle of friends. The exhibition makes it possible for the visitors to soak up the atmosphere of interwar Paris



Prague, 1938



Charlotte with nieces & nephews in Vieux Moulin, 1930



Charlotte in Toronto, 1950

PHOTOS © CBM POLIČKA

in a cosy café, play Bohuslav Martinů's piano bought in Paris, try on models of stylish 1920s clothes at a fashion house, or test their skills at the Medrano circus. The visitors can also read the love letters Bohuslav wrote to Charlotte or listen to the tales of various people knew her personally. They can write their own reminiscences in the visitors' book or record in it the impression they had from their

fleeting encounter with this extraordinary woman, who just thirty-five years ago could be seen in Polička or Prague. Owing to a special educational programme for schools, the exhibition has already been seen by many students from various parts of the Czech Republic and from abroad.

/ Lucie Jirglová



Alain and Sylvain Bécourt at the exhibition's opening (on the right) with the interpreter (first on the left)



Jaroslav Mihule opened the exhibition



From the exhibition

LIST OF MARTINŮ'S WORKS XIII

Special
Series

CATEGORY/

VOCAL MUSIC

SUBCATEGORY/

SONGS WITH PIANO ACCOMPANIMENT / PART I (A–I)

ON THIS PAGE of the Revue we continue with our publishing of the complete list of Bohuslav Martinů's works.

In this issue we will start the subcategory Songs with Piano Accompaniment (listed in alphabetical order). The basic data on the works listed here have been taken from the online catalogue of Martinů's œuvre at <http://database.martinu.cz>

Commentary/

"Archive" – gives the information as to where the autograph score is deposited. Only accessible information is stated. If data on the publisher are missing, the work has yet to be published.

ABANDONED SWEETHEART (OPUŠTĚNÁ MILÁ)

H. 67

Place of composition: Polička
Date of composition: 1912
Archive: autograph is missing
Copyright: Bärenreiter, Kassel

AH, LET ME KNOW (ACH, OZVI SE)

H. 267bis

Durata: 4'
Place of composition: Paris
Date of composition: 1938
Archive: Czech Museum of Music in Prague
Copyright: Bärenreiter, Kassel

AT NIGHT (V NOCI)

H. 30

Durata: 5:54
Place of composition: Prague
Date of composition: 1910
Dedication: Olga Valoušková
Archive: Czech Museum of Music in Prague, The Bohuslav Martinů Center in Polička
Copyright: Bärenreiter, Kassel

AVE MARIA

H. 59

Place of composition: Polička
Date of composition: 1912
Performing forces: S Org
Archive: autograph is missing

BEFORE YOU KNOW (NEŽ SE NADĚJEŠ)

H. 6

Durata: 1:52
Place of composition: Prague
Date of composition: 1910
Archive: Czech Museum of Music in Prague
Copyright: Bärenreiter, Kassel

CHINESE SONGS (ČÍNSKÉ PÍSNĚ)

H. 147

Place of composition: Paris
Date of composition: 1925
Dedication: Fina Tausiková
Archive: autograph is missing

CZECH RIDDLES (ČESKÉ HÁDANKY)

H. 277bis

Durata: 4:39
Place of composition: Paris
Date of composition: 1939
Dedication: Saša Pucová
Archive: Paris, private property
Copyright: Bärenreiter, Kassel

DEAD LOVE (MRTVÁ LÁSKA)

H. 44

Durata: 2:46
Place of composition: Prague
Date of composition: 1912
Dedication: Olga Valoušková
Archive: The Bohuslav Martinů Center in Polička
Copyright: Schott Music, Mainz

THE DROWNED MAIDEN (UTONULÁ)

H. 9

Place of composition: Prague
Date of composition: 1910
Archive: autograph is missing

EARLY IN THE MORNING, I WEED THE GRAIN (RÁNO RANÍČKO, PLEJU OBILÍČKO)

H. 49

Place of composition: Prague
Date of composition: 1912
Archive: autograph is missing

EASTER SONG (VELIKONOČNÍ)

H. 230

Place of composition: Paris
Date of composition: 1933
Premiere: Polička, 07.06.1956
Archive: autograph is missing
Publisher: Lidové noviny, Brno 1933
Copyright: Bärenreiter, Prague

THE END OF ALL (KONECVŠEMU)

H. 43

Durata: 2:27
Place of composition: Prague
Date of composition: 1912
Dedication: Vilma
Archive: The Bohuslav Martinů Center in Polička
Copyright: Bärenreiter, Kassel

ENOUGH OF HAPPINESS (ŠTĚSTÍ TO DOST)

H. 81

Durata: 1:39
Place of composition: Prague
Date of composition: 1912
Archive: Czech Museum of Music in Prague
Copyright: Bärenreiter, Kassel

ENTRY INTO MY SISTER'S ALBUM (PSÁNO DO PAMÁTNÍKU SESTRINA)

H. 8bis

Date of composition: 1910
Archive: Moravian Museum in Brno
Copyright: Bärenreiter, Kassel

THE FIERY MAN (OHNIVÝ MUŽ)

H. 71

Date of composition: 1912
Archive: Czech Museum of Music in Prague
Copyright: Bärenreiter, Kassel

FIRST LOVE (PRVNÍ LÁSKA)

H. 40

Place of composition: Prague
Date of composition: 1911
Dedication: Olga Valoušková
Archive: autograph is missing

