

BOHUSLAV MARTINŮ



The Bohuslav Martinů Foundation
The Bohuslav Martinů Institute
The International Martinů Circle

NEWSLETTER

JANUARY—APRIL 2007 / VOL. VII / NO.

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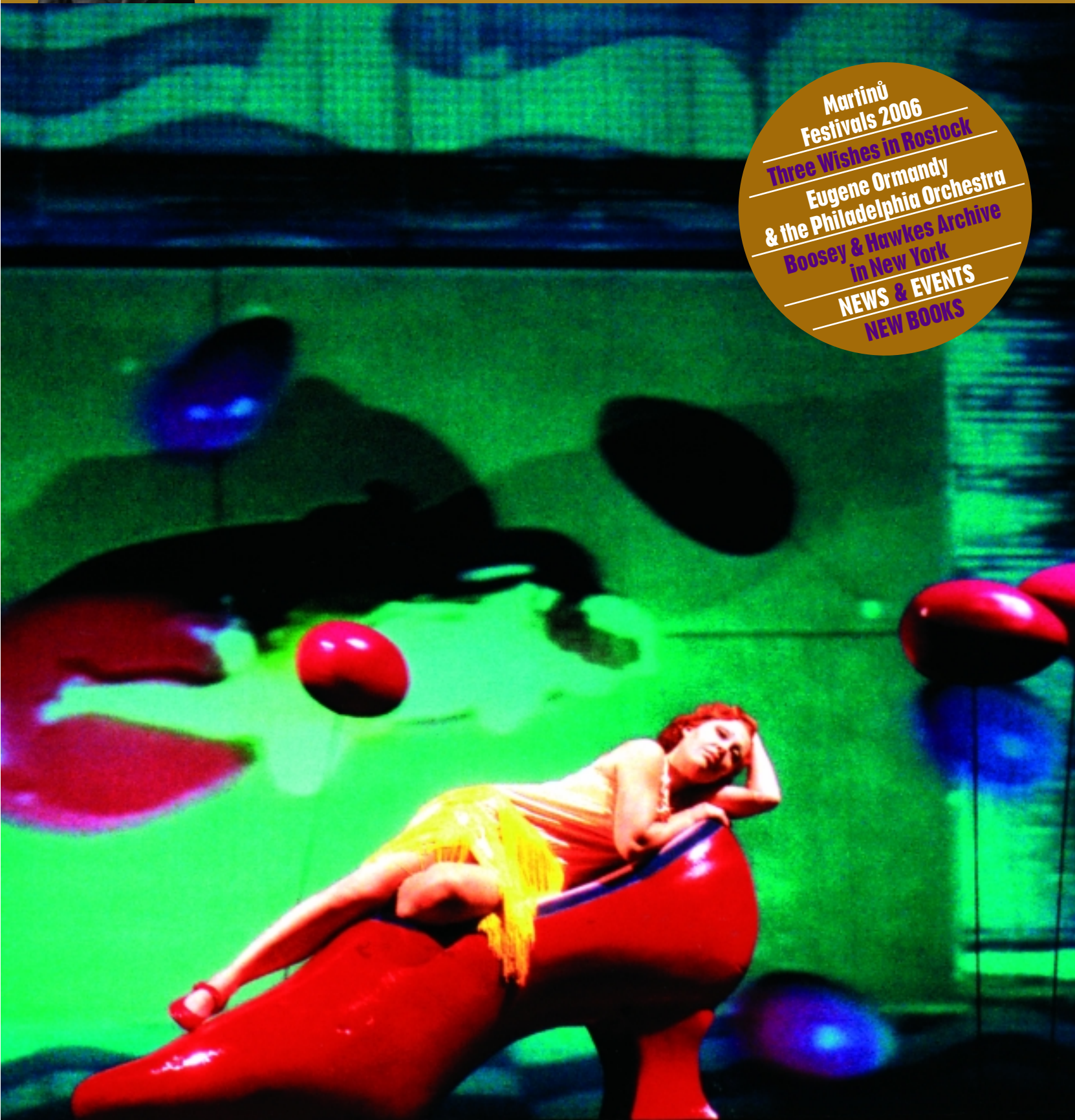
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bohoslav martinů
institute

Welcome

THE BOHUSLAV MARTINŮ NEWSLETTER

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THE PREVIOUS ISSUE



MUNICIPAL MUSEUM — BOHUSLAV MARTINŮ MEMORIAL IN POLIČKA

OFFERS short-term exhibitions
dedicated to the life and work of
B. Martinů, a guided tour to Martinů's
birthplace in the St. James church
tower and for registered researchers
archive materials concerning Martinů.
Further information available at
www.muzeum.policka.net
and www.policka-mesto.cz

VARIOUS

EDITORIAL BOARD FOR THE COMPLETE CRITICAL EDITION

IN THE PRESENCE of the publisher's representatives, the fifth meeting of the international **Editorial Board** for the Complete Critical Edition of the Works of Bohuslav Martinů (on 2–4 June 2007, Bohuslav Martinů Institute, Prague) will discuss the edition's organisational aspects and the long-term conception of the contents of the first ten volumes. The board will also propose external collaborators to be co-editors of the volumes. With regard to the fact that Czech and English will be the main languages of the edition under preparation, one of the items on the agenda will be work on the Czech-English dictionary of terms pertaining to editorial techniques, as well as revision of the English version of the Editorial Principles. In four blocks the editors will introduce the editorial issues of specific volumes that are now in the preparatory phase.

30th ANNIVERSARY OF MARTINŮ QUARTET

A gala concert to mark the
30th anniversary of Martinů
Quartet took place at
Prague's Rudolfinum (Dvořák
Hall) on 17 January 2007.

**Piano Quintet No. 2,
H. 298**, was performed (with
Karel Košárek the pianist).
The ensemble originated in
1976 at the Prague Conser-
vatory in the class of Prof.
Viktor Moučka. In 1985 the
quartet included in its
moniker the name of the
composer Bohuslav Martinů, thereby undertaking to promote his chamber music. The
quartet has performed in most European countries and regularly toured the USA and
Canada, Spain, Japan, England, etc. The ensemble made a complete recording of seven
Martinů string quartets for the music publisher NAXOS. For the second disc of this
3-CD set, in 2004 the quartet won the prestigious MIDEM award in Cannes for the
best CD of the year in the category of 20th century solo and chamber music. At the
present time, the quartet's members are Lubomír Havlák (1st violin), Irena Herajnová
(2nd violin), Jan Jiša (viola) and Jitka Vlašánková (cello).



Manfred Honeck during the
press conference in Prague
(December 2006)

perform some of the operas too should the opportunity arise.
Manfred Honeck started out as a violist of the Wiener Philharmoniker. Whilst still
a member of this orchestra he experienced Václav Neumann's guest conducting,
including his memorable performance of Dvořák's *Rusalka* at the Vienna State Opera.
Honeck launched his conducting career as an assistant to Claudio Abbado with the
Gustav Mahler Youth Orchestra. He gained renown as music director of the Swedish
Radio Symphony Orchestra and guest conductor of a number of world orchestras.
In the next season he will become chief of the Stuttgart State Opera.

AUSTRIA'S MANFRED HONECK is to
become a permanent guest conductor of
the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra as of the
2008–2009 season. As he stated at a December
press conference, in the anniversary year he
intends to focus on the works of Gustav Mahler –
and Bohuslav Martinů. At this juncture it is too
early to make public-specific programmes for
the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra's season
after next. However, it is known that Honeck's
favourite Martinů works include the *Field Mass*,
H. 279 and *Double Concerto for Two String
Orchestras, Piano and Timpani, H. 271*.

And the conductor would certainly like to

INTERNATIONAL MARTINŮ CIRCLE

MEMBERSHIP AND SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION

- **20 Euro / 25 USD for individuals**
(Subscription includes 3 issues of the
BM Newsletter and a non-commercial
CD recording from the Bohuslav
Martinů Festival.)
- **100 USD for companies**
(Subscription includes 10 copies of each
issue of the BM Newsletter and three
copies of the non-commercial CD
recording from the Bohuslav Martinů
Festival.)
- **Single copies** (back issues) of the
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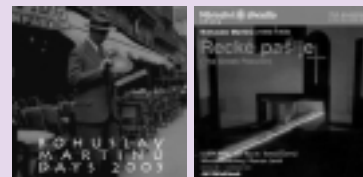
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THE IMC CORDIALLY WELCOMES THE FOLLOWING NEW MEMBERS:

- Jean-Claude Freling, France • Erika
Teraoka, USA • Sara Davis Buechner,
Canada • Marliese Myerscough, UK
• M. Kelley, UK • Richard Phillips, UK
• David J. Sharpe, UK • D. Stanton, UK
• Heinz Vogel, UK

FOR IMC MEMBERS

Two CDs are enclosed with this issue
for IMC members who have subscribed
for 2007. Members who register later
will receive both CDs in a consignment
together with the next issue. The first
is a CD from the Bohuslav Martinů Days
2005 festival which contains, among other



things, rare historical recordings of the
Moyses Trio and the world premiere of
String Trio No. 1, H. 136. The second CD
is a recording of the opera *The Greek
Passion* (H. 372, 2nd version) from the
National Theatre Prague under the baton
of Jiří Bělohávek and directed by Jiří
Nekvasil. ■

A WELL-CONCEALED COMPETITION

Since 1996 a competition for instrumentalists studying in the Czech Republic has been part and parcel of the Bohuslav Martinů Festival (from 2004 Bohuslav Martinů Days). The corner-stone is Martinů's music supplemented by compositions that have some linkage to him. This year the violin had its turn. Even though the competition has great prestige (with commensurate economic bonuses for the winners), it is virtually a competitive Cinderella. The low number of entrants is not a good advert for our teachers. Could it be that they are put off by the stringency of the conditions, which should, on the contrary, serve as motivation? Be that as it may, the finale was dominated by pupils of the HAMU (Faculty of Music of the Academy of Performing Arts) teachers Ivan Štraus and Jindřich Pazdera. The victor's laurels were rightly gained by **Monika Růžková** (*1985), who at the gala concert played Martinů's *Sonata No. 3, H. 303* in a remarkably mature manner.

MARTINŮ FROM MARTINŮ

The fact that an ensemble have in their moniker the name of a certain composer is no guarantee of their being exemplary performers. However, **Martinů Quartet**, who on 5 December at the Suk Hall of Prague's Rudolfinum promptly stood in for the cellist Jamník and the pianist Fournier, bear this name with distinction. They duly proved it when performing *String Quartet No. 2, H. 150*, which Martinů completed in 1925 in Polička. The work is permeated by the creative freedom the composer absorbed in Paris, enlightenment from the historical development of polyphony and the omnipresent relationship to his native country and Czech tradition. It was precisely this aspect that was most pronounced in the ensemble's performance. Martinů Quartet have perfectly absorbed their Martinů, yet the other opuses of the evening were by no means overshadowed by the Martinů piece. Both Mozart's *String Quartet in G Major K 387* and Dvořák's *Quartet in A Flat Major op. 105* were ignited by all the quartet members.

HOMAGE TO KORTE

A packed-out concert was given on 6 December by Trio Bergerettes within the Bohuslav Martinů Days in the rather



Monika Růžková (1st prize) and Martin Turnovský (head of the jury) Photo Zdeněk Chrápek



Josef Žák (3rd prize)

Photo Zdeněk Chrápek

unusual venue of the Stables in the Nostitz Palace. This space is suitable for events somewhat more chamber-like, perhaps not when it comes to the number of players but because of the visiting capacity. When the auditorium was full, the temperature soon soared to that of real stables. The concert was opened by Professor Ivan Štraus's homage to the composer it was dedicated to. Yet it was not only a "Homage to O. F. Korte", but to Bohuslav Martinů as well. The concert's programme was supplemented by a long letter dated 1956 written by "the young admirer" Korte and the reply by the "respectable master" Martinů. Selection of the repertoire, however, worked vice versa: two compositions by the respectable master Korte and a couple of youthful light-hearted pieces by Bohuslav Martinů. For the second time that week it was possible to hear in Prague Korte's *Sonata*

for Piano. Compared to that of G. Ohlsson, who performed it within his recital on 4 December at the Rudolfinum, the rendition by **Barbora Křištofová Sejáková** sounded more classical, with greater emphasis being put on the rhythmic element. The subsequent composition, *Philosophical Dialogues for Violin and Piano*, has sophistication directly in its title, and Sejáková – together with the violinist **Daniela Součková** – even underlined it with elaborate handling of tone and stroke. In a composition that could easily sound extremely static, they managed to maintain tension throughout. Upon first hearing, the introductory *Five Short Pieces (Piano Trio No. 1), H. 193* and the closing *Bergerettes, H. 275* could appear as light pieces. The balanced and glowing sound of the complete **Trio Bergerettes**, comprising, in addition to the two musicians mentioned above, the cellist **Tomáš Stražil**, lent to some movements an almost sonata-like flight. The ensemble performed their "title composition", lively in musicianship terms, exemplarily with a sense for both the classical order and more lyrical positions. As an encore, they played one part from *Dumky Trio* by Antonín Dvořák, who on this occasion could feel proud of his composing descendants.

