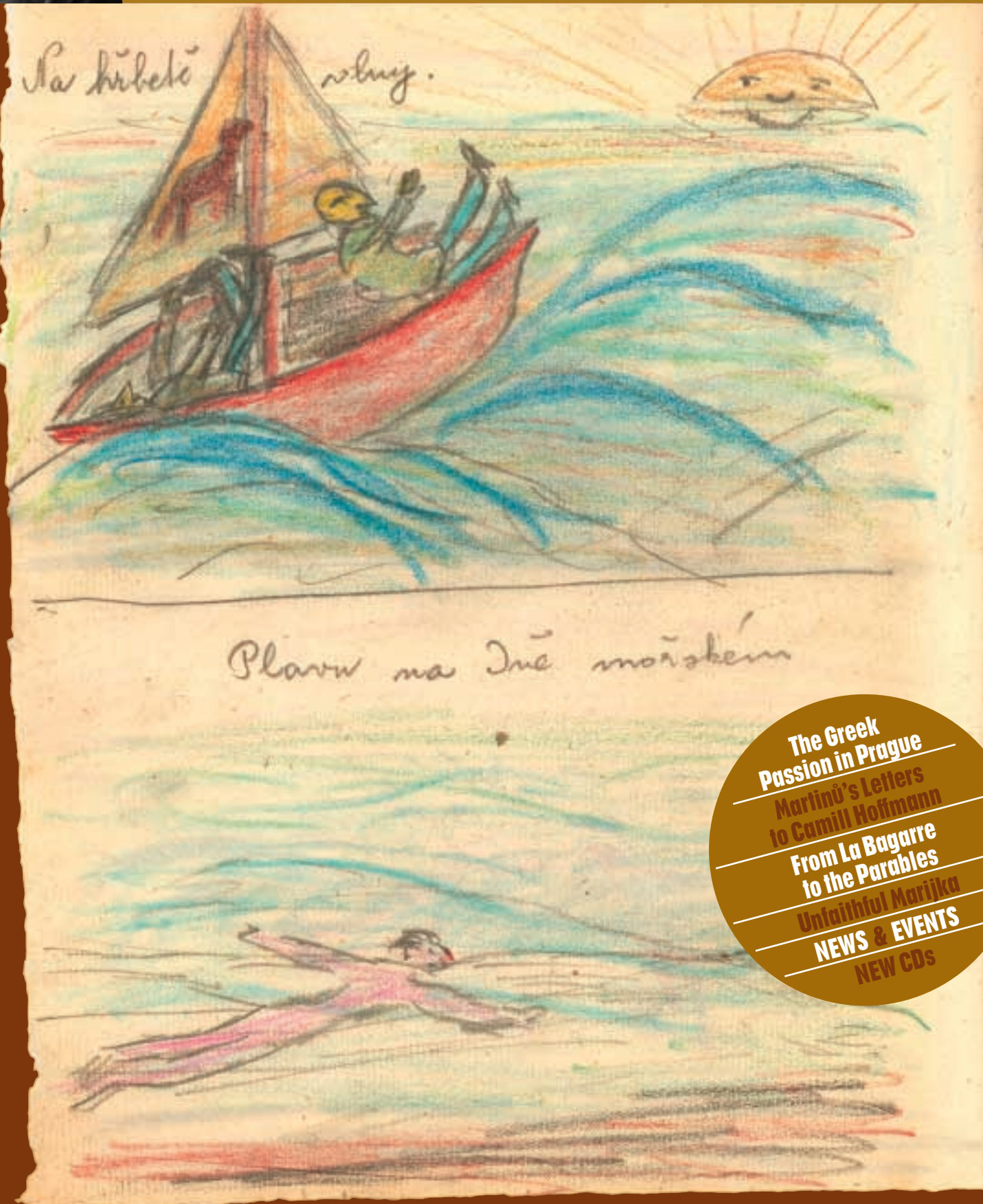




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MAY—AUGUST 2006 / VOL. VI / NO.



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Cartoon by Martinů: *On the Wave's Ridge; I am Swimming at the Seabed* ©PBM

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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

NEW PUBLICATIONS



HARRY HALBREICH: BOHUSLAV MARTINŮ – WERKVERZEICHNIS UND BIOGRAPHIE

Schott Music, 448 pp, ISBN 3-7957-0565-7
(ED 20005)

Presumed date of publication: October/November 2006

At one time the only foreign-language monograph about one of the most celebrated Czech composers.