FOUR CHILDREN'S SONGS AND RHYMES (ČTYŘI DĚTSKÉ PÍSNĚ A ŘÍKADLA)

H. 225

Place of composition: Paris
Date of composition: 1932
Dedication: Anna Šafránková
Archive: The Bohuslav Martinů Center in Polička
Copyright: Bärenreiter, Prague

FROM CHILDHOOD (Z DĚTSTVÍ)

H. 51

Place of composition: Prague
Date of composition: 1912
Archive: autograph is missing
Copyright: Bärenreiter, Kassel

THE GNAT'S WEDDING (KOMÁROVA SVATBA)

H. 75

Durata: 1:16
Date of composition: 1912
Archive: autograph is missing
Copyright: Bärenreiter, Kassel

HOAR-FROST FELL TO THE FIELD (PADLO JÍNÍ NA POLE)

H. 52

Place of composition: Prague
Date of composition: 1912
Archive: autograph is missing
Copyright: Bärenreiter, Kassel

I AM STRIDING, STRIDING BETWEEN THE HILLS (KRÁČÍM, KRÁČÍM MEZI VRCHY)

H. 74bis

Durata: 1:37
Date of composition: 1912
Archive: autograph is missing
Copyright: Bärenreiter, Kassel

I KNOW A GROVE (VÍM HÁJÍČEK)

H. 273

Durata: 1:30
Place of composition: Paris
Date of composition: 1939
Dedication: „K narozeninám maminky Vítězslavy Kaprálové“
Archive: Moravian Museum in Brno
Copyright: Bärenreiter, Prague

To be continued in the next issue.

a new production of **who is**

/ LUCIE DERCSÉNYIOVÁ

IN SEARCH OF THE SUBJECT MATTER

Jaroslav Mihule states in his monograph *Martinů, osud skladatele* (Martinů, The Fate of a Composer) that Bohuslav Martinů started composing the ballet *Who Is the Most Powerful in the World?*, H. 133, at the time when he was a student in Josef Suk's master class at the Prague Conservatory, which he attended in 1922 and 1923. In the National Theatre bulletin, however, Martinů wrote that he began working on the ballet "almost immediately after *Istar*", i.e. in 1919. Available sources variously date the piece's completion as 1922 (Erisman, Guy: 1990; Halbreich, Harry: 2007) or 1923 (Šafránek, Miloš: 1961; Mihule, Jaroslav: 2002). As was the case of his other works, Martinů had a clear idea of the ballet's form. He wrote that he intended to create a "short and uncomplicated" work and expressed his desire for "true dance", adding that at the time he had become rather tired of the symphonic structure of the dances on which he based his ballet *Istar*, H. 130. It would seem that he wanted to take a break from the conceptions of his previous stage compositions and did not feel like dealing with the inner drama of the characters; as such, he "desisted from describing emotions by means of dance and replaced various dramatic or impassioned scenes with a purely dance form." (Národní a Stavovské divadlo, 11 December 1926). Consequently, Martinů was searching for a subject matter that would make it possible to fulfil his intention. He even wrote from Paris to Karel Čapek, asking him for help in how to treat the theme, and in a letter dated 30 March 1924 the writer replied to him: "As you can see, I didn't make it to Paris because I had the flu, and I sincerely regret it. At the moment, I can't even think of theatre, whatever the subject may be. I am now occupied with other tasks and – would you believe it? – feel somewhat lighter without theatre... I am really sorry for dashing your hopes".

It is interesting that according to Miloš Šafránek (Divadlo Bohuslava Martinů, Prague, Editio Supraphon, 1979) Martinů only received the subject for the ballet in the middle of 1923, namely, from the Czech actress, stage director

and author Míla Mellanová, who sent him the fairy tale *Blažený ostrov nenarozených* (The Blessed Island of the Unborn) to consider. "When I was writing it, I could hear music in my ears, unearthly, I would say, almost astral," she wrote in her accompanying letter dated 1 August 1923, which Martinů received just before he left for Paris.

Mellanová relinquished to Martinů the rights to the subject matter and the composer duly adapted it according to his intentions.

According to the available information, it is evident that Martinů began creating the music for the ballet prior to having a specific subject.

The ballet's story itself is in no way earth-shattering – the piece is a witty dance burlesque with capricious music. Martinů wanted the audience to enjoy itself, describing the work as a "ballet revue", which afforded him scope for period dances succeeding one another – the characters dance in the rhythm of the serenade, minuet, foxtrot, Charleston, waltz, Boston and polka.

The fairy tale, inspired by an Indian fable, tells the story of a pretty and intelligent mouse princess whose parents refuse to marry her to someone ordinary. That is why they want to choose none other than the most powerful in the world. They turn down a mouse prince and seek the ideal husband – they suppose that the most powerful in the world is the sun, yet it is covered by a grumpy old cloud, which in turn is dispersed by the wind. But there is also a wall, which the wind cannot overcome. And so it seems clear that the sun is powerful, the wind is even more powerful, but the wall is the most powerful of all. The parents thus offer their daughter to the wall, but it is undermined by mice and falls apart. Accordingly, in the final analysis, the most powerful in the world are the mice. At the end of the fairy tale, the mouse princess is married to the mouse prince and everyone rejoices at a merry wedding.