MARTINŮ VERSUS BRAHMS

Zdeněk Mácal conducted Bohuslav Martinů's *Symphony No. 1, H. 289* in the 1960s during his debut with the **Czech Philharmonic Orchestra** at the Prague Spring festival. He also had it in his programme when he debuted in Chicago after immigrating to the USA. On this



Trio Bergerettes

Photo Zdeněk Chrápek

2006

Martinů's correspondence with

Festivals



Zdeněk Mácal

Photo Zdeněk Chrápek

occasion he presented the colourful score, which he has repeatedly played at least forty times, to conclude the Bohuslav Martinů Days (on 8 December) in a suitably grandiose manner at a concert given by the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra at Prague's Rudolfinum. His interpretation is more straightforward than that of Neumann. Mácal lets the music opalesce in a less impressionistic manner and plays it somewhat faster. This is immediately evident in the first, semantically significant transforming chordal areas, as well as a number of times at later junctures. He does not, however, allow it to slide into a simplified positivity but supports the sounding of the symphony as a momentous, inventive and masterfully instrumented opus, effective, modern, accessible and comprehensible. Previously, he championed in a similar manner the seldom played *Overture for Orchestra, H. 345*, which Martinů wrote as merely an occasional piece. For the sake of contrast and to juxtapose the music worlds of the 19th and 20th centuries, the first half of the evening was given over to Brahms's *Piano Concerto No. 1*, widely astride in symphonic terms. The pianist **Garrick Ohlsson**, a regular visitor to Prague, endowed the solo part with poetry in the slow movement, but with too much robustness in the marginal movements. His performance was nothing to write home about. Nevertheless, he is the darling of Prague audiences, who therefore take him as he is. And how did the attempt at gauging the respective strengths of the Martinů legacy and the Brahms legacy turn out? Well, Martinů can certainly be said to have held his own.

Luboš Stehlík, Jindřich Bálek, Petr Veber
(These reviews are reprinted from the Czech musical magazine *Harmonie*, No. 1/2007)

PROGRAMME

3 DECEMBER 2006

Martinů Hall, Academy of Performing Arts in Prague

Concert of Prize-Winners from the 2006 Martinů Foundation Competition in the Category of Violin

5 DECEMBER 2006

Suk Hall, Rudolfinum, Prague

Martinů Quartet

W. A. Mozart: *Quartet No. 14 in G major, KV 387*

B. Martinů: *Quartet No. 2, H. 150*

A. Dvořák: *Quartet in A flat major, Op. 105*

6 DECEMBER 2006

"Konirna" Concert Hall of the Nostitz Palais in Prague

Homage to O. F. Korte (1926)

Trio Bergerettes

B. Martinů: *Cinq pièces brèves, H. 193*

O. F. Korte: *Sonata for Piano*

O. F. Korte: *Philosophical Dialogues for Violin and Piano*

B. Martinů: *Bergerettes, H. 275*

7 & 8 DECEMBER 2006

Dvořák Hall, Rudolfinum, Prague

Czech Philharmonic Orchestra

Zdeněk Mácal – Conductor

Garrick Ohlsson – Piano

J. Brahms: *Concerto No. 1 in D minor*

for Piano and Orchestra

B. Martinů: *Overture, H. 345*

B. Martinů: *Symphony No. 1, H. 289*

OLDŘICH F. KORTE

ONE OF THE concerts (on 6 December) performed within the Bohuslav Martinů Days 2006 was dedicated to the contemporary Czech composer Oldřich F. Korte (1926) to mark the occasion of his 80th birthday. Korte's name is synonymous with a lifelong interest in and love for the music of Martinů and the championing of his work, especially under the Communist regime. Owing to the political situation in the former Czechoslovakia, Korte never got to meet Martinů in person.

In 1956 the young composer O. F. Korte sent a letter to Martinů in Rome in which he wrote about his fascination with Martinů's music and the affection of the generation of young composers in Czechoslovakia for his person and work. An English translation of selected extracts of Martinů's response is given below.

8 DECEMBER 1956, ROME

Dear friend: You sent one of the most beautiful letters and greetings on my birthday, and in a very kind and gentle manner you confirmed what I have always hoped for, i.e. my obligation and responsibility towards all those who will take up and continue in our common work, i.e. towards you, the young. Your letter delighted me immensely, and on this day for me it was a great and beautiful satisfaction when you described to me that, notwithstanding the distance between us, I somehow teach and encourage you all and that you have understood my endeavour for being linked to your and my homeland that is fighting a difficult struggle at the present time. You understand how such knowledge can please when I see that my work is not in vain and that it brings you further tasks and, as you write yourself, also encouragement and gratification, which is very rare today in the world and even in places where it is not sufficiently valued. You have drawn very near to my utterance, as well as its soul. However, now it makes my responsibility much more serious and difficult, but much more gratifying too. I thank you most cordially for that. Fate has taken me far away from you, however, during all that wandering I have been with you, friends unknown to me, and I am very happy to have been able to give a little joy to you even though it is often imbued with sorrow.

(...) If you could come and visit me (I will stay here until the spring and maybe even longer), you know, I would certainly like to



O. F. Korte and his wife

Photo Zdeněk Chrápek

meet you and help you in whatever you would like me to. Nevertheless, I must tell you that in today's situation we have severely damaged our reputation, you perhaps know why and I do not want to write about it, and it will probably be much more difficult to get over the borders. It is like in a theatre, the curtain has come down again and it is necessary to wait for the next act, that is, if there is to be another act. For the present, the world is looking down on us and the reception is somewhat different to the one you perhaps got several months ago, since something different was expected from us. This is just to warn you, I do not want to write much so as not to cause you unnecessary troubles at home. Please write to me what the possibilities are for materialising your plans, and I hope that eventually everything will get back on track again. Should you manage, be it now or later, you know that I will be pleased to see you. I wish you plenty of fortune and further successes, as well as for your wish to come true. I see that your conviction is strong, so no one can stop you, just like nothing stopped me. I wish you a beautiful Christmas. Let me know about yourself. Cordially yours B. Martinů. ■

OLDŘICH F. KORTE (born 1926)

Composer, columnist, pianist, philosopher: He studied composition at the Prague Conservatory and took private philosophy lessons. As a pianist he started out at Prague's Laterna Magika theatre. O. F. Korte is a member of the Board of Directors of the Bohuslav Martinů Foundation. Composing is the fourth and undoubtedly the most important sphere of Korte's creative work. Ranking among the classic works of Czech post-war music are his *Sonata for Piano* (1951–1953), the symphonic drama *The Story of the Flutes* and the chamber work *Philosophical Dialogues for Violin and Piano*. For Korte music does not lose its humanistic meaning of a personal message from man to man, the meaning of his existence and the search for the reasons for all things.

INTERNATIONALE MUSIKFESTTAGE BOHUSLAV MARTINŮ 2006

DOUBLE MARRIAGE

ALEŠ BŘEZINA



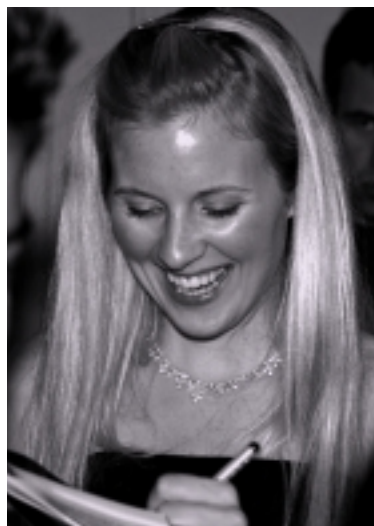
Internationale
Musikfesttage
B. Martinů

IN THE AUTUMN of 2006 Basel hosted its annual festival dedicated to Martinů, **Internationale Musikfesttage Bohuslav Martinů**. The festival was held under the auspices of Václav Havel, former President of the Czech Republic. It comprised four concerts and one film evening. At the opening concert on 1 November 2006, *Madrigals, H. 266, Sonatina for Trumpet and Piano, H. 357* and *Les Rondes, H. 200* were performed by the Musik-Akademie Basel. Screened at the film evening on 5 November was

Victims and Murderers, a 2000 Czech feature film by the director Andrea Sedláčková in which Martinů music is used. On 8 November a concert for children (Biel Symphony Orchestra, Thomas Rösner, conductor) and on 12 November a jazz concert "Jazz Impressions of Bohuslav Martinů" took place with the Adrian Mears Octet.

To conclude the 11th edition of Internationale B. Martinů Festtage in Basel, the organisers had a true ace up their sleeve – the originally purely chamber festival, last year for the first time augmented by a symphonic concert, this year presented in concert version Bohuslav Martinů's opera *The Marriage, H. 341* – on 15 November 2006. And what's more – they even managed to procure for the performance the world-famous conductor Gennadi Rozhdestvensky (holder of the 2003 Bohuslav Martinů Foundation Medal). Martinů's one-hour opera was supplemented by a fragment of the eponymous opera by Modest Petrovich Mussorgsky with instrumentation by Gennadi Rozhdestvensky.

The huge interest in these two works, both given their Swiss premiere, was evidenced both by the number of visitors to the introductory lecture (more than 300 of whom gathered in the foyer of the Stadtheater Basel) and the total of 500 people attending the concert, including representatives of many Basel-based music institutions and local media.



Alison Balsom, trumpeter



Adrian Mears Octet



Rolls Royce for the Opera Evening

Owing to a minor injury, Mr Rozhdestvensky decided to leave the conducting of the evening's first half to his assistant, Mrs Olga Machoňová-Pavlu, who navigated Mussorgsky's extraordinarily difficult score with aplomb and duly garnered richly deserved applause. The highlight of the evening, however, was Bohuslav Martinů's *The Marriage*, performed by an excellent cast of young singers and an ebullient

Gennadi Rozhdestvensky. The work and its performance so enchanted and enraptured the Basel audience that it gave wave upon wave of applause and did not want to let the artists leave the stage. We must wait to see whether this success will soon be reflected in the Basel Opera's dramaturgy.

For further information about the festival and reviews, visit www.martinu.ch ■

MARTINŮ DOUBLE CONCERTO WITH JOHN ELIOT GARDINER

LAST AUTUMN, London Symphony Orchestra performed on its European Tour in Brussels, Amsterdam and London Martinů's *Double Concerto for Two String Orchestras, Piano and Timpani, H. 271*. In the last Newsletter, on page 11, we have informed you about the review of the Dutch critic Frits van der Waa. In this issue we bring the extract from Geoff Diggines's review:

Martinů, Mozart, Dvořák: London Symphony Orchestra, John Eliot Gardiner (conductor), Leif Ove Andsnes (piano). Barbican Hall, London 9.11.2006. "...Eliot Gardiner launched into the 'Poco allegro' of Martinů's superbly terse 'Double concerto' with tremendous precision and sustained rhythmic energy. The underlying 'darkness' and 'grim antiphony' of the work (written for Paul Sacher in 1939, and performed by Sacher in 1940) is obviously informed by the grim political events in Europe at that time... although Martinů did not provide any programme or allusions to this effect. Eliot Gardiner played the piece very much as a dramatic re-working of a classical 'concerto grosso' – tough, difficult, contrapuntal music seems to suit his musical psychology. After the

sustained and ominous 'Largo' and the scrupulously executed final 'Allegro', with its complex pizzicato rhythms and wild polyphonic string configurations I was left wondering why this superb work is not performed more often? It makes a wonderful compliment to the more famous 'Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta' by Bartok, also commissioned and first performed by Paul Sacher, two years earlier..."

For the whole review see www.musicweb-international.com

LONDON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA EUROPEAN TOUR

conducted by Sir John Eliot Gardiner

PROGRAMME:

Martinů: *Concerto for Two String Orchestras, Piano and Timpani, H. 271*

7 November 2006

Palais des Beaux Arts, Brussels, Belgium

8 November 2006

Concertgebouw, Amsterdam, Netherlands

9 November 2006

Barbican Centre, London, UK
Leif Ove Andsnes – piano

RCNM CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL



GREGORY TERIAN

ONE OF THE welcome newcomers to the International Martinů Circle in 2006 was the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, the leading such music institution outside London. Established in its own purpose built accommodation in 1972, its origins date back to 1893 and the creation of the Royal Manchester College of Music, founded at the instigation of Sir Charles Hallé, father of the orchestra which bears his name.



Škampa Quartet

It has been gratifying to see the music of Bohuslav Martinů featuring prominently during the RNCM's 2006/07 season, in particular during the 9th Chamber Music Festival entitled "Intimate Letters from Eastern Europe" which took place from 11-14 January 2007. This imaginative series of events was devised by Dr Christopher Rowland, the Artistic Director of the Festival.

The opening concert included Martinů's **Nonet No. 2, H. 374**, a work which always brings cheer to audiences and did so on this occasion, delivered by a talented student band. The Škampa Quartet took part in the festival and delivered their commanding reading of the **String Quartet No 5, H. 268**, the finest of the series.

Recitals began at 9.30am each morning



Chris Rowland



Endellion Quartet

Sextet for Winds and Piano, H. 174, the **Piano Trio No. 1 "Cinq pièces brèves", H. 193**, performed by the Maraini Quartet while the Endellion Quartet included the **String Quartet No. 3, H. 183**, in the closing concert.

It was all a great delight for lovers of Martinů's music. All those concerned with this highly successful event are to be complemented on their achievement, with particular thanks to Jane Thompson, the Festival Administrator.