An updated catalogue of works with a detailed description of compositions, including the latest results of research.

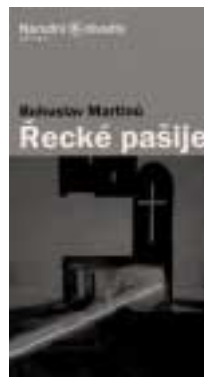
It also contains an updated biography of the composer bringing a new view of his private life, as well as a chapter about the composer's artistic personality with many note examples of his work. The publication has been created in cooperation with the Bohuslav Martinů Institute in Prague.

THE GREEK PASSION – PROGRAMME BROCHURE

The programme brochure of the opera *The Greek Passion* (National Theatre in Prague) is now on sale.

You can order this publication by e-mail:
info@narodni-divadlo.cz or fax: +420 224 931 544,
further information – tel: +420 224 901 448.

It contains: Synopsis of the opera; Bohuslav Martinů – life and work; Bohuslav Martinů and music theatre; *The Greek Passion* – two operas by Bohuslav Martinů; Musical motifs and annotations on the opera's style; Premiere of the second version of *The Greek Passion*; Libretto in the original English version.



OBITUARY HOWARD SHANET, 87, CONDUCTOR AND COMPOSER

HOWARD SHANET, a conductor, composer and professor at Columbia University who wrote an important history of the New York Philharmonic, died on Monday, June 19, 2006. He was 87 and lived in Manhattan.

Mr. Shanet was born in Brooklyn on Nov. 9, 1918. He began his musical studies as a cellist and earned a bachelor's degree at Columbia in 1939 and a master's in musicology, as a student of Paul Henry Lang, at Columbia in 1941.

As a conductor, Mr. Shanet appeared with several major American orchestras, including the New York Philharmonic and the Boston Symphony, and he frequently performed in New York with the organizations he founded, Music-in-the-Making and String Revival.

After World War II Mr. Shanet studied composition with **Bohuslav Martinů (in Tanglewood, Berkshire School of Music, in 1946)** and Aaron Copland and conducting with Serge Koussevitzky and Fritz Stiedry. He was a conducting assistant to Leonard Bernstein at the New York City Symphony in the early 1950's and wrote program notes for the New York Philharmonic in 1959 and 1960.

In 1953 Mr. Shanet joined Columbia as a professor of music and a conductor of the university's orchestra.

Excerpted from The New York Times, June 22, 2006 (www.nytimes.com)

INTERNATIONAL MARTINŮ CIRCLE

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- **Single copies** (back issues) of the Newsletter: **CZK 50 / 2 Euro + postage**

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THE IMC CORDIALLY WELCOMES THE FOLLOWING NEW MEMBERS:

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- Fedde Oosterhof, Netherlands
- Mileva Fialova, Netherlands
- Sejáková, Barbora, Czech Republic
- Robert Klimowski, USA
- Jean-François Balleve, France
- Czech Centre London
- Royal Academy of Music London

The Greek Passion recording from Prague National Theatre has been published recently (for details see back cover: New CDs in the Martinů Institute). IMC Members will receive the CD together with the BM Newsletter 1/2007!

ERRATA

On page 13 of the last Newsletter (end column, paragraph 3) the „Philharmonia Orchestra of London“ should be given instead of the „Scotland Philharmonia“. We sincerely apologize for this mistake.

MARTINŮ'S GREEK PASSION IN PRAGUE NATIONAL THEATRE

MARK TODD

WHEN I attended a performance of the Prague National Theatre production of the second version of Martinů's *'The Greek Passion, H. 372/III'* in May I didn't know that I would be asked to write about it later, so I didn't make notes about specific points that I might have done if I had been forewarned. However, one of the notable features of the evening was that conductor, orchestra, individual singers and production were so well integrated that it is in fact the whole rather than individual parts or performances of parts which

settings suggested both the Greek village and hillside and the interior of a church. Though the time of action is so far as I can see unspecified, in this production, costumes of a generalised and colourfully attractive kind hinted at the atmosphere intended without drawing attention to themselves – again, precisely as Martinů himself suggested would most engage the audience's sympathetic understanding. The costumer designer was Tereza Šimová. While it could be felt that the 'church' setting takes away from the outdoor quality which is evoked by Martinů's music and the contrast between village and bare

woman to a three hundred year old crone with a death's head – again, maybe implicit but not explicit in the composer's intention. I feel that in both cases the implicit makes all the stronger a statement by being left implicit, and I wonder if Prague National Theatre would consider dropping the resurrection cameo in future revivals of this production as ENO eventually did with their death's head.