THE BRNO PREMIERE

The ballet *Who Is the Most Powerful in the World?* was premiered on 31 January 1925 in Brno and was the first Martinů work to be staged at a theatre in the city. Martinů eagerly

awaited the responses to the performance, and in a letter to his friend Stanislav Novák he wrote: "Please tell everyone you meet that my mice ballet is three years old, that it was (composed) at a time when I didn't know anything about Stravinsky, apart from that he had written *Petrushka*, but I didn't know him. I already find it somewhat silly to be bracketed with Stravinsky. If it were written by, for instance, Axman, it would be a discovery and we would be contemporary, up there with Europe as a whole, yet when it concerns me they think I must have taken it over from somewhere. I don't care much about having been put in such a cage as Impressionism. Today, no one mentions my absolute surrender to Impressionism any more, now that I have surrendered to Stravinsky. They are next to each other, aren't they?" (7 February 1925, Paris). Martinů may have suspected that the critics would not be able to resist comparison, and his foreboding proved to be well-founded, as evidenced by a review published by Listy Hudební matice: "Joke upon joke, foxtrot and waltz. Dvořák, Mozart, Strauss and, above all, Stravinsky. Not just with certain reminiscences but the overall style. Nothing doing; it is contemporary, it has bustle and verve, imagination and forcibility." (Listy Hudební matice, Vol. VI. 1924–25). The one-hour ballet was staged within a mixed bill alongside Osvald Chlubná's new opera *The Power of Desire*. The critics compared the two works, appreciating the wit of Martinů's piece and defining it as a ballet comedy. The author of the review published in *Rovnost* was evidently taken aback by Martinů's work: "...Bohuslav Martinů's ballet comedy strives to be an attempt at a modern reform of ballet, as it was launched by Stravinsky. It adheres to a single principle – disaffirming any principle – and this is done so thoroughly that one keeps being stunned and dazzled by new surprises, some of which are so strong that they presume a nervous system totally different to that possessed by us, today's mortals." (*Rovnost*, 4 February 1925). Gracián Černušák perceived Martinů's piece as largely derivative, yet at the same time acknowledged that it "has its own vigour and makes one laugh". The critic went on to praise the "colourful and formally lush, spiritually extremely auspicious sets" designed by Andrej Andrejev and made

the most powerful in the world?



Performance of the ballet *Who Is the Most Powerful in the World?* in February 1927 in the National Theatre, Prague:
Helena Štěpánková dancing as “Miss Mouse” and Emanuel Famíra dancing as “Wind”

PHOTO: ARCHIVE OF THE NATIONAL THEATRE, PRAGUE

brief reference to the “freshness, wit and smoothness of the corps de ballet.” (Lidové noviny, 28 January 1925). Unfortunately, the responses of the time do not reveal anything more specific about the ballet’s first production in Brno, choreographed by Jaroslav Hladík.

Two years later, on 17 February 1927, the work was staged by the National Theatre in Prague. The choreography was undertaken by Remislav Remislavský, the stage direction by Ferdinand Pujman, and the sets were designed by František Berger. Martinů’s ballet was performed in Prague within a mixed bill after Ravel’s opera for children *L’Enfant et les*

sortilèges. The two works puzzled some of the critics. The daily *Právo lidu* wrote that “despite being arresting, both pieces are substandard for a large stage... and yet the first of them possesses so much gracefulness, so much delightful music, so much tenderness, so many novel, inventive ideas and so much abundant compositional and sonic loveliness, and the second so much salutary musicality, humour, nimbleness and engrossing music.” (*Právo lidu*, 19 February 1927). Hubert Doležil, in whose opinion Martinů’s ballet referred to Stravinsky’s rhythms and instrumental effects or Milhaud’s compositional phraseology, did not deny that the piece had a “Czech

tone” (*České slovo*, 19 February 1927). Iša Krejčí, too, saw an affinity with Milhaud, while Otakar Šourek expressed his viewpoint in a single sentence: “The music is simple, in places greyly garrulous, yet otherwise an entertaining trifle possessing a sense of colourful stage exquisiteness.” (*Venkov*, 19 February 1927). The critic Erich Steinhardt wrote in a similar vein for the *Neue-Musik Zeitung* and *Auftakt*. He defined the two works as fantasy mimes and branded Martinů an absolutely contemporary composer who, although delighting in Impressionistic colouring, is entertaining and possessing a light touch.

In comparison with the music, the critics paid only sporadic attention to the choreography, merely mentioning the performers in passing. Boleslav Vomáčka wrote of Remislavský's seemingly stage direction and dances, highlighting too the distinct performances of Helena Štěpánková, Louisa Černá, Zdenka Zabylová and Emanuel Famíra (Wind). According to Doležil, the choreographer Remislavský and the set designer František Berger "came into their own", with Remislavský affording the mimic action comprehensibility and both soloists and corps faring well. The critic praised Zabylová's performance of the Sun Prince as subtle and gracious, and praised Černá for her heroic portrayal of the Mouse Prince, while Helena Štěpánková was complimented as a young mouse lady with all the goods. (Lidové listy, 19 February 1927).