Jane Thompson

and continued through the day to the late evening. On the final day visitors had the opportunity of hearing the Martinů's

In addition to the festival, works by Martinů are featuring in the College's regular events this season including the **Partita, H. 212**, **Memorial to Lidice, H. 296**, and the **Concertino for Cello and Small Orchestra, H. 143**. ■

'THE PARABLES', BBC SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA, 15 FEBRUARY 2007

JONATHAN BURTON

THE BRITISH Broadcasting Corporation's Maida Vale Studios occupy a long, low building in a quiet suburb of north-west London; formerly an indoor ice-skating rink, it is now the home of the BBC Symphony Orchestra, providing rehearsal and recording spaces as well as instrument storage, management offices and the orchestral library.

On 15 February 2007 at the Maida Vale Studios, the BBC Symphony Orchestra under Jakub Hrůša gave a concert of Czech music, which was recorded for future transmission. The first item on the programme was one twentieth-century Czech composer's deeply-felt tribute to another, the *Variations on the Theme and Death of Jan Rychlík* by Otmar Mácha, which did not quite hang together as

a satisfying whole despite the orchestra's total dedication and attention to detail.

Then came the highlight of the evening – a performance of Martinů's all too rarely heard **The Parables, H. 367** (Paraboly). (This may even have been its UK premiere in a live performance – no one seems to be able to recall a previous one.) After he suffered severe concussion resulting from his fall from a balcony in the USA in 1946, Martinů's music underwent a subtle change; from then on, it has an air of mystery and magic, of ecstatic other-worldliness and expectancy, which (in the best of his late works) has listeners holding their breath and sitting on the edge of their seats. *The Parables* follows the pattern laid down in the **Sixth Symphony (Fantaisies Symphoniques), H. 343** and the well-known **Frescoes of Piero della Francesca, H. 352**, being in three movements, each with contrasting sections in

varying tempi, constructed apparently along intuitive lines rather than to a discernible structural plan. (Composing the *Fantaisies Symphoniques* for the conductor Charles Munch, Martinů said he was writing "a story for Charles"; hearing the work in performance, he commented "Something holds it together, I don't know what.") *The Parables* were another "story for Charles", written in Rome and Switzerland in 1957-58, for Charles Munch and the Boston Symphony Orchestra; the inspiration for the first two movements came from the writings of the French author Antoine de Saint-Exupéry – not so much "parables" as "points to ponder". The first movement, "The parable of a statue", is a meditation on the persistence of creative ideas, as the viewer reacts to the sculptor's original thoughts when seeing the finished work perhaps many centuries later. "The parable of a garden" reflects on the permanence and renewal of life despite the falling leaves and fading flowers. The third "parable" turns to narrative rather than reflection, with lines taken from Georges Neveux' play *Le Voyage de Thésée*, which Martinů later used as the basis for

his one-opera about Ariadne. Theseus meets the town drummer: "I announce marriages and deaths. You are already in the labyrinth." Martinů includes the sound of the famous Basel drummers, which he heard in the street outside his hotel while writing the piece.

The concert ended with the lovely four-movement *Fairy Tale (Pohádka)* of Josef Suk, given a rich and heart-warming performance.

Hero of the evening was the young conductor Jakub Hrůša, still only in his mid-twenties and rapidly making a name for himself not only in the Czech Republic but across Europe. Although he is a protégé of Jiří Bělohlávek (the BBC Symphony Orchestra's Chief Conductor since July 2006), Hrůša is very much his own man, and stamped his distinctive interpretation on these performances with calm authority. The orchestra obviously liked and respected him, as did the audience; we look forward to hearing much more from Jakub Hrůša as his career takes off. ■

HISTORIC MARTINŮ PERFORMANCES BY *Ormandy & The Phila*

GREGORY TERIAN

WHEN COMPARED with its rivals in Boston and New York, the Philadelphia Orchestra was a latecomer to the music of Bohuslav Martinů. Its advent came with the world premiere of a new concerto on 5 November 1943.

The concert was directed by Eugene Ormandy, the celebrated Hungarian-born conductor, who had been appointed music director in 1938, succeeding the legendary Leopold Stokowski. The orchestra was renowned for its opulent sound which Stokowski had nurtured over a period of 24 years.

THE CONCERTO FOR TWO PIANOS AND ORCHESTRA, H. 292

The soloists in the new concerto were Pierre Luboschutz and Genia Nemenoff, who had commissioned the work in 1942. Luboschutz had a distinguished solo career in pre-revolutionary Russia and later established himself in Paris. In 1929 he met and married a pupil in one of his masterclasses. Nemenoff was the daughter of an émigré family, also from Russia. The couple went on to form a successful duo partnership and later settled in the United States.

The premiere of the Concerto in Philadelphia was followed by three further performances, the last at Carnegie Hall in New York on 9 November at which Martinů was present.

Many performances followed throughout the United States and the concerto has since proved to be one of Martinů's most popular with further performances in Philadelphia in 1950.

Later the work was taken up by the Belgian husband and wife team of Henry Piète and Janine Reding. They gave the European premiere at the Besançon Festival in 1955 and it featured regularly in their subsequent programmes. Later advocates included Lejsek and Lejsková, who recorded it for Supraphon, and the Labeque sisters.

Following the success of the concerto, the Philadelphia audiences next heard **The Memorial to Lidice, H. 296** in concerts on 3 and 4 December 1943, just five weeks after its premiere by the New York Philharmonic. "Lidice" evoked an immediate emotional response from audiences, moved by the horror of the event which it commemorated. It was quickly taken up by orchestras throughout the land.



Eugene Ormandy, 1950

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1945 – SYMPHONY NO. 4, H. 305

1945 proved to be the most fruitful year for Martinů in Philadelphia with Ormandy directing performances of the *2nd Symphony* in January. They were followed in February by a visit from Rudolf Firkušný, who came to perform the *2nd Piano Concerto*. He had given the first performance of that work in 1935 and it often featured in his concerts.

During April and May, as the final dramatic days of the war in Europe were being played out, Martinů was engaged in composing his *4th Symphony*, dedicated to William and Helen Ziegler who often hosted the Martinůs at their country home on the coast near Darien.

The world premiere of the new symphony was given by the Philadelphia Orchestra on 30 November 1945 followed by three

further performances, the latter being at Carnegie Hall on 11 December. It was acclaimed as his finest to date.

Martinů was present for the premiere and was clearly enthused by its reception. He wrote home to his family in Polička: "the *4th Symphony* had a great success, the concert was sold out to the last seat, the orchestra was terrific, the reviews are excellent".

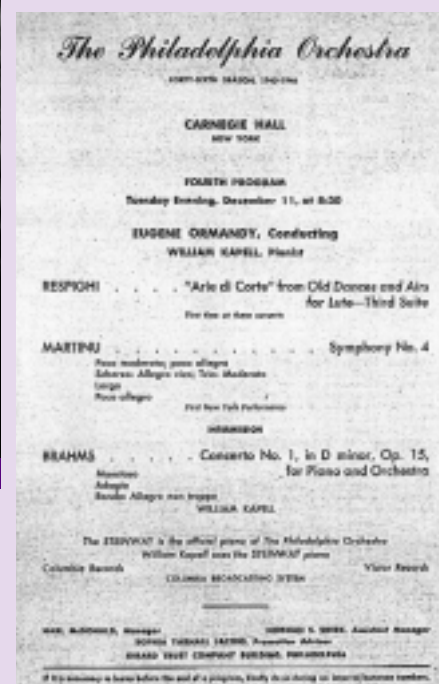
One critic wrote of the symphony as being more assertive in a positive, virile way than its predecessors, whereas Šafránek thought that lyricism and tranquillity predominated. As for the composer, in his contribution to the programme notes, he restricted himself to a detailed technical breakdown of each movement, running counter to his previously expressed view was that such analyses were not helpful to the listener. It is difficult not to conclude

that the *4th Symphony* reflects at least something of those final momentous days of the war and the yearning for the peace which was to follow. It has since enjoyed greater popularity than any of the other symphonies.

CONCERTO FOR VIOLIN, PIANO AND ORCHESTRA, H. 342

In 1955 another concerto for duo performers featured in the Philadelphia programmes. It was commissioned by the husband and wife team of Benno and Sylvia Rabinovich.

Benno was a violin virtuoso of the old school. Born in New York of Russian-American parents, he had studied with Leopold Auer and among career milestones was a performance of the Glazounov *Violin Concerto* under the baton of the composer. Sylvia Smith, the other half of the partnership, had



Symphony No. 4 – programme of the concert

embarked on a promising solo career, but after her marriage she restricted herself to the role of accompanist to her husband.

The world premiere of the new concerto had been given on 13 November 1954 with the San Antonio Symphony Orchestra conducted by Victor Alessandro at the Municipal Auditorium in that city (elsewhere wrongly shown as having taken place in New York on 13 May 1954). The Philadelphia performances came

delphia Orchestra



Bohuslav Martinů in Philadelphia, during a rehearsal of The Philadelphia Orchestra, 1955

© The Philadelphia Orchestra Association Archives/Adrian Siegel Collection

a year later on 18, 19 and 28 November with a performance at Carnegie Hall on the following day.

The critical response to the work was mixed. It was seen as a first attempt in modern times to compose a work for this combination with all the associated difficulties of balancing both violin and piano against an orchestral backdrop.

One of the ways in which Martinů tackled that difficulty was to give the violin and piano alternating individual solo turns, particularly in the middle movement, producing some beautiful lyrical passages. In the New York Times, Howard Taubman wrote that the composer “deserves a ribbon for a good try” but despite the spirit of the solo performers and the lavishly coloured orchestral support provided by Ormandy “they could not make the violin-piano combination persuasive against a full orchestra”.

The composer was present for the performance in New York and abandoned a reluctant attempt to go on stage to take a bow, much to the annoyance of Ormandy, as recounted by Charlotte Martinů in her memoir.

There is no denying that this work has proved to be the Cinderella of Martinů concertos. The only recording was deleted long ago and there has been only the odd concert performance in recent years.

Martinů enthusiasts, however, will soon have a new opportunity to assess the

work for themselves. A new recording is due to appear on the Hyperion label later this year with Bohuslav Matoušek and Karel Košárek as soloists with the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Christopher Hogwood.

PERFORMANCES SINCE 1959

The **Double Concerto for Two String Orchestras, Piano and Timpani, H. 271** was a late comer for the Philadelphia audiences. Rafael Kubelik introduced the work during the 1965/66 season. On a later visit he was to accompany Rudolf Firkušný in another performance of the **2nd Piano Concerto, H. 237**, the only one of the Martinů concertos Firkušný was to perform in Philadelphia.

Eugene Ormandy retired as music director in 1980. The last Martinů work he conducted was the **Oboe Concerto, H. 353** with John de Lancie as soloist. Ormandy's successor Riccardo Muti introduced the **Rhapsody-Concerto for Viola and Orchestra, H. 337** and Neeme Järvi, as a guest conductor, performed the **2nd Symphony, H. 295**.

In the 1990s there was a surge of Martinů performances occasioned by the centenary of the composer's birth. The **1st, 5th** and **6th Symphonies** were heard in Philadelphia for the first time conducted respectively by Mácal Welser-Moet and Pešek who also introduced **Les Fresques de Piero della Francesca, H. 352** to the home audiences. Charles Dutoit conducted the **Field Mass, H. 279** and there was also a performance

of the **Sinfonia Concertante, H. 219** directed by Ion Marin.

In 1994 the veteran conductor Wolfgang Sawallisch succeeded Muti and revived the **4th Symphony** for a new generation of Philadelphians after a 50 year gap. His compelling reading appeared on the Orchestra's centennial CD collection in 1999 when he again performed the work in concert.

In recent times the Orchestra has moved into a new home in the Verizon Hall where

the present music director Christoph Eschenbach has performed and recorded the **Memorial to Lidice**.

For the future, with the 50th anniversary of the composer's death being marked in 2009, one can anticipate a resurgence of interest in his music and a continuing tradition of performance in Philadelphia.

With special thanks to Darrin Britting, Associate Director of Communications, Philadelphia Orchestra and Greg Vaught, Principal Librarian, San Antonio Symphony Orchestra



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BOHUSLAV
MARTINŮ
THREE WISHES

JIŘÍ NEKVASIL

AT THE END OF 2006 and beginning of 2007 I had the opportunity to prepare for the Volkstheater Rostock a production of Bohuslav Martinů's opera *Three Wishes*, H. 175 (premiered on 20 January 2007). It was only the fifth staging of this opera since its world premiere in 1971. (In total: two Czech, one French and two German productions, if we discount the opera's adaptation at Berlin's Neukölner Oper in 2000.)

Our production was the first-ever staging of the work without any music cut-outs. Only a few spoken passages at the beginning of Act 3 were deleted. The staging was prepared in German translation by Marcus Gammel.

This text sums up my dramaturgical deliberations and analysis of the work originated during the preparation of the production conception, is enriched with beautiful happenstance and experience of everyday encounter with the work in the course of the rehearsal process and with the awareness of the resulting form of the performance.