As I said above no individual performance stood out such was the integral excellence of singing and playing. On the night I attended the direction by Jiří Bělohlávek was

tinů's original English, taken loosely from the English translation of Kazantzakis's novel. However, English-speaking Czech friends who attended on another night felt that the translation very precisely reproduced the neutral and deliberately non-poetic nature of the English whose purpose is to serve as a vehicle for the intense poetry and feeling of Martinů's music itself. As Kazantzakis himself pointed out in a letter to the composer, retention of beautiful passages would have burdened the opera. My Czech friends also noted the effectiveness of the conductor on the night they attended, Zbyněk Müller.



Roman Janál (Fotis), Luděk Vele (Grigoris)

Foto F. Ortmann



Valentin Prolat (Manolios), Petra Nôtová (Lenio)

Foto F. Ortmann

sticks in the mind. It's indeed pleasant to be able to write about such an evening with virtually unqualified praise.

I should say that while I came to the performance with high expectations of its musical aspects, I was, based on previous experience, not so hopeful about other sides. The last time I attended a twentieth century opera in this house, Janáček's *'Fate'*, it was in an unbelievably dreadful production which treated composer, dedicated performers and audience with total contempt and made the opera completely incomprehensible to anyone who didn't already know it – even audience listening with closed eyes would sometimes have their comprehension defeated at some points such as the indulgent perversity of the production. Therefore to say I was pleasantly surprised by the production of *'The Greek Passion'* is a great understatement.

I've seen a couple of productions of *'The Greek Passion'* before in different versions but neither had the unity of vision or straightforwardness of this one. The

hillside, the resultant unity was a positive factor and the outdoor quality was in any case conveyed by Martinů's score and the contrast in setting by the acting of the principals. So far as gimmicks such as the representation of the peddler Yannakos's donkey as a donkey-shaped balloon on a stick are concerned it can certainly be said that, once seen and accepted, they avoided the distraction that a live animal or larger representation would have created.

At the end of this production, far from being 'borne away upon the water' as the text suggests, the Christ figure Manolios was 'resurrected' in a floodlit cameo. While I suppose resurrection could be said to be implicit in the idea of passion so far as I know it has no liturgical equivalent and was never hinted at by Martinů himself, and maybe rather goes against the bleak vision underlying Kazantzakis' novel. It reminded me of a frequently revived production of Janáček's *'Makropoulos Case'* at the English National Opera in former days when in her dying moments Emilia Marty was transformed from a beautiful

exemplary in its attack and coherence, ensuring total attention in the drama and resulting in excellent and dedicated orchestral playing. As Kazantzakis wrote, 'the chorus is one of the main roles' and the Prague performers ensured it was. Tomáš Černý developed the character of Manolios so that the final outburst came as a natural and moving culmination, and Maida Hunderling and Petra Nôtová were totally effective as the contrasted Kateřina and Lenio. The priests of the two communities whose differing statements underlie so much of the message of the opera were both authoritatively conveyed by Martin Bárta and Luděk Vele. The different aspects of humanity of the peddler Yannakos and the con-man Ladas, Jan Vacík and Václav Knop, were fully conveyed both in their scene together and separately. Aleš Briscein as Nikolio sang beautifully and conveyed bemusement at being the unexpected beneficiary in real life of Nikolios assumption of the 'christ' role. Smaller roles were also well taken.