The ballet *Who Is the Most Powerful in the World?* marked a turning point in Martinů's oeuvre, even though the composer himself viewed it as a "step backwards" – perhaps owing to its being lighter, more unrestrained and lithesome than his previous, more seriously conceived, works. When the libretto was published, it was introduced by Vítězslav Nezval's text, replete with high-flown proclamations and fervour, echoing similar proclamations made by Les Six and their intellectual leader, Jean Cocteau. Even though, when compared with *Istar*, the critical responses to *Who Is the Most Powerful in the World?* were much more positive, the piece was given a mere six additional performances (22 and 26 February, 9 and 14 and 26 March, 21 September 1927). Martinů would only return to the National Theatre stage in 1933, with the ballet *Špalíček*, H. 214 yet his dance burlesque was not revived in Prague.

In 1960, *Who Is the Most Powerful in the World?* was produced as a puppet performance choreographed and directed by Eva Kröschlová; in 1973 it was staged by Eva Malátová at the People's School of Arts in Pardubice, and in 2005 the title, as choreographed by Tanja Pezdir, was included in the repertoire of the Ljubljana Opera.

On 23 March 2008, the ballet had a well-received premiere (+4 more performances)



at the Volkstheater Rostock (choreographer and stage director: Wladimir Fedianin); in 2009 it was staged to great acclaim by pupils of the Bohuslav Martinů Primary Arts School in Polička.

THE NEW PRAGUE CHAMBER BALLET PRODUCTION

The most recent production of *Who Is the Most Powerful in the World?*, premiered on 18 February 2013, is that of the Prague Chamber Ballet, who added the work to their repertoire as a stand-alone performance for schools. In Prague, the ballet is presented in the alternative space of the Ponec Theatre, as well as in the Church of St. Simon and Jude. The one-act, fifty-minute opus has been prepared by Hana Polanská Turečková (b. 1980), who previously danced at the National Theatres in Brno and Prague, and since 2012 has been a choreographer and member of the Artistic Board of the Prague Chamber Ballet.

The essence of the original Martinů libretto has not been modified, yet the action is set in a circus milieu, which makes it possible to give free rein to the imagination, just as the original fairy tale about mice does. In this story too, parents seek a suitable groom, the most powerful in the world, to marry their daughter, who

despite the three present natural elements (Sun, Cloud and Wind) is finally given to a prince. With regard to the fact that the parents are stated in the programme as the Ringmaster and the Ringmaster's Wife, it would have been more fitting to set the lead characters in the given milieu than make them the Prince and Princess – they could be, for instance, acrobats, tightrope-walkers or clowns. Nevertheless, the revisions to the original libretto have not reduced the comprehensibility of the story, which, in addition, is explained by the actress Barbora Hrzánová from

a sound recording.

The ballet's staging features an impressive graphic element: a set design that refers to the time of the work's origination – the 1920s, the decade when abstraction, surrealism and Dadaism were engendered and the artistic avant-garde outraged with its novel conceptions. The designer Vladimír Houdek openly embraces these trends, playing with the details of various abstract images projected on to the back screen, while each of the tabourets on which the protagonists sit down during the performance has a different shape and bears bold geometrical patterns. Houdek's stage design renders the timelessness of the ballet, which in musical terms mirrors the trends of the time and concurrently retains the composer's prolific invention. Compared to the set design, less elaborate are the costumes designed by Monika Žáková, who focuses more on interesting masks than refinement of the attire (the dancers, alias Sun Rays, in baggy overalls initially come across a little bit like grown-up toddlers).

In the new production of the ballet, Martinů's music is heard from a recording made by the Prague Symphony Orchestra conducted by Jiří Bělohlávek, which resounds through the moderate space of the Ponec Theatre, fully replacing a live performance. Hana Polanská Turečková has



*The most recent production of **Who Is the Most Powerful in the World?**
in February 2013 – Prague Chamber Ballet*

PHOTO: JIŘÍ THÝN

succeeded in finding a distinctive vocabulary of movement and making use of all the possibilities of the small ensemble, whereby the individual dancers portray multiple roles.

At the beginning, we see the shadows of the three elements behind backlit screens. During the course of the production, a flexible wall from cut strips is employed, from which at some moments only certain parts of the dancers' bodies – heads, arms, legs – protrude. The Princess's parents move like puppets and their isolated phased motion comes across as slapstick. The Wind crosses the stage on roller-skates several times, the Sun Rays are represented by the arms of the four dancers, whose

lithe and waving arms now and then assume the poses of an Indian dance and etch in the movement of a revolving circle from a structured material, which is an integral part of the backdrop.

The variations do not reflect the steps of the dances quoted in the music, with earthbound positions predominating – sometimes, it would seem there are too many of them, especially when the rhythm and melody urge waltz steps or more high-flown jumps. The Prince and the Princess could at least for a while whirl in the waltz rhythm, yet they never do. Acrobatic elements are scanty too: the odd cartwheel, a little bit of juggling, even though the chosen

circus milieu provides a wide range of possibilities, which would perhaps be more thoroughly exploited by today's cool nouveau cirque genre.

Each of the characters renders the determined role and action by means of physical expression. The choreographer focuses on bold gesture, conceiving the given situation in its urgency, or lightness. An unforgettable passage is the dispute between the daughter (Princess) and the mother (Ringmaster's Wife), with the latter wanting to control and impose on her child an uncompromising decision – sharp movements led in direct lines depict the dominance with which the mother, Lenka Bílková, enforces her will. Towards the end of the argument, however, the initially pliant, round curves of the frail Nikol Šneiderová's physique assume a curtness and strength. Very good too is the rendition of the moments of mutual enthrallment between the two central characters in softly nuanced movement and an interesting partnership chime. Knowledge of academic dance technique is evident in the ample shaping, in which we perceive the choreographer's sense of modelling movement in various dynamic and spatial variations.