Three Wishes is Bohuslav Martinů's third complete operatic composition, the second written in collaboration with the librettist-poet Georges Ribemont-Dessaignes (1884–1974). The work

witnesses to a hectic atmosphere before shooting. The director gives orders. A telephonist calls to get the missing costumes and props. The story's protagonists appear – actors in their dressing-

stars in a single trap! A rose without thorns! A golden-blue flower? A black lily of snow! One two three! It doesn't belong to you!" The same dream was dreamt by the couple's servant Adelaide, and alongside a broken mirror and cuckoo cry there are strange signs – something is about to happen! In the meantime, Mr. Juste discovers in the forest a fairy caught in a trap and brings her home. At home, the world-weary Indolenda tries to chase away ennui by means of coquetry with her young cousin Adolf. He, however, fails to show much interest in his ageing cousin. Mr. Juste brings the Fairy home. First she dispels his wife's suspicion that she is his new mistress and promises to make three wishes come true should she get back her freedom. And Indolenda voices the first wish: "I want to be rich!" Their dwelling duly acquires the appearance of enormous profusion, dressers change them into glamorous clothes! And precious guests arrive, all revelling in the wealth. However, the Fairy reveals yet another secret of this feast – it is an engagement party – cousin

Indolenda duly becomes young. However, she does not want Juste and instead chooses as a lover her cousin Adolf, who does not say no to the rejuvenated Indolenda.

We move from the desert island to a small square. The spurned Juste melancholically plays his hunting-horn. On the balcony of the house opposite the amorous couple Indolenda and Adolf appear, profess love to each other, dance a tango to gramophone music, accompanied by the attention of the surroundings and the despair of the lonely Juste – who feels old, abandoned and sad! The Fairy appears and reminds him of there being one more – final – wish. And Mr. Juste wishes to be loved. And hence a hunchbacked beggar (formerly the wealthy Eblouie Barbichette) falls in love with him and possesses him with her "love" just for herself and, eventually, almost beats him to death out of jealousy. "Life is so hard!" exclaims the dying Juste and a cuckoo cry concludes his earthly sojourn – this time, the cuckoo's voice belongs to the Fairy.



Indolenda (I. Wilhelm) and Adolphe (Ch. Kayser)

Photo Jiří Nekvasil

originated in 1929 and in a way crowns the first triptych of the composer's operas from the period affected by jazz influences and inspirations. The present, albeit significantly stylised, gets on to the stage. However, the basis is a play within a play, or, more specifically, a film story within a life story. And a film in opera too. But an opera in the context of the current historical operatic experience.

The opera is structured into three acts and begins with a prologue.

The prologue opens with rhythmised chorus singing, with its main motto being money – a thousand dollars. The chorus, conceived even in a voice-band manner, is interrupted by the appearance of the director and the film crew. We are

rooms: the married couple Nina Valencia (Indolenda) and Arthur de St. Barbe (Mr. Juste), Serge Eliacin (Adolf) and Lillian Nevermore (the Fairy). We record a short flirtation between Serge and Nina. And then, upon the director's order, "shooting" begins – the actual story – of a film – opera – vagrant life?

A cuckoo cry from a cuckoo clock opens **Act 1** – capturing the atmosphere of an early morning in the Justes' bedroom. An ageing couple, fed up with themselves. He, Mr. Juste, a former "executioner of virgin hearts", leaves for the forest to hunt, an activity that has become a substitute for his erstwhile sexual activities, while his wife tries to keep the impression from last night's beautiful and strange dream: "Three



The Fairy (L. Ceralová)

Photo Dorit Gätjen

Adolf is to marry the wealthy Eblouie Barbichette. And as a wedding present they receive from the Fairy a golden island with a golden palace, where everything is golden. "Life is beautiful!" These words sung by the chorus conclude Act 1.

Act 2 opens with a sea voyage to the golden island. The impatient Juste and Indolenda require more proof of the golden island's existence, "proof weighed in gold". And the proof appears presently – golden birds in the sky, golden fish in the sea, and, finally, everything is covered with gold, all the passengers become golden and the boat, under the weight of gold, founders.

The castaway Juste expresses his second wish: "I want my wife to become young!"

"Cut!" the director calls! Shooting is over! General euphoria, and after the film's premiere the director invites all the actors to a small celebration party. Indolenda and Adolf (now again the actors Nina Valencia and Serge Eliacin) are agreeing on another, this time private, story – they continue acting – they will be lovers in real life too. The exclamations "Long Live Life!", resounding amid general exuberance, conclude Act 2.

Act 3 opens with the scene of a crowd in front of a cinema giving a premiere. A film will begin shortly in which the entire story is repeated again in brief (within approximately 15 minutes with the accompaniment of instrumental music). The premiere is a great success! Nina is

WISHES

Opera



Act 3 – scene of a great success after the premiere of the film

Photo Jiří Nekvasil

determined to abandon her husband (Arthur) and run away with Serge. Arthur enters a bar. He stays aloof from the merry company, intoxicated with success and high on life. He has the feeling they are laughing at him. Eventually, when he remains on his own, lonesome in the empty bar and his monologue ends with the same words as in his film role, "Life is so hard!", this time no director appears to say CUT.

THE LIBRETTO, created for Martinů's *Three Wishes* by Ribemont–Dessaignes, is one of the most remarkable and outstanding opera librettos of the 20th century. The author offers to the composer several semantic and expressive levels, which were given paramount fulfilment in Bohuslav Martinů's musical composition.

Original is the framing idea itself – shooting preparations, the actual film story, the end of shooting, the film premiere and sequel at the post-premiere party in a bar bearing the name "Three Wishes".

The librettist offers several worlds here – the "civilian" (and, at the same time, civilist): a prologue exposed in the form of collage – the shooting under preparation, voices of the director, the telephonist and flirting actors blending together, as well as the world of film premiere and the post-premiere party (Act 3). The second world is the world of a fairy-tale/burlesque and concurrently moralist story, a story of a shot film (which, after all, could function independently). The story is not so much persiflage or quotation of a libretto of a contemporary film, it is more a fairy-tale

fantasy allegory built up in a collage manner, in a collage-type Dadaist and Surrealistic spirit. The story is replete with symbols and semantic levels, it cannot deny inspiration by psychoanalysis. At first reading it might evoke the impression of a spreading poetic improvisation, yet it concerns a very skilfully elaborated multi-layer and multi-vocal structure.

The librettist also gives civilian names to the four main characters – the married couple in the film story, Mr. Juste and Indolenda, are the actor-couple Arthur de St. Barbe and Nina Valencia, Serge Eliacin plays cousin Adolf in the film, and their roles pass over to "life" too. Nina abandons her husband and leaves with the younger Serge. The enactor of the Fairy also has a civilian name – Lilian Nevermore. Although her story is somewhat of a question. In the prologue itself, we see her alongside the three main protagonists in a dressing-room being made up. However, she does not say a word. Her "civilian" utterance is a scandalous musical performance at the concluding party in a bar. The rest remains secret. Other characters only have their names from the film story. Interesting too is the fate of Eblouie Barbichette. By the end of the story, this rich girl has become a hideous hunchbacked beggar. And she remains a hideous beggar in "civilian life" too – she appears in front of the premiere cinema, as well as at the concluding party. Without explanation, without words, like another question. (In the librettist's synopsis and the script of the first two acts, as they are published in Miloš Šafránek's book "Bohuslav Martinů's Theatre", Eblouie is already in Act I, during her betrothal to

miracles virtually unfeasible in theatre, yet, on the other hand, extremely provoking the creators' imagination. At random, I quote: Act 1, Scene 4: "...seeds in flowerpots germinate immediately, plants begin blossoming with little hearts and arms." Act 2, Scene 1: "With a loud noise a flock of birds come flying, circling above the boat and ultimately flutter down on board... At the same time, the Sun and Moon appear in the sky. They are golden. Both the sky and sea become golden. The personages on the stage also have gilded clothes: Only the Fairy looks transparent and feather-light..."

In musical terms the opera is a grand collage in which Martinů is not afraid to juxtapose various expressive means (it is a principle we encounter with the composer neither for the first nor by no means for the last time). Nevertheless, the work does not fall to pieces but with its several layers creates the impression of compactness without denying its experimental nature and, at the same time, becomes a vivid and entertaining theatre form.



Indolenda (I. Wilhelm) and Adolphe (Ch. Kayser)

Photo Dorit Götjen

Adolf, characterised as "hideous and rich, but dazzling with diamonds and pearls". Yet in the composer's script, also in Šafránek, this characteristic is absent and neither does it appear in scenic notes in the score and piano extract. Hence, there is the possibility of an even bigger, unsubstantiated change – a young, beautiful and rich girl can transform into an ugly hunchbacked beggar and remain as such, even after the camera stops rolling, in real life too. The border between film and reality is being breached here in a totally different manner.

In his scenic notes (especially concerning the film story), Ribemont–Dessaignes also affords great scope to fantasy and alongside notes of an almost technical/stage-direction nature prescribes things and

The opera's entire **MUSICAL/DRAMATURGICAL STRUCTURE** deserves at last a brief comment.

The prologue consists of two parts – the first combining voice-band-like chorus, narrated passages and sung entries, with the accompaniment of a prevalently orchestral ostinato, the second part, after the director's order "Attention, we are shooting!", is an approximately two-minute-long instrumental overture in the jazz spirit, accompanying the final hectic preparations for shooting and the director's orders. The actors and scene are under preparation! The music finishes. The director commands: "Camera!" Shooting – the film story begins!

Act I consists of 5 scenes (tableaux). In Scene I we find ourselves in the Justes'

bedroom. Scene 2 (in the libretto divided by the back curtain which closes the bedroom) is a scene of Indolenda and her servant Adelaide. Scene 3 shows a scene of hunting – a landscape or forest. The first part of this scene contains longer instrumental interludes “forest marvels!” – first blossoming flowers similar to women are seen, then quaint animals. These scenes are interlaced by Juste’s short ariosos. The second part of the tableau is a grand dialogic scene of Juste’s encounter with the Fairy. The scene culminates in an instrumental coda that also offers time for reconstruction to Scene 4 followed by attaccos. We are in Indolenda’s room – her arioso in the chanson spirit is followed by a scene of flirtation with cousin Adolf. His seduction culminates with a scene in tango rhythm. The scene concludes with the arrival of Juste and the Fairy and the expression of the first wish. Scene 5 is concurrently the finale of Act I. The overall structure of Act I is in a way “the most traditional” and linear. Scenes comprise attaccos, narration, even though of a fanciful story, is observed. Sung passages frequently pass into spoken passages (mostly with instrumental accompaniment). Spoken texts are used here not in the Singspiel spirit, but as another expressive means alongside singing, many a time requiring musical stylisation in their performance (spoken texts are worked with in this manner throughout the opera). The spoken word also frequently serves for highlighting the bizarre poetry of the librettist’s language. From this viewpoint, also in a way “traditionally” built up is the finale of Act I. After the voicing of the first wish, “I want to be rich!”, and the cuckoo cry, the finale opens in an interlude of virtuoso solo piano (*Allegro vivo*) with jazz undertones. During this scene (according to the author’s notes): “Technicians appear and re-make Mr. Juste’s dwelling, which acquires the appearance of enormous luxury. Dressers change Mr. Juste and Indolenda into glamorous clothes. A table with luxury dishes and crystals is brought in. In the meantime, the Fairy falls asleep in the corner by the fireplace.” The piano solo merges into an instrumentally accompanied dialogue between Juste and Indolenda, enraptured by their sudden wealth, which grows into a bitter argument about whose wealth it actually is. The argument is interrupted by the butler announcing the arrival of special guests who first slowly fill up the empty space. The rising tempo culminates in the rapid entry of “more and more guests” – the entire chorus. The choral part of the finale has a three-part structure – entry of the chorus with the text: “Believe me Monsieur, Madame, it is definitely better to have a full wallet than heart. ...” This



Eblouie Barbichette / the Beggar (A. Höcht)

Photo Jiří Nekvasil

scene passes (within a single whole) into a feast scene and ends with the words: “Oh, life is beautiful”. The middle part comprises a recitative entry of the Fairy in combination with narrated entries of other personages and her announcement of betrothal, which finishes in a choral coda “Wealth, wealth, it’s love, bliss and paradise” and culminates in the apotheosis “Life is beautiful!” Both choral entries in the finale have great panache and I can feel here proximity (especially in the conclusion) to musicals or musical comedy.

Act 2 opens with a male chorus of sailors with a solo from the captain. He evokes the atmosphere of sailing. The ostinato rhythm of the chorus scene then merges into soloist replicas too. The scene is punctuated by narrated texts – questions to the Fairy. The Fairy’s answers take the shape of two chanson ariosos, the second with tango undertones. The entire sea scene culminates in a large ensemble in the style of a grand French opera tableau à la Meyerbeer. There are not so many of these knowing stylised citations in *Three Wishes* (compared with, for example, the opera *The Soldier and the Dancer*, H. 162); they are very subtle yet reveal the composer’s extensive knowledge and at the same time express by means of play with an opera genre inside a genre a certain distance from the theme and, furthermore, in its experimental form, the awareness of connections with opera theatre history. The dramatically culminating ensemble after a subsequent crescendo merges into a solo piano and with its accompaniment begins a male quartet (Ballad): whereas Act I tells the story in linked scenes almost linearly, in the quartet scene we experience a certain stoppage, comment, a view from outside. The five-strophe ballad, written in the style of “melody singers” of the late 1920s, starts with the

words “A boat all from gold was sailing, sailing on a golden sea. A boat almightily wealthy, there was enough of everything but love!” In the next strophes we hear a poetic comment on the ship’s sinking,

spoken text allows for transition into the next scene. We are on a desert island and Adolf meets the black woman Dinah. The scene – the black woman’s song sprawls out into a masterly cabaret joined by the voices of Juste and the rejuvenated Indolenda, who rejects Juste’s overtures. She wards off the black woman and, enchanted by her youth, chooses a new lover, Adolf. The whole scene is again in a fast tempo with jazz undertones. The coda is then formed by an arioso of the abandoned Juste (eventually disappearing into the dark) and an amorous duet between Adolf and Indolenda.