As a non Czech I cannot comment personally on Aleš Březina's translation of Mar-

I saw in the programme that the stage director for this production, Jiří Nekvasil, is also now the Artistic Director of production at the Prague National Theatre and the set designer, Daniel Dvořák, is Director of the National Theatre, and that the two have frequently worked together. This can be taken as a real sign that the house is renewing itself after former horrors such as *'Fate'* and must bode well for the future. Couldn't the Prague NT soon repay the terrible wrong it did to Janáček in the *'Fate'* production by a completely new production of that opera treating the composer and audience with the same respect as this *'The Greek Passion'* certainly did? A production like this which fulfils its function in ensuring that the audience has a faithful and clear conception of the composer's intention in his music and chosen libretto will always be welcome, so we must look forward to future Martinů opera productions by this team, and indeed operas by others. Kazantzakis dictum 'In opera, music means everything' was faithfully followed here, and the result was an outstanding evening. ■

JIŘÍ BĚLOHLÁVEK

...with

Interview

MARTINŮ IS INTELLIGIBLE

PETR VEBER

Jiří Bělohlávek has prepared the second version of *The Greek Passion, H. 372*. "It has a greater musical-dramatic sweep," he says.

JIŘÍ BĚLOHLÁVEK has returned to conducting Bohuslav Martinů's *The Greek Passion* for Prague's National Theatre after a gap of some twenty years. The new production, however, originated in very different social conditions. "Nevertheless, the composer himself boldly emphasised in the opera the question of solidarity of the rich with the poor. It was topical at the time Martinů composed the work, and still has relevance today. It would be a mistake to pretend that this aspect is not inherent in *The Greek Passion*. But the greatest value of this opera for me is in the balance and the multi-layered nature of Bohuslav Martinů's musical expression," says Bělohlávek.

You conducted *The Greek Passion* in Prague back in 1984. How has it changed for you during that time?

For me it was very instructive that I had the opportunity to see the reconstructed first version in Bregenz and London, staged in an extremely interesting and convincing way. David Pountney is a great director and connoisseur of Czech opera. He enthused over the first version, deeming it more compelling and more rewarding in theatrical terms. However, in terms of musical form, the second version is undoubtedly more sophisticated and stronger. It comprises a larger amount of the symphonic element and has a greater musical-dramatic sweep.

What do you most like about this work?

I love its musical aspect from the beginning to the end. It is magnificent. And the story is enormously thrilling and topical. It describes a fascinating metamorphosis of simple people who awaken to the power of moral principles and find the courage to stand up, and even die, for these principles.



© National Theatre Archive

How on earth was it possible that a work in which there were crosses and Christ was eulogised could be staged in Prague in the middle of the 1980s?

At that time the production had more than sixty reruns within several years. But we also experienced a non-musical drama – the entire project was very nearly aborted following the dress rehearsals. The supreme ideologist found the work unsuitable because of its alleged clericalism. The stage director, Kašík, had to endure a certain degree of tampering with the production's form: the candles that were to illuminate a large staircase built on the stage in the shape of a cross had to be extinguished, and during the concluding Kyrie eleison the chorus had in their hands hammers and sickles so as to give it a revolutionary air...

What position does Martinů's music occupy in the world?

Presentation of his work lags behind that of Janáček. Musical institutions virtually fight for Janáček. But when it comes to Martinů, it is still necessary to assert him. Whenever I manage to convince a foreign orchestra to perform some of his symphonies, everyone is enthusiastic after the concert – they indicate that they would like to know more. Nevertheless, when after a year another visit begins to be discussed, then it is suddenly as if the previous experience had not existed. I hoped that a certain breakthrough

would occur after our Martinů weekend in London ten years ago. It was not to be.

What do you appreciate most in Martinů's music?

His intelligible musical language. I have always been fascinated too by how he was able to respond to various instigations, how he sucked them in and recast them into his musical language. And amid all the cosmopolitan elements, the Czech note

remains present in his compositions too. My enthralment began back at the time when as a boy I was singing in the Kühn Children's Chorus. There I came to know the cantata *The Opening of the Springs*. It is a jewel of music literature, a repository of emotions Martinů fostered towards his country. I almost have the feeling that it is the skeleton key to his music.