The performance of the ballet ***Who Is the Most Powerful in the World?*** is visually pure, while the graphic aspect and dance form a harmonic whole. Owing to its conception and intelligibility, it holds the interest of both adults and children, thus opening scope for the appreciation of the demanding music, visual arts and dance.

PRAGUE CHAMBER BALLET **WHO IS THE MOST POWERFUL IN THE WORLD?**

Choreography: Hana Polanská Turečková
Sets and costumes: Vladimír Houdek,
Monika Žáková
Script: Eva Kolková
Lighting design: Pavel Kotík
Premiere: 18 February 2013 at the Ponoc
Theatre, Prague

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Mihule, Jaroslav: *Martinů, osud skladatele*, Karolinum, 2002
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the **naxos** martinů recordings

/ GREGORY TERIAN

Klaus Heymann, a German-born entrepreneur and music lover, launched the Naxos label in 1987. Based in Hong Kong, he had previously acted as a distributor of American audio equipment and later set up an agency to promote several European record labels in the Far East, including Supraphon. He went on to establish his own HK label which specialised in Chinese symphonic music and would later feature recordings by the Hong Kong Philharmonic with which Heymann became closely associated. In parallel, the Marco Polo label was created to present less familiar orchestral repertoire in recordings emanating mostly from Eastern Europe. One release featured Martinů's *Epic of Gilgames, H. 351* performed by the Slovak Philharmonic under Zdeněk Košler.

The emergence of Naxos resulted in a steady stream of CD releases of the standard classics, issued at unmatched budget prices. Initially they had limited appeal for specialist collectors. To compete at this level, Naxos necessarily engaged young and less well known artists. However, the volume of sales achieved was beyond all expectations and this was to have a profound impact on the international record scene. Commercially, the most successful of these recordings proved to be that of Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* as performed by the Japanese violinist Takako Nishizaki, the wife of Klaus Heymann.

As Naxos prospered, so the range of its recorded repertoire expanded and embraced the works of Martinů. The first CD of his music, recorded at the 1994 Australian Chamber Music Festival, included the *String Quintet, H. 164* and *Piano Quartet No.1, H. 287*. Artists participating included the late Daniel Adni and Isabelle van Keulen.

The catalogue of Martinů works has continued to grow, providing collectors with access to a wide range of the composer's music at modest cost. It now ranks second only to Supraphon in the scope of its CD recordings. Two recent discs have featured the Piano Trios and the complete ballet score of the *Revue de cuisine, H. 161*. The roster of artists now includes such notable interpreters as the Martinů Quartet and Giorgio



Giorgio Koukl & Jana Wallingerová

Koukl, whose enthusiastic promotion of the composer's works continues unabated.

GIORGIO KOUKL'S LEGACY

Giorgio Koukl was born in Prague in 1953 and studied at the State Music School and Conservatoire. Following the events of 1968, his family left Czechoslovakia and settled in Lugano in Switzerland where he adopted the Italianised version of his first name *Jiří*.

He continued his studies at the Zurich and Milan Conservatoires and participated in Rudolf Firkušný's masterclass at the 1971 Lucerne Festival. This stimulated his interest in the piano works of Martinů. He began to include them in his recitals and performances were broadcast by the Swiss and German radio networks. As his repertoire widened, he approached record companies with a view to producing a Martinů compilation, but none showed interest, believing such a disc would not be commercially viable.

Naxos came to the rescue and eventually agreed to release a comprehensive series of recordings of Martinů's piano works. The initial CD appeared in 2004. The project proceeded on the basis that the artist would bear the cost of producing the recordings. The resulting albums, which include many first recordings, drew critical acclaim.

With the soprano Jana Wallingerová, Koukl next turned to the composer's early unpublished songs. A CD of these delightful settings

appeared in 2010 and was also well received. In January of this year these artists again came together at the Korunní studios in Prague to record a new album. Naxos 8.572310 is due for release in December and will feature twenty-five more songs. They are all first recordings apart from *Three Songs for the Cabaret „Red Seven“, H. 129* of 1920. Among them, Koukl regards the cycle *Měsíce, H.135*, dating from 1922, as unique in its use of dense harmonies, not to be found in any of the composer's earlier or later works.

Koukl has collected sufficient songs to fill two further albums, including fresh discoveries not listed in the Halbreich catalogue. Both existing CDs received financial support from individual members of the IMC and it is to be hoped that funds will be forthcoming to enable the additional discs to be published. This indefatigable artist has also recently recorded works by Tcherépnin and Tansman, both friends of Martinů from the time of his Paris sojourn. One can envisage an intriguing recital of works by these three contemporaries, but it will require a brave sponsor to promote such an event.