According to the librettist, in scene 2 we find ourselves in a small square. There is neither a real motivation nor a closer description of where we are and why we are there all of a sudden! It is in line with the logic of a film fairy tale and fantasy or dream. Above all, it concerns the atmosphere, a new scene for the story’s conclusion. The unhappy Mr. Juste plays the hunting-horn, bemoans his fate and with anger observes the cooing lovers Indolenda



Indolenda (I. Wilhelm) and Adolphe (Ch. Kayser)

Photo Jiří Nekvasil

a little bit like a song in the style of epic theatre. The quartet leaves just as it arrived, not appearing in the action any longer. We will still encounter the quartet three times in Act 3. A short narrated scene of Juste and the Fairy ensues in which Juste voices his second wish. Some of their sentences are repeated like an echo by the chorus offstage. The entire scene finishes with two solo piano strokes. A four-strophe patter-song of Adolf with accompaniment from a solo accordion follows in which in the style of cabaret or pub song he bewails his wretched fate as a shipwrecked sailor. These successive scenes are not inter-composed whatsoever. They are put side by side, infracting and disputing the hitherto continuity of narration. A short

and Adolf on the balcony. Upon Indolenda’s instigation, Adolf switches on a gramophone, thus starting one of the most remarkable ensembles (in addition, with a chorus) in the entire opera. Gramophone music (a recording) begins playing – a tango performed by an “Argentinian singer”! Gradually mingling with the singing from the gramophone record is a chorus – inhabitants of the small town who have been allured to the square by the sound of the gramophone. They listen and repeat the song after the singer. In the second strophe, the voices of Adolf and Indolenda, charmed with the song and themselves, join in. Their amorous embraces are accordantly commented on by the chorus (sopranos, altos, tenors), then the contrasting atmosphere is evoked by Juste’s dramatic



Act 2 – sea voyage to the golden island

Photo Jiří Nekvasil

entry in the style of a Verdi-like arioso which is joined by the equally Verdi-like bellicose voices of choral basses. When the gramophone record “finishes”, singing is replaced by a narrated text. However, Adolf puts on the gramophone record once again but this time it is prematurely terminated by Mr. Juste, throwing a stone at the device and breaking it. This ensemble with chorus is the longest musical area in the entire opera.

The scene continues with the arrival of the hunchbacked beggar (Eblouie Barbichette) and, after the chorus departs and the third wish is voiced, ends like a play – a dramatic duet between Juste and the Beggar, which is interlaced with the lovers’ entries. Juste dies and the Director’s “Cut!” concludes the filming. A musical coda (analogous to the instrumental part of the prologue) concludes Act 2.

I would also like to mention **the role of the chorus** in the film story (in Acts 1 and 2). Besides the three scenes when the chorus is present on the stage as story participants (the feast – finale of Act 1; the sailors’ chorus and the scene in the square), choral voices resound as comment, or one of the instrumental voices – although prevalently with a text – offstage, thus supplementing the atmosphere of many scenes. This function of the chorus is actually exposed in the first part of the opera’s prologue, in its voice-band-tuned entries.

In its form and content, **Act 3** is a totally different world. It opens with an overture lasting approximately one minute, representing the crowd in front of the cinema prior to the film premiere. Their attention is drawn by the film stars – the story’s actors, this time as “civilians” – arriving dressed up to the nines. The film begins. The film music comprises a total of 8 musical numbers (the total footage being approximately 15 minutes). During it, the entire story and its main situations are briefly repeated on the screen in the form of a silent film. The purely instrumental nature is only breached in the fifth part, called Boat. A male quartet enters the

stage in front of the screen, accompanying the film screening with its song from Act 2. At the same time, we simultaneously observe (as if somewhere else in the cinema foyer) a brief clandestine rendezvous between Nina and Serge at which they in their mindless amorousness arrange their escape (a sung dialogue).

The film ends – the final applause. In short narrated sentences, the lovers assure each other of their love.

A symphonic interlude, Departure (Le départ), ensues. This eleven-minute-long composition, which can also function independently as a concerto number, brings into the work a new, entirely different, musical world – that of a built-up symphonic composition. According to the librettist, the composition is accompanied by projections on a big screen (i.e. not a film in the cinema). It is a sort of dream about the lovers’ plan to leave for New York. It is as if here, in music in line with the arrangement and expression of his great symphonic compositions, Martinů had marked his involuntary escape from Europe to America eleven years later, where he launched his career of world-renowned symphony composer.

The introductory more than 30 minutes is mainly instrumental music (with the exception of a short duet accompanied by the quartet in one film sequence and short narrated entries), accompanying acting, film screening and large-format film projection.

The symphonic sound of Departure is replaced by jazz music from a gramophone. Appearing from out of the dark is the maudlin Arthur St. Barbe (Mr. Juste) with a letter in his hand, who goes to an empty bar and orders two glasses of whisky. He is waiting for someone. The black woman’s song from Act 2 begins playing from the gramophone. According to the librettist’s notes, the entire scene and its continuation is meant to be dreamy, behind a bobbin curtain – as if the whole ensuing finale should end with the question: was it a dream, fantasy, or reality? A question without a clear answer. The

bar is invaded by an ebullient company of actors, personages from the story, film crew and premiere guests. Only Arthur remains aloof. The bartender welcomes his guests in the bar called “Three Wishes”, mixes a special cocktail, the Black Woman again sings, the lovers Nina and Serge no longer conceal their relationship. Following as the highlight of the programme is the performance of the beautiful Lillian Nevermore (the Fairy). Her performance is again introduced by the male quartet’s song about the golden boat. Before long, Lillian’s extravagant performance draws everyone’s attention and drives the whole company into a frenzied dance.

And all of a sudden, Arthur has the feeling that everybody is looking at him in a mocking manner. The chorus repeats the same words as those in the finale of Act 1 and passes by Arthur. He is on his own again in the empty bar. He pays his bill and in the concluding song recapitulates his life and the bleak situation of a lonely man. And his last words, “Life is so hard”, are repeated by the chorus somewhere offstage. Arthur and the entire scene disappear into the dark. And, like a curtain, the first verses of the male quartet are heard for the last time: “A beautiful golden boat was sailing, there was enough of everything but love!”

When deliberating the scenic form of this remarkable work, **OUR INTENTION** was to meet the author’s requirements by means of colourful magical theatrical collage. The main point at the beginning and the end of the performance is the empty space of a black stage. When the audience enters the theatre, they see a dark revealed stage space. Just like in our imagination, anything can take place there. A director arrives with his crew, the stage is the empty space of a studio that gradually fills up with people and sets. In compliance with the author’s notes, we only let the director and film-makers be present in the introduction, and then,

in the conclusion of Act 2, the director, camera and people behind it return only shortly before the final Cut that concludes the shooting. The whole story of the “film” was narrated continually, while with regard to its length and diversity we have enough time to forget that everything that unfurls before our eyes is “just” film shooting. The major aesthetic starting point for the graphic aspect was collage inspired by the aesthetics of the avant-garde visual arts of the late 1920s. Images are assembled from several components, blend together and inosculate in front of themselves. We envisioned the route lying more in the magic picture, insinuation and symbol than in realistic descriptiveness. The story’s scenes are not realistic descriptive film structures, but collage-like images set up from fragments. It is a world of dream – a fairy tale, changing before our very eyes. At the same time, it is a theatrical world of a fantasy “liberated theatre”.

Ungraspability, ambiguity and magic combining theatre and film were the basis for the means we used. Abundantly used was live video projection from front and overhead cameras, which shot the actors on changing carpets which created the décor background on the back projection area. Also conceived within this spirit of collage and play were the dramatic actions, sometimes working with the conventions of dramatic film art of that time.

As regards the story’s film version, we chose the form of animated film in which costume designs came to life. The film depicted the same situations by different means and phraseology.

The Rostock production of *Three Wishes* and its warm reception by the audience were for me clear proof of the fact that this opera is a vivid piece of musical theatre that serves as an entertaining multi-layered show. It is one of the hitherto underestimated gems of 20th century operatic creation.

Three Wishes or Inconstancy of the Life,

H. 175, Film-opera in 3 acts with prelude and postlude in **Theatre Rostock**
<http://www.volkstheater-rostock.de>
 with cooperation of National Theatre Prague

Premiere: 20 January 2007, 7.30 pm,

Großes Haus, Das Volkstheater Rostock,

Germany

Libretto: Georges Ribemont-Dessaignes

Musical Director: Peter Leonard

Stage Director: Jiří Nekvasil

Scene: Daniel Dvořák

Costumes: Mike Hahne

Choirmasters: Ursula Stigloher /

Ronald Monem

Choreography: Stephan Brauer

Singers: Olaf Lemme (Juste/Arthur de St. Barbe), Ines Wilhelm (Indolenda/Nina Valencia), Christoph Kayser (Adolphe/Serge Eliacin), Lucie Ceralová (Fairy/Lillian Nevermore),

FROM THE NEW YORK'S BOOSEY & HAWKES

ROSEMARY BEECHER BRYANT

ON A RECENT TRIP TO THE USA, the director of the Bohuslav Martinů Institute, Aleš Březina, was given access to a large amount of documentation relating to Martinů's works in America. The paperwork consists of correspondence (largely between the international offices of Boosey and Hawkes in London and New York) and a file of newspaper cuttings and other media releases relating to a large number of Martinů works.

Boosey and Hawkes is one of the seven-teen music publishers with a link to Martinů's work. The signing of an exclusivity agreement in 1948 was preceded by a decade of cooperation during which the company acquired, among other things, the publishing rights to five symphonies and the other most significant works written during Martinů's stay in America.

THE CORRESPONDENCE file contains letters, telegraphs and inter-office memos dating from 1950 to 1969. The most valued are three letters written by Martinů's hand. In one of the letters Martinů is asking to communicate to Boosey and Hawkes in London errata in *Sinfonia Concertante*, **H. 219** (date from 1950). In the other one Martinů requires putting the English translation into the copy of the score of *Juliette*, **H. 253** for Friedrich Schramm, intendant of a theatre in Wiesbaden, Germany who intended to produce Juliette in Hamburg (date from 1953). Martinů recommends that by Walter Schmolka, but only one copy with it exists. Martinů requests translation to be put in another copy at his own expense. The third one is relating to the *Overture*, **H. 345** and publishing rights by the Boosey and Hawkes.

Eight letters refer to the *Rhapsody-Concerto for Viola and Orchestra*, **H. 337** (1952), revealing the problems that Boosey and Hawkes had with the work. Viola player Jascha Veissi disputed Boosey and Hawkes' rights to its publishing and performance, claiming that he had a prior agreement with Martinů. In a letter sent by his artistic representative in New York, Veissi stated, "At the time Mr. Martinů and I discussed the arrangements, he said that he had no publisher and I would have to make my own parts and there would be no royalties to anyone. My only arrangements are with Mr. Martinů and I no [...] nothing about Boosey and Hawkes or any other publisher". In another letter it transpired that Veissi possessed the only copy of the material, and held the rights to its performance for three years. However, the work was dogged with further problems: the release of a concert recording for the Boosey and Hawkes archive had to be postponed, when the Musicians' Union suspended recordings because of the frequent broadcast of illegal records on the radio.

A similar situation regarding performance rights had arisen several years earlier over the *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra No. 2*, **H. 237** (1934), when pianist Rudolf Firkušný refused to pay the \$60 fee to Boosey and Hawkes for a previous performance. Firkušný possessed the set of music under "honourable, verbal agreement" but held no written contract for it; it was meant to have been returned to Boosey and Hawkes' London office in summer 1953, but the office had no record of its receipt. A letter from Pearl Ayres of December of that year reveals that the *Concerto* was actually the property of Orbis publishing house, Prague.

Certain problems occurred with the parts for the *Toccata e Due Canzoni*, **H. 311** (1946): the conductor Henry Swoboda requested the scores be shipped to Vienna for recordings in April 1951, but received only an old version of the *Toccata* and one *Canzone*. A letter from Betty Randolph Bean in New York to Ernst Roth in London, of 6th July 1951, describes how Swoboda could seek damages from the London office for the inconvenience caused. The response from London explained that a reduced fee would take the place of full damages. Betty Randolph Bean also highlighted the discrepancy between the British and American hire catalogues: in the London edition, the *Toccata* is listed separately as a work of 35 minutes' duration, whilst in the US catalogue, the *Toccata e Due Canzoni* together are described as being only 18–20 minutes long!