Reprinted from the Czech journal *Hospodářské noviny*, 18 April 2006



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MARTINŮ MEDAL

On occasion of the new production of the opera *The Greek Passion* and the dress rehearsal on 12 April 2006 in National Theatre in Prague, under the baton of Jiří Bělohlávek, this famous conductor had been awarded the Bohuslav Martinů Foundation Medal. The medal was presented by Ivan Štraus, the director of the Board of Martinů Foundation. ■

“Dear Mr Hof”

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN BOHUSLAV

PAVEL POLÁK

In 2002 the German literary archive in Marbach obtained several cartons with Camill Hoffmann’s papers. The media wrote about “small remains with big names”. Alongside autographs of Stefan Zweig, Heinrich Mann, Karel Čapek and many other distinguished personalities, the papers also contained an extensive correspondence between Bohuslav Martinů and Camill Hoffmann.

Hoffmann’s literary remains were donated to the archive by Ralph Saul, a former American soldier who was in Prague in 1945. Here, he was handed over the precious papers by Hoffmann’s long-time friend Lela Danglová, who was worried that they might be lost in the post-war confusion. Saul, who had not the slightest inkling as to what was hidden in the cartons, took them back to Chicago and duly stored them in the loft of his house. There they remained, unread by anyone, for more than fifty years.

So that artworks can take effect and speak at all, first they must be made public – literature printed and read, pictures displayed and viewed, music played and listened to. Of all the artistic disciplines, it is the most difficult for music since in most cases it needs plenty of musicians, a large hall and a good conductor. And, last but not least, someone who can convince the powers that be and a conductor that they should play just this, and not another composition.

The person who unceasingly arranged for operas to be put on in Berlin and Dresden and relentlessly championed Bohuslav Martinů’s music was Camill Hoffmann, poet, translator, journalist, reviewer and Czechoslovak diplomat.

Camill Hoffmann was born in 1878 in Kolín, Central Bohemia, into a Jewish family. His mother tongue was German, but he could speak Czech equally as well. His parents sent him to study in Prague, where he attended the Grammar School in Štěpánská Street, an institution at a later date also attended by Max Brod and Franz Werfel. Hoffmann’s life-long indulgence was literature, primarily poetry. During his studies in Prague he already penned verse, usually under the school bench and exclusively during Greek lessons. In Prague he belonged to the group of artists centred around the magazine “Jaro”, in which he published his first poems. Similarly to most German-language artists, within a short

time he left Prague, moving in 1901 to Vienna, where he became editor of a literary column of the prestigious daily *Die Zeit*.

Hoffmann’s first collection of poems was not a success. Nor was he to break through with the second, which proved to be his swan song. Camill Hoffmann has never become an acclaimed poet, but he did gain general respect with his journalistic activity. In 1912 he and his family moved to Dresden, where he accepted the post of head of the literary column of *Dresdner neueste Nachrichten*. There he worked until 1919, when during the revolutionary unrest that seized the entire German empire he lined up on the side of the striking printers and, as a result, was duly fired.

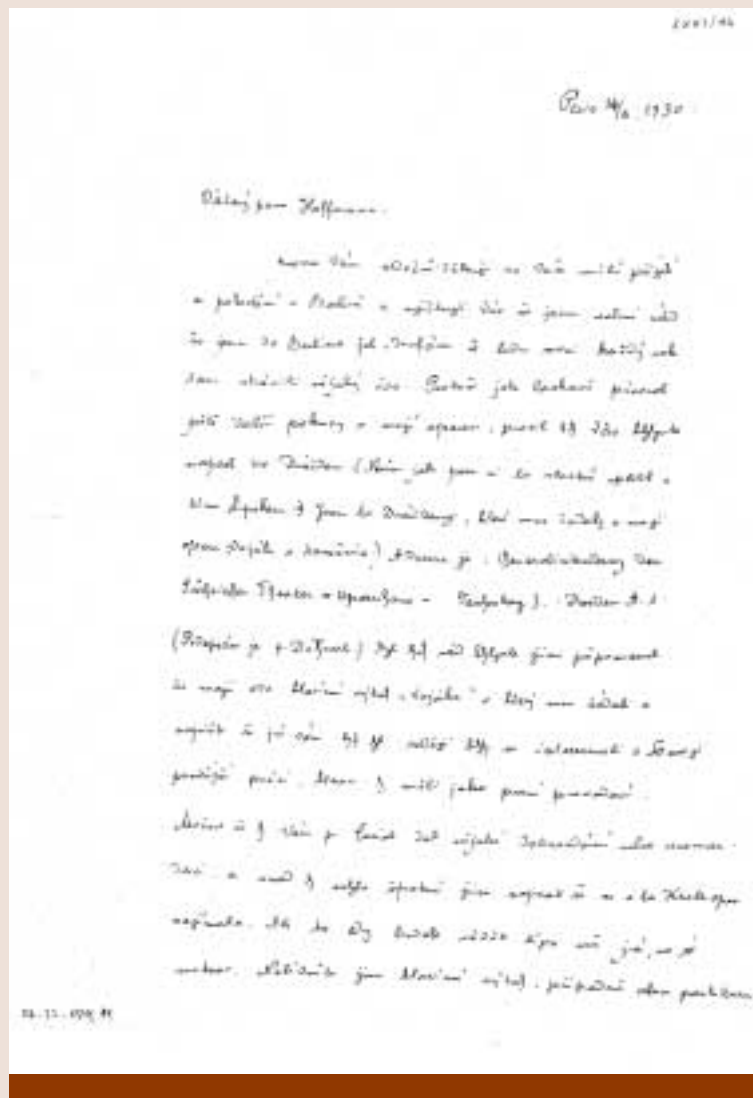
His language was German. His country, however, was Bohemia. Consequently, after