There can be no doubt that, through his series of recordings, Giorgio Koukl has done more than any other pianist since Rudolf Firkušný to bring the piano works of Martinů to international attention. Lovers of the music will be profoundly grateful for his dedicated efforts on behalf of the composer. ■

(listed by year of recording)

Compiled by William Marsden

1989

The Epic of Gilgamesh (H.351)

Ivan Kusnjer, Štefan Margita, Luděk Vele, Eva Depoltová, Milan Karpišek, Slovak Philharmonic Choir and Orchestra, Zdeněk Košler

Naxos 8.555138

(formerly on Marco Polo 8.223316)

1994

String Quintet (H.164); *Piano Quartet No. 1* (H.287); *Oboe Quartet* (H.315); *Sonata No. 1 for Viola and Piano* (H.355)

Charmian Gadd, Slomia Soroka, Rainer Moog, Theodore Kuchar, Young-Change Cho; Isabelle van Keulen, Daniel Adni; Joel Marangella, Alexander Ivashkin, Kathryn Selby

Naxos 8.553916

1995

Symphonies Nos. 1 and 6 (Fantasies Symphoniques) (H.289 and H.343); *Symphonies Nos. 2 and 4* (H.295 and H.305); *Symphonies Nos. 3 and 5* (H.299 and H.310)

Ukraine National Symphony Orchestra, Arthur Fagen

Naxos 8.553348-50

Sonata for Flute, Violin and Piano (H.254); *Trio for Flute, Cello and Piano* (H.300); *Promenades for Flute, Violin and Piano* (H.274); *Madrigal Sonata for Flute, Violin and Piano* (H.291)

Feinstein Ensemble

Naxos 8.553459

String Quartets Nos. 4, 5 and 7 (H.256, H. 268 and H.314) (Vol.3)

Martinů Quartet

Naxos 8.553784

1996

String Quartets Nos. 3 and 6 (H.183 and H.312); *Duo No.2 for Violin and Cello* (H.371); *Three Madrigals for Violin and Viola (Duo No.1)* (H.313) (Vol. 2)

Martinů Quartet

Naxos 8.553783

1997

String Quartets Nos. 1 & 2 (H.117 and H.150); *Three Horsemen (Tři jezdcí)* (H.1) (Vol. 1)

Martinů Quartet

Naxos 8.553782

Sonatas Nos. 1-3 for Cello and Piano (H.277, H.286 and H.340); *Ariette for Cello and Piano* (H.188B); *Seven Arabesques for Cello and Piano* (H.201) (Vol. 1)

Sebastian & Christian Benda

Naxos 8.554502

2000

Variations on a Theme of Rossini (H.290); *Variations on a Slovak Folk Song* (H.378); *Nocturnes (Four Studies for Cello and Piano)* (H.189); *Six Pastorales* (H.190); *Suite Miniature* (H.192) (Vol.2)

Sebastian & Christian Benda

Naxos 8.554503

2002

Fantasy for Ondes Martenot, Oboe, String Quartet and Piano (H.301)

Thomas Bloch, Marek Statowski, Bernard Wisson, Pomeranian Quartet

Naxos 8.555779

2002-2007

Sextet for Piano and Wind Instruments (H.174); *Sonata No. 1 for Flute and Piano* (H.306); *Sonata for Flute, Violin and Piano* (H.254); *Trio for Flute Cello and Piano* (H.300)

J. Ferrillo, T. Martin, H. Martinson, S. Nelson, S. Pinkas, R. Ranti, R. Ryder, F. Smith

Naxos 8.572467

2003

New Miniatures (Nový Špalíček) (H.288); *Two Ballads to Folk Poems for Alto* (Dvě balady (H.228); 'Saltimbanques' from *Three Songs to Poems by Apollinaire* (H.197); *Vocalise-Etude* (H.188); *Four Songs on Czech Folk Texts (Čtyři písně)* (H.282bis); *Four Children's Songs and Nursery Rhymes (Čtyři dětské písně a říkadla)* (H.225); *Three Songs for Christmas* (H.184bis); *A Love Carol (Koleda milostná)* (H.259); *A Wish for Mother (Přání mamince)* (H. 279bis); *Songs from 'The Miracles of Mary' (Hry o Marii)* (H.235) (with Polka and Waltz from Špalíček) Olga Černá, Jitka Čechová

Naxos 8.557494

2004

Eight Preludes (H.181); *Window on the Garden (Fenêtre sur le Jardin)* (H.270); *Fables* (H.138); *Trois Esquisses* (H.160); *Christmas (Vánoce)* (H.167); *Dance Sketches (Esquisses de Danses)* (H.220); *Foxtrot* (H.126bis) (Vol. 1)

Giorgio Koukl

Naxos 8.557914

2005

Piano Quintets Nos. 1 & 2 (H.229 and H. 298); *Sonata for Two Violins and Piano* (H.213)

Karel Košárek, Martinů Quartet

Naxos 8.557861

Puppets (Les Marionnettes) (H.92, H.116 and H.137); *Film en Miniature* (H.148); *Spring in the Garden* (H.125); *Butterflies and Birds of Paradise (Papillons et Oiseaux de Paradis)* (H.127); *The Fifth Day of the Fifth Moon* (H.318); *Les bouquinistes du quai Malaquais* (H.319) (Vol.2)

Giorgio Koukl

Naxos 8.557918

2006

Piano Sonata No. 1 (H.350); *Fantasia et Toccata* (H.281); *Etudes and Polkas (Books I, II and III)* (H.308); *Three Czech Dances* (H.154) (Vol. 3)