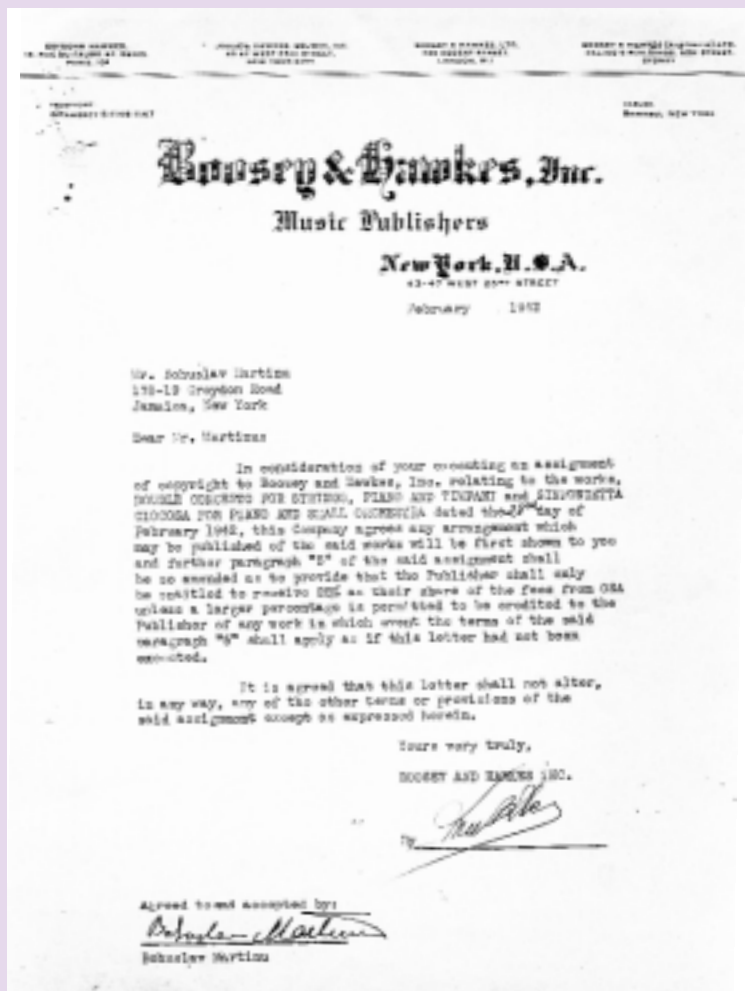
BOHUSLAV MARTINŮ
TOCCATA E DUE CANZONI

Printed study score of the *Toccata e Due Canzoni*, **H. 311**

Other correspondence describes the effect of Martinů's works. One such example is a letter from A. J. Prins, from Die Haghe Sanghers, to Bohuslav Martinů, following a performance of the *Polní Mše / Field Mass*, **H. 279** (1939) in The Hague, Holland. Die Haghe Sanghers (The Royal Male Choir) had performed the work in January 1951, and the letter expresses how the concert was received, enclosing translations of some press clippings. The performance was described as "an event for our musical life, with which very few music performances can be compared", and the work itself "one of the most direct expressions of the spirit of our time" which "speaks to the heart of this harassed mankind".

THE MEDIA DOCUMENTS tell us more about the reception of Martinů's works in America, and the extent of Boosey and Hawkes' involvement with his life as a composer. There are four lists and inventories of his works, each with various levels of detail regarding the date of composition, date and location of first performance, scoring, duration and publisher. Some of these documents were part of the process of creating a comprehensive catalogue of works for the Boosey and Hawkes' lending library.

There are also a couple of **BIOGRAPHIES** intended to form part of the composer's portfolio at the library, possibly to be adapted for programme notes. One of them, prepared for Boosey and Hawkes on 19th September 1955, describes the composer thus: "Renowned as Czechoslovakia's leading figure in contemporary music, he is today one of the outstanding composers in America".



Appendix to the author-publisher contract on the works *Double Concerto*, **H. 271** and *Sinfonietta Giocosa*, **H. 282** signed by Martinů in February 1942

ARCHIVE

There also several reviews of Martinů's premieres. Whilst many certainly agreed with this opinion, it seems that several of his works' premieres caused mixed reactions. Although the *Sinfonietta Giocosa* received many positive reviews ("rhythmic energy, Czechish melodies, good construction and a wealth of interesting musical ideas" – *The New York Times*; "Light, somewhat elfin, jolly music, modern, tartly melodious and altogether appealing" – *New York World*; "distinguished for its brilliance and gaiety" – *New Yorker*), it also suffered some criticism: "the composer has mastered a craft but not a style" – *New York Post*; "there wasn't enough to the jokes to last over half an hour" – *PM*; "rather long and somewhat overanxiously modern" – *New Yorker*. However, almost all the reviews comment on the spirited performance of the pianist (Germaine Leroux) and the fact that the *Sinfonietta Giocosa* proved the high point of the concert, which also featured Mozart:

Although some of his works did prompt negative opinion, others caused only praise, such as the **Concerto Grosso for Chamber Orchestra, H. 263**, which was premiered in January 1942 by the Boston Symphony Orchestra, under Serge Koussevitzky, at the Carnegie Hall. American critics particularly warmed to the work because of its turbulent history: The *New York Post* explains that its premiere was "interrupted several times by Hitler's legions" and *PM* described its "adventures" with particular relish: "Scheduled to be published in Vienna in 1938, it was buried by *Anschluss*. Scheduled for a Prague premiere in 1939, it was *verboten* by the Nazis. Scheduled for a Paris premiere in May 1940, it was lost when the composer had to flee the invaders." The rescuing of the score by conductor George Szell, who brought it to the USA, provided an appropriate conclusion to the story, and the critics agreed with the *New York Times*' verdict



Boosey & Hawkes archives – view into the Martinů folder

Overture to *The Magic Flute*, Haydn: Symphony no.45 ("Farewell") and two pieces by contemporary composers Harl MacDonald and Robert McBride, which were given a very poor reception by the critics.

Similarly, the NBC Television premiere of ***The Marriage, H. 341***, at 3pm on 8th February 1953, provoked different responses. Whilst one critic highlighted the presence of "arias and ensemble singing in [the] lyric, melodic vein", another wrote, "there [is nothing] remotely reminiscent of a sustained melodic line". A journalist from the *New York World Telegram and Sun* combined the two opinions in his review, singling out "the only aria in the piece" and commenting, "by its flowing melodious line one could safely judge that Mr Martinů can write effective arias if he wants to. There was need for more of them here."

that "it would have been a pity had the music not been found, for the work... proved not only expertly contrived... but also replete with interesting musical ideas" (11th January 1942). The performance was heralded as "masterly" (*New York Times*), and the piece itself "a fine and vigorous work by a fine and vigorous composer" (*Herald Tribune*), which was "compact, direct and always pleasing" (*PM*) and "a virile, rhythmically attractive item" (*NY World-Telegram*).

Overall, the documents provide an interesting insight into the workings of the music publishing industry of the time, and offer some surprising information about the reception of Martinů's works amongst his generation. ■

With special thanks to Helene Anderson and Holy J. Mentzer, Boosey & Hawkes

NEW OPERA STAGING

Opera Review



Ines Wilhelm and Bonita Hyman

Photo Dorit Götjen

THE FILM-OPERA *THREE WISHES, H. 175* GARNERS RICH APPLAUSE

(Extracts from a review by Prof. Heinz-Jürgen Staszak, *Norddeutsche Neueste Nachrichten*, 22 January 2007)

Rostock. The film-opera *Three Wishes* by the Czech composer Bohuslav Martinů has been staged by the Rostock Opera. The new performance is an artistic novelty: fancy, tangled, witty and humorous, playful and replete with the joy of experimentation. The Sunday premiere met with copious applause... Martinů composed the opera in 1929 in Paris, at a time when Dadaism was fading and Surrealism was beginning to break through. The French librettist, Georges Ribemont-Dessaignes, had feet in both camps. The two authors play a dirty little game of exposure in this opera. They play with the building blocks of the art of that time and also juggle with the cornerstones of our life, with the eternal desires for wealth, beauty and love, and with the delusions by means of which we deceive ourselves (and let ourselves be deceived) into believing in their fulfilment. This all is narrated in the form of a production of a film fairy-tale in which a fairy fulfils the three wishes of possessing gold, being young and being loved until the end, when only hoariness remains from all that glitter. The stage director, Jiří Nekvasil from Prague's National Theatre, does not present this story as a pointed provocation, but rather lends to it irony and an almost understanding humour. His production accumulates concealed meaning thanks to permanent deliberate chaos between reality and illusion, underpinned by constant irritation, whether we find ourselves in the "reality" of a corny opera or amid the schmaltz of a film "dream factory". It is a dazzling entertainment. The stage director is robustly supported by the sets of his colleague Daniel Dvořák, the costumes designed by Mike Hahne and the performances of the ensemble: the commenting chorus, a decorative ballet and numerous soloists, especially Olaf Lemme, Ines Wilhelm, Cristoph Kayser, Lucie Ceralová and Andrea Höcht. In addition, the production accrues charm and irony owing to the use of the very medium that makes it problematic – film. The stage action is accompanied by snippets of film (produced by the Institut für Neue Medien) as an extra background dimension opening by means of Dadaist elements literarily parallel perspectives. However, the opera is no less humorous in musical terms. Martinů composed a grand opera – melding oratory and symphonic components with jazz rhythms and idioms of common entertainment music into a gripping musical whole. Die Norddeutsche Philharmonie, conducted by Peter Leonard, seamlessly switched between different roles – metamorphosing from a grand symphonic and operatic orchestra, through a chamber and light entertainment ensemble to a jazz band. ■

with... *the violinist* **Alexander**

Rozhdestvensky **ON BOHUSLAV MARTINŮ**

EVA VELICKÁ

On 21 February 2007 Bohuslav Martinů's very rarely played composition *Concerto for Violin, Piano and Orchestra, H. 342* was performed to great acclaim in the Smetana Hall of Prague's Municipal House. We talked to the brilliant young violinist Alexander Rozhdestvensky a day prior to this concert, at which he played alongside his mother, the pianist Viktoria Postnikova. The FOK Prague Symphony Orchestra was conducted by the violinist's father, the legendary Gennady Rozhdestvensky. Alexander, who has been living in Paris for 15 years and given concerts worldwide, talked enthusiastically about Bohuslav Martinů.

Is this your first visit to Prague?

No, I have already performed here with the FOK Orchestra, Glazunov's *Violin concerto*. I like Prague very much and rehearsals with the orchestra go really well. I really like the Martinů work we will be playing tomorrow.

It will be a unique concert since this composition is seldom performed.

That's true, it was really difficult to get hold of a recording of this work. The first thing I saw was the violin part. When I looked through it, I didn't understand much. However, afterwards, with the piano, I gradually began comprehending the work and started to like it a lot. Especially the orchestra; it impressed me immensely.

How did you become acquainted with Bohuslav Martinů's music? It was probably thanks to your father, a great champion of Martinů works, who has been awarded a Bohuslav Martinů Foundation Medal.

Yes, when I was very young I heard him performing in Moscow a cycle of Martinů's symphonies. Moreover, an excellent friend of mine is Robert Kolínský, a brilliant pianist of Czech origin living in Zürich and organising the Martinů Festival in Basel. We have played various Martinů chamber pieces together.



Alexander Rozhdestvensky

Does it mean then that you know Martinů really well?

No, unfortunately not so well so far. But I like his music very much and I would like to play it more.

What is Martinů's music like for a violinist? Is it complicated, what specificities does it possess?

Yes, it is difficult, which is strange considering Martinů was a violinist himself. The music is written in a rather "uncomfortable" manner, especially in the beginning when one is getting acquainted with the notes. However, step by step you finally absorb it and it starts to sound good.

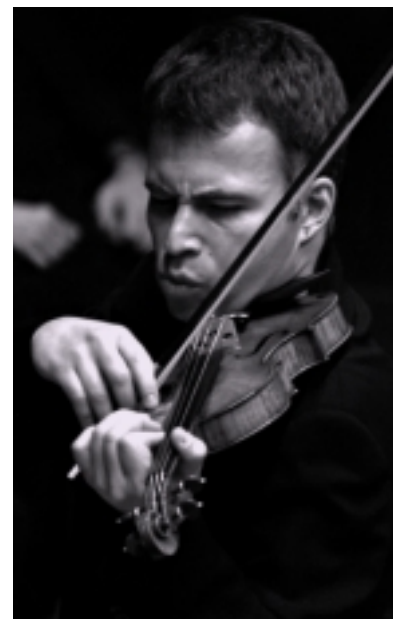
Martinů's music is often performed at concerts alongside that of French, American or Central European composers. But almost never together with that of Russian composers. Do you think that there are any parallels with Russian composers such as Shostakovich or Prokofiev?

It would certainly be quite possible to perform them together. I think that Martinů is a really universal composer. He has a specific style, language, according to which you immediately recognise him. When you, for instance, hear a recording of some unknown work you can immediately tell the author when it concerns Martinů – according to the typical instrumentation,

harmony. The concerto we are going to play also comprises special harmonies, sometimes partially reminding me of Shostakovich. However, it's not really possible to talk about parallels in the case of Martinů since he is absolutely singular.

And what about Alfred Schnittke, whose music you have frequently performed and recorded? Just like Martinů, Schnittke uses baroque elements in his music.