the origination of Czechoslovakia he firmly opted for the new state. His experience and knowledge of German life and institutions proved to be invaluable for the newly formed state administration. He was hired for the Press Department of the Presidium of the Ministerial Council. President Masaryk soon entrusted Hoffmann with preparations for publishing the German-language newspaper *Prager Presse*, which was to act against national reluctance and explain to the German minority the government’s objectives. When in 1921 its first issue was published, Hoffmann was no longer in Prague. He had been appointed press attaché by the Czechoslovak Embassy in Berlin.

Custom has it that diplomats remain in their office merely for several years before moving on to pastures new. Camill Hoffmann, however, was to stay in Berlin



Camill Hoffmann 1878–1944



until 1938. The fact that he held his office for so many years can only be explained by his contacts with German artists and journalists and his excellent knowledge of the local situation and circumstances. His tasks also included promotion of Czechoslovak culture in Germany. Hence, Hoffmann was constantly addressed by the Czech artistic community with request for assistance. Alois Hába, Vítězslav Novák, Erwin Schulhoff and Leoš Janáček, for instance, turned to Hoffmann to help them to get their works into German halls and on to German stages. Hoffmann helped in other ways too, Rudolf Firkušný, for example, regularly practised the piano chez Hoffmann.

In early 1929 Bohuslav Martinů also turned to Hoffmann, asking him to recommend in the right Berlin circles his opera *The Three Wishes*, H. 175 (*Les Trois souhaits*), not yet completed at that time. Martinů really cared about the opera having its premiere in Berlin. Camill Hoffmann agreed and at the same time also offered to translate the libretto. “I would with the greatest pleasure accept your cooperation and I send you a piano abstract with text. [...] I assure you that I will be very happy if you in person undertake the work”, Martinů wrote back from Paris.

Martinů was definitely not unknown in Germany. He had gained recognition primarily owing to his *String Quartet No. 2*, H. 150, but he had also presented there his *Quartet for Clarinet, Horn, Violoncello and Small Drum*, H. 139, and the *Duo for Violin and Cello*, H. 157. Nevertheless, Martinů assumed that the performance of the

Hoffmann...



MARTINŮ & CAMILL HOFFMANN

symphonic poem *La Bagarre*, H. 155, whose 1927 premiere in Boston enjoyed stunning success, had prepared solid groundwork for his opera. Upon the composer's wish, Hoffmann turned to Otto Klemperer. A few months later, on 16 July 1929, Hoffmann wrote to Bohuslav Martinů about the status of his matter: "I had hoped that I would be able to inform you of the positive result of my attempts, involve local musical circles for your works. I can see, however, that it will not be possible at such a fast pace. A week ago Klemperer responded to my complaint by saying that unfortunately he could not include *La Bagarre* in the programme of his concerts for the 1929/30 season since he had too many commitments. Furthermore, he told me that, for the moment, neither could he deal with *Les trois souhaits*. I am supposed to turn to Klemperer in this matter in late September. Then I took the manuscript of *La Bagarre* and sent it to Tietjen, the general intendant of all three opera theatres in Berlin, in an inscription drawing Tietjen's attention to you, suggesting to him to hand over *La Bagarre* to Furtwängler, but above all calling upon him to be interested in *Les trois souhaits* for the Charlottenburg Opera. [...] I could not undertake anything else at this moment since Kleiber had departed and will only return on 1 November. Anywise, Berlin is suddenly abandoned; hardly any conductors have stayed here for the summer. [...] Frankly speaking: I would like to see a certain possibility that *Les trois souhaits* be really performed in Germany. I have finished the rough translation of two acts, but I had to interrupt this work – meeting a higher request: I am translating in haste *Rozhovory s T. G. Masarykem* (Conversations with T. G. Masaryk), which, however, does not hinder me from continuing to seek placement of your works."