Giorgio Koukl

Naxos 8.557919

Seven Czech Dances (Borová) (H.195); *Les Ritournelles (Ritornely)* (H.227); *Four Movements (Quatre Mouvements)* (H.170); *A Note in a Scrapbook (Lístek do památníku)* (Albumblatt Nos. 1 and 2) (H.222 and H.241); *Improvisation* (H.333); *Dumkas Nos. 1, 2 and 3* (H.249, H. 250, and H.285bis); *Adagio* (H.362); *For Dancing (Pro Tanec)* (H.158); *Bagatelle* (H.323); *Rujana* (H.100); *Barcarolle* (H.326); *Prelude on the Theme of the Marsellaise* (H.85); *Prelude No. 2* (H.86); *Instructive Duo for the Nervous* (H.145); *Procession of the Cats on Solstice Night* (H.122); *Piece for the Little Evas* (H.242); *Mazurka* (H.284); *Par T.S.F.* (H.173bis); *Scherzo* (H.138bis); *Untitled* (H.141); *Prelude* (H.140) (Vol. 4)

Giorgio Koukl

Naxos 8.570215

2008

Six Polkas (1916)(H.101); *Five Waltzes* (H.5) (Vol. 5)

Giorgio Koukl

Naxos 8.572175

Esquisses I (Skici) (H.203); *Jeux, Series I and II* (H.205 and 206); *Three Lyric Pieces* (H.98); *Black Bottom* (H.165); *Evening at the Shore* (H.128); *Song without Words* (H.46); *Nocturne* (H.95); *Chanson Triste* (H.36) (Vol.6)

Giorgio Koukl

Naxos 8.572024

A Fairy-Tale of Goldilocks (Pohádka o Zlatovlásce) (H.28); *From Andersen's Fairy-Tales (Z pohádek Andersenových)* (H.42); *Ballade, the last chords of Chopin* (Ballada, poslední akordy Chopinovy) (H.56); *Merry Christmas 1941 to Hope Castagnola* (H.286bis); *The Little Lullaby* (122bis); *La Danse* (H.177); *Le Train hanté* (H.258); *Prélude* (H.178); *Foxtrot narozený na růžku* (H.123bis); *Spring (Jaro)* (H.127ter); *Four Children's Pieces (Dětské skladby)* (H.221); *Avec un doigt* (H.185) (Vol. 7)

Giorgio Koukl (with Chiara Solari)

Naxos 8.572025

Piano Concertos Nos. 3 (H.316) and 5 (Fantasia Concertante) (H.366); *Concertino for Piano and Orchestra* (H.269)

Giorgio Koukl, Bohuslav Martinů Philharmonic Orchestra Zlín, Arthur Fagen

Naxos 8.572206

Sonata No.1 for Viola and Piano (H.355) Sarah-Jane Bradley, Antony Hewitt

Naxos 8.572533

2009

Piano Concertos Nos. 1, 2 and 4 (H.149, H.237 and H.358)

Giorgio Koukl, Bohuslav Martinů Philharmonic Orchestra Zlín, Arthur Fagen

Naxos 8.572373

La revue de cuisine (H.161A); *Harpsichord Concerto* (H.246); *Chamber Music No. 1* (H.376); *Les Rondes* (H. 200)

Holst-Sinfonietta, Klaus Simon

Naxos 8.572485

2010

Sonata for Violin and Piano in C (H.120); *Concerto for Violin and Piano* (H.13); *Sonatine for Violin and Piano* (H.262)

Stephen Shipps, Dmitri Vorbiev

Naxos 8.572282

(currently available on download only)

Six Simple Songs (Šest prostých písní) (H.110); *Three Lullabies (Tři ukolébavky)* (H.146bis); *Two Small Songs in Folk Idiom (Dvě písničky v národním slohu)* (H.14); *Two Songs on Russian Poetry (Dvě písně na ruskou poezii)* (H.135bis); *Three Goethelieder* (H.94); *The Gnat's Wedding (Komárova svatba)* (H.75); *Three Children's Songs (Tři dětské písničky)* (H.146); *Dead Love (Mrtvá láska)* (H.44); *Czech Riddles (České hádanky)* (H.277bis); *Two Songs (Dvě písně)* (H.31); *I am Striding, Striding Between the Hills (Kráčím, kráčím mezi vrchy)* (H.74bis); *How Dear to me the Hour (Jak milý čas)* (H.106); *Blissfulness (Štěstí to dost)* (H.81); *Tears (Slzy)* (Vilmě) (H.41); *Mood Drawing (Náladová kresla)* (H.29); *A Song of 1st November (Píseň prvního listopadu)* (H.72); *A Girl's Dreams (Divčí sny)* (H.22); *When we are both Old (Až budeme staří)* (H.10); *Before you Know It (Než se naděješ)* (H.6); *Night after Night in Deams I see You (Noc tebe každou drahá, zřím)* (H. 57); *La Nuit from Three Songs to French Texts (Tři písně na Francouzské texty)* (H.88/3); *Life's over for Me (Konec všemu)* (H.43); *At Night (V noci)* (H.30); *Old Song (Stará píseň)* (H.74); *Song on an Old Spanish text (Píseň na starošpanělský text)* (H.87); *A Song about Kissing (Píseň o hubičkách)* (H.27bis); *I Know a Nice Green Grove (Vím hájiček pěkný zelený)* (H.273)

Jana Wallingerová, Giorgio Koukl

Naxos 8.572588

2012

Piano Trios Nos. 1 (Cinq pièces brèves), 2 and 3 (H.193, H.327 and H.332); *Bergerettes for Violin, Cello and Piano* (H.275)

Arbor Piano Trio

Naxos 8.572251

A complete CD Discography of Martinů music by W. Marsden can be downloaded on www.martinu.cz – section **DOWNLOAD**

jiří pilka

AT ITS MEETING on 18 March 2013, the Board of the Bohuslav Martinů Foundation awarded **Dr. Jiří Pilka** a Bohuslav Martinů medal. By receiving this honour, he joined the illustrious company of previous holders, including Jiří Bělohlávek, Sir Charles Mackerras, Gennady Rozhdestvensky, Josef Suk, Rudolf Firkušný and other distinguished artists.