Yes, now I would like to prepare and perform Martinů's *Concerto da Camera for Violin and String Orchestra with Piano and Percussion, H. 85*, which reflects these tendencies. I think that there are still more parallels between Schnittke and Martinů. Martinů has a penchant for using popular melodies like foxtrot, which was popular at that time in America. On the other



© Prokop Souček

hand, Schnittke, as well as, for example, Shostakovich, likes using what was then popular in the Soviet Union. Therefore, in their works we can often hear a sort of "Soviet march" treated with humour.

Have you performed often with your parents? And what's it like playing with them?

No, very rarely. However, the cooperation is excellent. I like playing with my father very much. I always learn something new. ■

“DEAR RUDA”

Letters

BOHUSLAV MARTINŮ'S LETTERS TO RUDOLF FIRKUŠNÝ

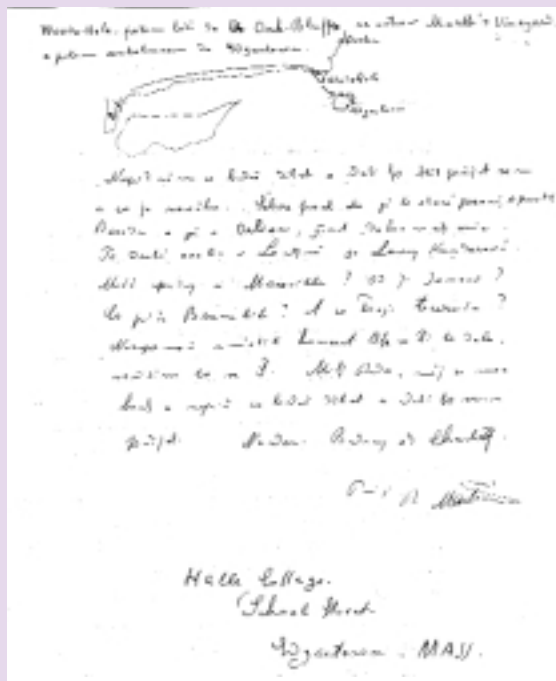
JANA HŘEBÍKOVÁ

Mrs VERONIQUE FIRKUŠNÝ-CALLEGARI, daughter of the pianist Rudolf Firkušný, has provided the Bohuslav Martinů Institute with copies of twelve letters Bohuslav Martinů wrote to her father. Rudolf Firkušný was for Bohuslav Martinů not only an important adviser as regards piano parts of his works, the two were also close friends and confidants throughout their lives.

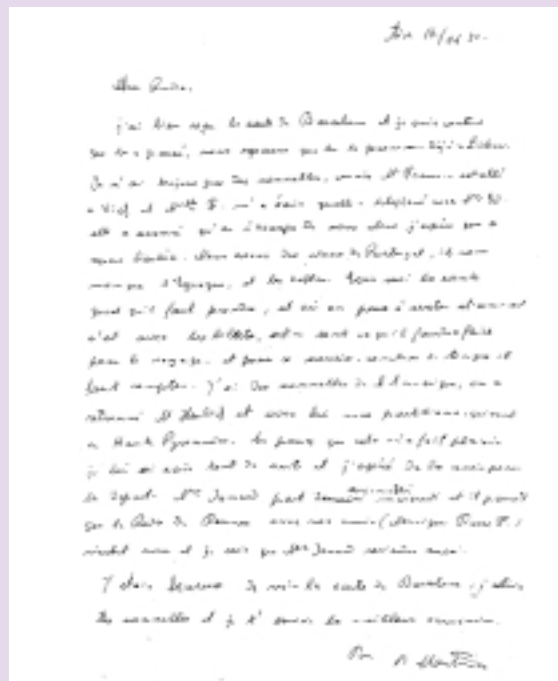
The letters date from 1935 to 1954. The first three letters were written in 1935 and relate to **Piano Concerto No. 2, H. 237**. Martinů addressed them from Paris to Prague, where Firkušný was living at 116 Slezská street, Vinohrady. Martinů informs Firkušný that he has sent concerto material to the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra and that he hopes Firkušný will like the concerto. He also conveys that he wants to compose for him and dedicate to him a new piano concerto, which will later become **Piano Concerto No. 3, H. 316**.

Piano Concerto No. 2 was premiered on 13 November 1935, performed by Firkušný with the accompaniment of the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Václav Talich. On the very next day following the premiere, Martinů writes from Paris: “Dear friend. Thank you and please accept my congratulations on performing the concerto. I tried to catch you on the Radio, but unfortunately, because of major interference, I could only hear fragments. [...] I was really sorry about it; however, from what I heard I must admire your performance and I cordially thank you for your great work and performance too.” Martinů asks Firkušný for his opinion on the concerto, and also whether the orchestra’s instrumentation is not overly full. Later on, Martinů was to return to the concerto’s orchestration and upon Firkušný’s advice reworked and simplified a few places in the orchestral parts. Furthermore, Martinů specifies for Firkušný his concept of the performance’s tempo: “however, I must say that I conceived both the outer movements as being much slower, especially the first movement, calm *allegro*, rather melodious. And I also saw the third one more like *allegretto rondo*, it means a nuance looser.”

Another of the letters preserved is dated 1940. Owing to censorship, Martinů writes it in French and sends it to Firkušný in Lisbon from Aix. Martinů informs him that they have received Portuguese visas but are still lacking Spanish ones. He asks Firkušný to describe the route they should take and requests further information concerning emigration: “Écris-moi la route qu’il faut prendre et où on peut s’arrêter et



On the left – The letter dated 12 July 1941 in which Martinů explains to his friend the journey to Edgartown and encloses a small picture: “You go here from N.Y. in the morning at 9.45 (Central) up to Woods-Hale, then by boat to Oak-Bluffs on Martha’s Vineyard island, and then by bus to Edgartown.” On the right – The letter written in French sent from Aix en Provence on 16 October 1940 (the wrong date 16 January 1940 stated in the letter), addressed to Firkušný in Lisbon (Portugal).



comment c’est avec les billets, enfin tout ce qu’il faudra faire pour le voyage, et pour se nourrir, combien de temps il faut compter.”

The next four letters, which Martinů wrote in the summer of 1941, document the events of the first summer spent in America. The Martinůs lived at 120 West 57th Street, New York City, and moved for the summer to the Halle College artists’ colony in School Street, Edgartown, Massachusetts. “It is very nice here, we go to the beach by boat to the island opposite, the people are really nice just like everywhere, it seems, in America, and I immediately set to work, I am writing the violin concerto for Sacher and reading, we are learning English and go swimming.” The mentioned violin concerto for Paul Sacher is **Concerto da Camera for Violin and String Orchestra with Piano and Percussion, H. 285**, premiered in Basel on 23 January 1942. Martinů also writes in the letters that he would like to get in contact with the conductor Arturo Toscanini. He wants to meet him and show him a score of his, for example, that of *Double Concerto*. He asks Firkušný for the address of the soprano Jarmila Novotná, who at that time was singing at the Metropolitan Opera in New York. Martinů would like to ask her to address the famous conductor in person.

Furthermore, the letters reveal that on 14 August 1941 the Martinůs left for about

four days after receiving an invitation to the Berkshire Festival. “I am glad that I have seen it, we were with [the violinist Emanuel] Ondříček and had a great time.”

Martinů always liked meeting up with Firkušný whenever it was possible and Firkušný’s concert schedule so allowed. Martinů also asks him whether he would not consider moving closer to their New York apartment: “Will you stay in the apartment you are in now? It would be good if you could find something close to us. I do not know whether I will manage to adapt myself here and I think that even in the best case it will take me a long time before I manage to do so.” Firkušný indeed moved to a place closer to the Martinůs, from 162 East 74 Street to 28 West 58th Street.

In her book *My Life with Bohuslav Martinů*, Charlotte Martinů recalls: “Ruda Firkušný lived two houses from us, and when it happened he was not on a tour, he came over to have lunch or dinner with us. He was a very close friend, actually a family member.” (Editio Bärenreiter; Prague 2003, p. 109). Rudolf grew on Martinů and the two understood each other very well. Charlotte recalls just how important the friendship with Firkušný was for Martinů at yet another juncture (p. 122): “Bohuš confided to him his personal problems, harrowing ambivalence, internal confusions; Ruda tried to assuage them.”

Only three letters have been preserved from the post-war period, dated 22 November 1953, 24 October 1954 and 20 December 1954. In the first letter Martinů writes to Firkušný in New York that they are in Nice that so far they have not made acquaintance with anyone, but it is beautiful there. At that time, Martinů was striving to create an opera libretto to Dostoyevsky’s *The Possessed*. However, he writes that things are not going well with the opera and he probably won’t finish it. Martinů attentively followed Firkušný’s concerts, and not only those at which he performed his works. On 24 October 1954 he writes to Firkušný: “Dear Ruda. We listened to the concerto and you really pleased me with the way you played Mozart, bravo! And I was gratified how you pushed Münchinger in movement III. It is a beautiful concerto and you played it beautifully too.” Nevertheless, Bohuslav and Charlotte are sorry that they cannot catch the radio broadcasts from Luxembourg and Rotterdam, where Firkušný had other performances. In the last letter, dated 20 December 1954, Martinů asks Firkušný to come and see them in May 1955. “We could put together that piece of yours or the Sonata.” For the 1955/1956 season, the Martinůs came to America, where they again had the opportunity to meet Rudolf Firkušný and where Martinů composed for him yet another piano concerto, **No. 4, Incantations, H. 358**. ■

CONCERTS

APRIL

14 April 2007

• Reno, Nevada, United States
Reno Chamber Orchestra,
Theodore Kuchar – Conductor
Toccata e due canzoni, H. 311

18 April 2007

• Konzerthaus, Schubert-Saal, Wien, Austria
Norwegian Chamber Orchestra
Three Madrigals, H. 313

19 April 2007

• Hradec Králové, CZ
Filharmonie Hradec Králové,
Andreas Sebastian Weiser –
Conductor,
Bohuslav Matoušek – Violin, Viola
**Czech Rhapsody for Violin and Orchestra,
H. 307A (adapted by J. Teml)
Rhapsody – Concerto for Viola and
Orchestra, H. 337**

19, 20, 21 April 2007

• Benaroya Hall, Seattle, WA, USA
Seattle Symphony,
Gerard Schwarz – Conductor
Double Concerto, H. 271

21 April 2007

• Kulturhaus Babelsberg, Potsdam, Germany
Marta Vávrová – Soprano
Petr Vašíček – Piano
**Songs on Two Pages, H. 302
The New Chapbook, H. 288**

24 April 2007

• Poděbrady, CZ
Filharmonie Hradec Králové,
Andreas Sebastian Weiser –
Conductor,
Bohuslav Matoušek – Violin, Viola
**Czech Rhapsody for Violin and Orchestra,
H. 307A (adapted by J. Teml)
Rhapsody – Concerto for Viola and
Orchestra, H. 337**

27, 28 & 29 April 2007

• Orchestra Hall, Detroit, MI, United States
Detroit Symphony Orchestra
Neeme Järvi – Conductor
Symphony No. 4, H. 305

MAY

3 May 2007

• House of Culture, Plzeň,
Czech Republic
Pilsen Philharmonic Orchestra
Jiří Malát – Conductor
Pilsen Philharmonic Choir,
Pilsen Children's Choir
Bouquet of Flowers, H. 260

6 May 2007

• Rudolfinum, Prague, CZ
Pilsen Philharmonic Orchestra
Jiří Malát – Conductor
Pilsen Philharmonic Choir,
Pilsen Children's Choir
Bouquet of Flowers, H. 260

12 May 2007

• Geertekerk, Utrecht, Netherlands
VU-Kamerorkest
Daan Admiraal – Conductor
**Concerto for Cello and Orchestra No. 1
(1st version), H. 196 I**

13 May 2007

• Waalse Kerk, Amsterdam, Netherlands
VU-Kamerorkest
Daan Admiraal – Conductor
**Concerto for Cello and Orchestra No. 1
(1st version), H. 196 I**

22 May 2007

• D. Brucknerhaus, Linz, Austria
Janáček Quartet
String Quartet No. 2, H. 150

24 & 25 May 2007

• Baltimore, MD, United States
Baltimore Symphony Orchestra,
Gunther Herbig – Conductor
**Symphony No. 6 (Fantaisies symphoniques),
H. 343**

26 May 2007

• A Pilgrimage to the Springs, Vlkov, CZ
Bohuslav Martinů Choir from France,
Kos Mixed Choir from Litomyšl and
ethnographic choir Kohoutek from Chrudim
**Opening of the Springs, H. 354
Sonata for Flute and Piano, H. 306**

JUNE

30 June 2007

• Residenz, Weißer Saal, Würzburg, Germany
Münchener Kammerorchester
Alexander Liebreich – Conductor
Partita – Suite No. 1 for Strings, H. 212

JULY

14, 16, 17 & 18 July 2007

• Philharmonie im Gasteig, München, Germany
Münchener Philharmoniker,
Christian Arming – Conductor
Symphony No. 1, H. 289

AUGUST

19 August 2007

• Biel – Switzerland
Bieler Symphonieorchester
The Revolt, H. 151

FESTIVALS

MAY

MARTINŮ FEST 2007 • 13–20 May 2007

• Týl House, Polička, CZ
13 May 2007
Ensemble Martinů
Sonata for Violin, Flute and Piano, H. 254

16 May 2007

Apollon Quartet
String Quartet No. 1, H. 117

18 May 2007

T. Jamník – Cello and I. Kahánek – Piano
Sonata for Cello and Piano, H. 277

20 May 2007

• St. Jacob Church
Moravian Philharmonic Olomouc
and Žerotín Choir
Songs of Mary, H. 235

THE PRAGUE SPRING FESTIVAL

12 May–3 June 2007

www.festival.cz
19 May 2007 / 11:00 am

• HAMU, Martinů Hall
Tomáš Jamník – Cello,
Ivo Kahánek – Piano
Sonáta pro violoncello a klavír č. 1, H. 277

21 May 2007 / 9.30 pm

• Rudolfinum
Alison Balsom – Trumpet,
Daniela Kosinová – Organ
Vigilia, H. 382

26 May 2007 / 8.00 pm

• Rudolfinum
Pardubice Chamber Philharmonia
Leoš Svárovský – Conductor
Toccata e due canzoni, H. 311

JUNE

FESTIVAL MITTE EUROPA

www.festival-mitte-europa.com
10 June 2007 / 4 p.m.