In August, Hoffmann informed Martinů that the music director of Dresden Philharmonic Orchestra, Paul Scheinpflug, had shown an interest in the symphony *La Bagarre*. Ultimately, matters only remained at the interest stage, and at the end of the year Scheinpflug sent the composition back to Hoffmann with the explanation that he could not place it. Following an unsuccessful attempt to assert the two compositions at the Kroll Opera House on the Square of the Republic, Hoffmann, upon the recommendation of the general intendant, Tietjen, decided to offer *The Three Wishes* to the Charlottenburg Opera. Here, alongside Furtwängler the band-master Dr. Stiedry, whom Hoffmann knew in person, worked at that time. "I leave everything upon your decision," Martinů wrote back, adding that "it would though still be better to negotiate with



Klemperer. It appears to me that Furtwängler is rather conservative and less open to modern music than Klemperer."

At the beginning of November, Hoffmann again handed over the opera's score to Klemperer and a month later wrote from Paris: "Every day I expect from him a message since he has promised to inform me whether your work does or does not come into consideration for him." Only three long months later, on 3 April, did the directorate of the Kroll Opera contact Hoffmann with the following telephone call: "In recent days we have again dealt with the opera *The Three Wishes*. For the present, we cannot say that we have accepted it, but we are interested in it and it has certain prospects of being performed on our stage. The best would be, and we would wish, for Mr Martinů to come to Berlin and present his work to us. In April, Mr Klemperer will leave for a holiday, but he comes back at the beginning of May, so Mr Martinů could arrive in May or June. His presence would contribute to the definitive decision."

Bohuslav Martinů agreed to visit Berlin, albeit, with no great excitement. In a letter dated 7 May 1930, he writes to Hoffmann: "I myself have certain doubts about my personal intervention, I am very impractical in these matters. In addition, I really regret that I cannot speak German; although I can understand a little bit, it is not much. And as a pianist I am rather weak, so I am worried about not being able to make the impression that would be necessary. Otherwise, of course, I would really like to meet Klemperer and other Berlin artists in person, and I think this prospect should make me overcome my fears."

The dramaturg Hans Curiel suggested that Martinů first of all play the work to him, Alexander Zemlinsky and Fritz Zweig. They would mark the parts Martinů would then play for Klemperer. They said that he did not have to hear the entire work. There is no mention in the correspondence about how the visit actually ran and with what response. It can be presumed, however, that the presentation did not turn out badly, judging by the composer's letter to Hoffmann dated 24 June 1930: "[...] again I cordially thank you for your pleasant reception and treatment in Berlin and assure you that I am very glad to have gone to Berlin. I believe that I will be able to spend some time there every year."

The promise to stage the opera *The Three Wishes* and the composition *La Bagarre* in Berlin vanished into thin air at the beginning of the holidays. Hoffmann writes that

“Dear Mr Hoffmann...”

CORRESPONDENCE
BETWEEN
BOHUSLAV MARTINŮ
& CAMILL HOFFMANN

▶ Continues from page 8

“the situation in the Kroll Opera is still insecure, Klemperer does not want to make any plans and unfortunately sent *La Bagarre* back to me. I have heard that he is very fretful and nothing can be done with him in the near future. I am sorry to have to communicate such bad news to you.”

The definitive decision that Martinů's works would not be performed in Germany in the foreseeable future was taken in the autumn of 1930, when in Prague Czech nationalists and radicals demonstrated against the screening of German films in the original language. Gangs demolished cinemas and German cafes. Foreign diplomats lodged complaints against this conduct to the Czechoslovak government. Under these tense Czechoslovak-German relations, Martinů did not believe that his opera would have any chance whatsoever in Germany. At that moment he considered it more important that the opera simply be staged, no matter where. He pondered over Prague or Brno.