Jiří Pilka was granted this accolade in recognition of his relentless endeavours to rescue one of the most endangered species on Earth – artistic music. He has done so by means of hundreds of lectures, commentaries, concerts for schools, 23 books about music written in refined Czech, invitations to share the mysteries and joys of music, offering excursions to a higher realm, eschewal of stony platitude. Through erudite and emphatic insight into the creative process of numerous artists whose spiritual wealth has become the property of the entire world of culture. By discovering the laws and relations at the crossroads of history, fact and hypothesis.

Jiří Pilka's personality was initially formed by his family environment – his mother was a piano teacher, his father an auditor at the Ministry of Finance in Prague whose work duties led him in 1936 to Písek, a town with a busy cultural life at the time, where the beautiful local theatre continued to give performances even during the Nazi occupation. The situation regarding concerts, however, was not as good – Pilka did not see an opera production until he was 16 and only got to hear a symphony a year later, when he travelled to the town of Sušice to attend a concert given by the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Rafael Kubelík.

Despite his mother's best efforts to make a pianist of her son, it soon became apparent that he had neither the requisite patience nor any compositional talent. Nevertheless, Jiří Pilka loved music and so began studying musicology at Charles University in Prague. Life in the 1950s was not easy for a sharp-witted young man with opinions of his own who did not want to serve the Communists and secretly continued to be a member of a Scout group established after the war. He was even locked up in prison for half a year, and if it were not for



a handful of enlightened people in the ruling class he would not have been allowed to complete his studies.

Finding a job after graduating was really difficult for a person burdened with his past. Fortunately, there was always someone who could take Pilka under their protective wing; for instance, Karel Šebánek, a close friend of the Martinůs, under whose patronage he packed orchestral materials at the Czech Music Fund.

The national lifting of spirits during the Prague Spring in 1968 finally opened the door to a job corresponding to his abilities, yet all the harder was the rude awakening after those heady days and the onset of Normalisation.

Pilka pursued many activities under pseudonyms, and he and his family lived very much from one day to the next. When he was appointed dramaturge of the Pardubice Chamber Orchestra, largely owing to the efforts of the conductor Libor Pešek, Pilka was at last afforded the opportunity to bring to bear his comprehensive knowledge of music history and connect the expectations of the East Bohemian audience with Pešek's endeavour to elevate the youngest Czech orchestra to a higher level by giving them demanding tasks within which 20th-century music, including that of Bohuslav Martinů, played a significant role.

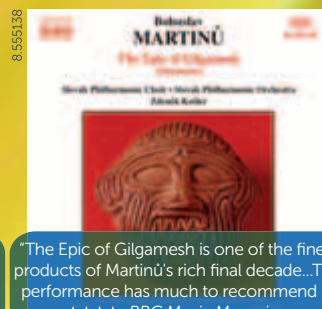
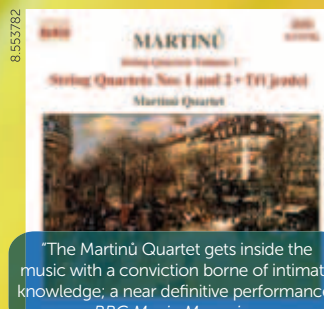
In the wake of the 1989 revolution, Pilka

finally assumed jobs he had long had the ability to do: editor-in-chief of the music broadcast section of Czech Television, director of the Prague Symphony Orchestra and, finally, director of the Golden Prague TV festival, a post he held for five years.

In 2009, he was elected a member of the Supervisory Board of the Bohuslav Martinů Foundation.

Jiří Pilka is highly deserving of the medal owing to his selfless work on behalf of Czech music and Bohuslav Martinů's legacy. May he continue to serve music for a long time to come to an extent commensurate with his abilities.

/ Ivan Štraus



"Koukl takes his place at the top table of Martinů performers on record...As a complete cycle this set has no rivals"
MusicWeb International

"These are both radiant symphonies, life-enhancing and infectious in their rhythmic vitality and luminous textures"
Penguin Guide

"The Martinů Quartet gets inside the music with a conviction borne of intimate knowledge; a near definitive performance"
BBC Music Magazine

"The performances are lively and spirited and the recording eminently natural"
★★★ *Penguin Guide*

"The Epic of Gilgamesh is one of the finest products of Martinů's rich final decade...This performance has much to recommend it"
★★★★ *BBC Music Magazine*

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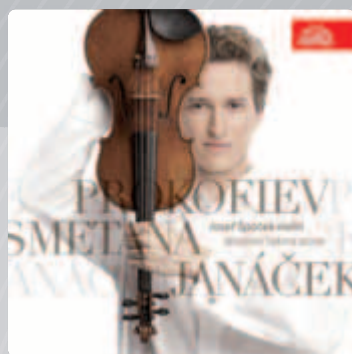
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Czech Radio Symphony Orchestra
conductor Tomáš Netopil



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