• Oelsnitz, Saxony, Germany
Prague Philharmonia
Kaspar Zehnder – Conductor
Jiří Bárta – Cello
Concert for cello and orchestra No 1, H. 196

CONCENTUS MORAVIAE FESTIVAL

31 May–30 June 2007

www.concentus-moraviae.cz
(Martinů will be played at the
following events; programme details
were not specified)

31 May / 7.30 pm

• Třebíč – Chateau, Stone Hall
Ceremonial Opening Concert
Talich Chamber Orchestra
Jan Talich – Conductor
Michaela Fukáčová – Cello

9 June / 7.30 pm

• Velké Meziříčí – Chateau
"Bohuslav Martinů and France"
Monika Knoblochová – Harpsichord
Carlo Jans – Flute
Adéla Štajnochrová – Violin

11 June / 7.30 pm

• Lysce – Chateau, Great Drawing Room
Jiří Vodička – Violin
Adam Skoumal – Piano

12 June / 7.30 pm

• Mikulov – Chateau, Chateau Hall
Concert of President of the Southern Moravia Region
Prague Philharmonia
Kaspar Zehnder – Conductor
Jiří Bárta – Cello

14 June / 7.30 pm

• Ivančice – Beseda House
Akademia Quartet
Karel Košárek – Piano

18 June / 6.00 pm

• Moravský Krumlov – Chateau, Slavic Epopee
Children's Choir Kantiléna
Jakub Klecker – Choirmaster

20 June / 7.30 pm

• Slavkov u Brna – Chateau, Historical Hall
Chloë Hanslip – Violin
Jiří Bárta – Cello

27 June, 7.30 pm

• Třebíč – Chateau, Stone Hall
Jan Talich – Violin,
Alexander Besa – Viola,
Jiří Bárta – Cello
Jana Boušková – Harp,
Ludmila Peterková – Clarinet,
Karel Košárek – Piano

29 June, 7.30 pm

• Bystřice n. Pernštejnem – House of Culture
Pavel Šporcl – Violin
Petr Jiříkovský – Piano

INTERNATIONAL CHOIR FESTIVAL
AND COMPETITION B. MARTINŮ
PARDUBICE

30 June 2007

Pardubice Chamber Philharmonia
Partita – Suite No. 1 for Strings, H. 212

SMETANOVA LITOMYŠL FESTIVAL

15 June–1 July 2007

www.smetanovalitomysl.cz
16 June 2007, 9.00 pm

The Bohuslav Martinů Philharmonic Orchestra
Roman Válek – Conductor
Soloists, Children's and Mixed Choirs,
Hradištan Dance Group
Bouquet of Flowers, H. 260
(a premiere of the cycle in an original dance
interpretation)

OPERAS

27 April 2007

The Miracles of Mary, H. 236
• Slezské divadlo Opava
www.divadlo-opava.biz

1 May–4 May 2007

The Knife's Tears, H. 169
• Second Movement Opera, London
www.secondmovement.org.uk/06future.htm
(a triple bill with The Two Blindmen by
Offenbach and Rothschild's Violin by
Fleischmann/Shostakovich, staged in an old
banana warehouse in Covent Garden)

11 & 22 May 2007

The Greek Passion, H. 372 II
• National Theatre, Prague, CZ
www.narodni-divadlo.cz

13 May 2007

The Greek Passion, H. 372 II
• Moravskoslezské divadlo, Ostrava, CZ
(The National Moravian-Silesian Theatre)
www.ndm.cz

THE BOHUSLAV MARTINŮ INSTITUTE would like to extend its cordial thanks to Mr Gert Floor, an IMC member, for kindly sending copies of programmes from concerts in the period from 1948 to 1986 at which Martinů compositions were played. Within a concert series in The Hague, the Concertgebouw Orchestra performed, among other pieces, such significant compositions as *Tre Ricerari*, H. 267 (7 January 1948), with the conductor H. Jordans, *Symphony No. 4*, H. 305 (14 January 1950), *Double Concerto*, H. 271 (31 May 1951), and *Field Mass*, H. 279, under the baton of R. Kubelik. The documents provide a valuable insight into the importance of Martinů's orchestral works in the repertoire of the Netherlands' leading orchestra.



František Muzika: Bohuslav Martinů (caricature), 1928



Autograph of Martinů's ballet "Špalíček" (Chap-Book), title page

THE CZECH MUSEUM OF MUSIC has released a multimedia CD-ROM containing information on all its displays, collections and regular events. In Czech and English, it provides concise information about the wealth and immense range of its collections. The CD-ROM comprises

a host of music examples (in the music archive and sound recordings library section). As regards Martinů museum deposits, the CD-ROM includes among others extracts from the ballet *Špalíček/The Chap-Book*, H. 214. In its

iconographic part, it provides a Martinů caricature by F. Muzika (1928) and photographs from Paris (1932). At the present, the CD-ROM can be purchased at the box office of Czech Museum of Music in Prague, price 250 CZK, www.nm.cz

CORRESPONDENCE

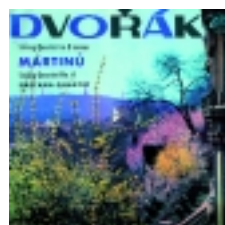
THE CORRESPONDENCE ARCHIVE has been extended by a copy of a letter from Henry J. Wood – the English conductor, composer and promoter of modern British musicians. In the letter dated 10 April 1943 sent to the publisher Boosey & Hawkes in London, Wood comments on the seven full scores he borrowed. Wood says of Martinů's *Symphony No. 1*, H. 289: "I have looked through them with much interest, but alas! my 'Prom' programmes are now completed. I found the Martinů Symphony most interesting."

Aleš Březina, was given access to the archive of the Boosey and Hawkes publishing house. In the large amount of documentation relating to Martinů's works in America were found also three letters written by Martinů's hand. In one of them Martinů is asking to communicate to Boosey and Hawkes in London errata in *Sinfonia Concertante*, H. 219 (date from 1950). In the other one Martinů requires putting the English translation into the copy of the score of *Juliette*, H. 253 for Friedrich Schramm, intendant of a theatre in Wiesbaden, Germany who intended to produce Juliette in Hamburg (date from 1953). The copies of all letters are to be found in the Bohuslav Martinů Institute.

ON A RECENT TRIP TO THE USA, the director of the Bohuslav Martinů Institute,

HISTORICAL RECORDINGS

Mr DAVID GRUNDY has kindly donated to the Library of the Bohuslav Martinů Institute an LP (SUA ST 50529 Stereo) containing Martinů's *String Quartet No. 4*, H. 256

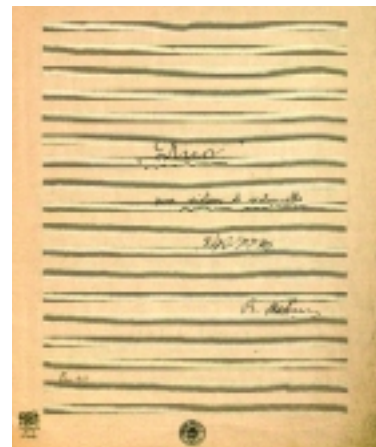


was made in 1963 in Prague's Supraphon studio and released in 1964.

performed by Smetana Quartet (Jiří Novák, Lubomír Kostecký, Milan Škampa, Antonín Kohout). The recording

NEWLY DIGITISED SOURCES IN THE BOHUSLAV MARTINŮ INSTITUTE

The Bohuslav Martinů Institute has obtained from the Music Department of the National Library in Prague a digitised version of the autograph of *Duo for Violin and Cello No. 1*, H. 157. The undamaged manuscript has 16 annotated pages and a title page, does not bear a dedication, however, it was dedicated to the closest



Autograph of the Duo for Violin and Cello No. 1, H. 157 (title page)

friend Stanislav Novák and the cellist Maurits Frank. Added to the autograph's last page is the date of the composition's completion – 26 January 1927. The two-movement duo was premiered by the musicians it was dedicated to in March of the same year and within a year of its composition was published by the Paris-based La Sirène Musicale. The virtuoso duo is an invaluable document of Martinů's Paris period – brilliantly rhythmic, a precise working of voices with polytonality.

THE OPENING OF THE SPRINGS, H. 354 WORLDWIDE

THE OPENING OF THE SPRINGS, perhaps Bohuslav Martinů's most famous work, has been performed in a host of countries worldwide. On 2 October 2004 it was premiered in Japan at the Duojin Church in Tokyo by the Kóriyama East Highschool Choir, conducted by Saitō Kazuo. A recording is available at the Library of the Bohuslav Martinů Institute. The singers performed the composition in Czech and it was narrated in Japanese by Kitsukawa Shigekiyo. Another interesting performance took place last year in Paris. The children's and girls' choir Aposiopée prepared the composition under the guidance of Nataša Bartošková, a Czech choir-master living in France. The premiere took place on 13 May 2006 at the Czech Centre in Paris. The Opening of the Springs was performed in French. We will bring more information about the Aposiopée ensemble in the next issue.

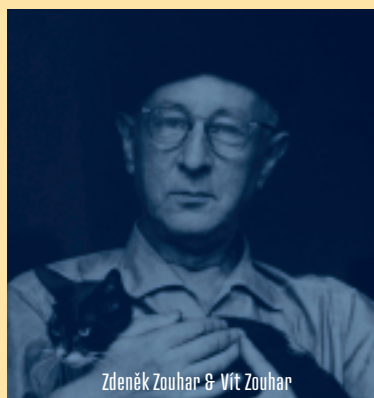


The children's and girls' choir Aposiopée



Martinů in Paris, 1932

© PBM



Zdeněk Zouhar & Vít Zouhar

milý příteli:

Dear friend:

Dopisy Bohuslava Martinů Zdeňku Zouharovi
Bohuslav Martinů's letters to Zdeněk Zouhar

Palacký University, 394 pp
Scheduled date of publication:
June/July 2007

ZDENĚK ZOUHAR & VÍT ZOUHAR

Milý příteli: Dopisy
Bohuslava Martinů
Zdeňku Zouharovi

Dear friend: Bohuslav Martinů's
letters
to Zdeněk Zouhar

This unique collection of letters from the last ten years of Bohuslav Martinů's life addressed to Zdeněk Zouhar is a key testimony to Martinů's works, life circumstances and the relationship between the composer and the interpreter of his works who premiered the cantata *The Opening of the Springs*, H. 354, the cycles *Three-part Songs*, H. 338 and *Three Legends*, H. 339, and initiated the origination of the *Primrose*, H. 348 cycle.

In the letters, published for the first time after almost fifty years, Martinů conveys his ideas of how the opera *What Men Live By*, H. 336, the *Primrose* cycle, the male choruses *Brigand Songs*, H. 361, the cantata *The Opening of the Springs* should be interpreted, and gives opinions on the new music, Moravian folksongs, his return from exile and many other topics.

This edition captures Martinů's singular literary style in authentic form, provides facsimiles of letters and juxtaposes the correspondence with the composer's letters to his family, friends, interpreters, as well as the reminiscences of his wife Charlotte.

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 tempts a lot to a very serious and "deep" conception, but it was not my plan. For me it is a rather cheerful work and the listener must feel not a religious-like moral but joy. The moral is precisely in joy.

—From Bohuslav Martinů's letter to Zdeněk Zouhar on the interpretation of the opera *What Men Live By*, 11 March 1956

I have received a beautiful poem from a Polička native, M. Bureš, about the opening of the springs in our Vysočina. I was totally enchanted by the poem and immediately sat down at the piano. And now I think, if you would be interested, that we could make a premiere of this composition in Polička. I know you are looking for material and this would perhaps be the most suitable. It is for female choir and simple, Soprano and Alto Solo, Baritone Solo, two violins, viola and piano. I am sure that Bureš will agree too. So write to me and tell me what you think.

—From Bohuslav Martinů's letter to Zdeněk Zouhar, 6 July 1955

Harry Halbreich / Bohuslav Martinů – Werkverzeichnis und Biografie



Harry Halbreich

Bohuslav
Martinů

Werkverzeichnis
und Biografie

SCHOTT

Schott Music, 448 pp
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Czech Music Guide

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Lenka Dohnalová
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- The catalogue was enlarged and revised in cooperation with the Bohuslav Martinů Institute in Prague.