The fact that Martinů's apprehensions were well founded is confirmed by Camill Hoffmann's letter dated 3 January 1931. “Unfortunately, I do not have any pleasant news for you. I have received a very elusive answer from Dresden, they do not want to bind themselves, and the overall situation in Germany is so bad that I do not see the possibility of placing your *The Three Wishes* here. In the spring, Klemperer will play Janáček's opera *From the House of the Dead*, which is the only new Czechoslovak work that can be staged in Germany after the film riots in Prague.”

The Three Wishes only saw its premiere an incredible forty years later, at the State Opera in Brno on 16 June 1971.

And what became of Camill Hoffmann, who – ultimately in vain – translated the libretto of *The Three Wishes* into German? Following the Munich Agreement in 1938 he was recalled. He did not make use of the opportunity to immigrate to England, he and his wife deciding to stay in Prague. In 1942 he was arrested by the Gestapo and deported to Terezín. Here too he participated in cultural life and gave lectures on Czech literature for German-speaking Jews. When on 28 October 1944 he and his wife got on the very last Terezín transport to Auschwitz, he told the former Berlin rabbi Leo Baeck: “We have gone through so many things, we will survive this too”. Unfortunately, he was mistaken. ■

STAGING OF MARTINŮ'S *ARIANE* IN COLOGNE, GERMANY: A DRAMA IN THE PSYCHIATRIC WARD

GABRIELE JONTÉ

No island, no sea, no sailing boat, only a desperate patient in a bare hospital room with corrugated-iron walls: the suffering of a mentally ill Ariadne, being tormented by evil childhood memories, was presented as the pivotal point of Martinů's opera as viewed by stage director Christian Götz.

According to Martinů's directions in the score of *Ariane*, H. 370 (1958), the curtain is supposed to rise no earlier than after the first instrumental *sinfonia* and the prologue. In the latter, the watchman – standing in front of the curtain – searches the horizon, looking out for a sailing boat with seven young men who are appointed to fight the Minotaur. But in the Cologne production, a full spectrum of pathology is spread out on stage even before the orchestral introduction begins. Thus, the music loses its original function as an announcement of a surrealist play, expressed by the surprising sound of early baroque music played by a 20th



Century combination of instruments: flute, violin, bell-chimes, xylophone, harp and piano. Right from the beginning, the Cologne staging shows the Minotaur as a greedy monster, responsible for Ariadne's early

ON THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF LOVE “LARMES DE COUPEAU” IN MÜNSTER

IVANA RENTSCH

The stage director Axel Kresin has produced at Städtische Bühnen Münster three very rarely staged one-acters: “Larmes de couteau”, H. 169 by Bohuslav Martinů, and “Le pauvre matelot” and “L'abandon d'Ariane” by Darius Milhaud. Prevaillingly young male and female singers were accompanied by similarly enthusiastic and engaged instrumentalists of the Theater-Jugendorchester of Städtischen Bühnen Münster conducted by Peter Meiser.

In his setting of Georges Ribemont-Dessaignes' one-acter “*Larmes de couteau*”, Bohuslav Martinů unwaveringly and uncompromisingly abided by its grim action – even the original text remained largely unchanged. The story, both tragic and allegoric, develops very rapidly: Eléonore loves a hanged man, in whom her mother recognises Saturne – she would prefer the attractive Satan to become her son-in-law. Eventually, Eléonore marries the hanged man. However, following the initial euphoria, the newly-weds' exaltation soon peters out. Eléonore stabs herself. At that moment the rope breaks, the hanged man brings his bride back to life and, at the end of his monologue about love, introduces himself as the neighbour Saturne. Eléonore, however, wants to continue believing in her hanged man's identity, until Satan vaults out of Saturne's head. He comments on the entire story's core with the words: “I am, was and always will be the other (or – any other)”, and in conclusion Eléonore voices a complaint: “I am a poor, misunderstood woman!”

Both Satan's last cynical sentence and Eléonore's sigh are construed as a metaphor of the impossibility of human cognition and the senselessness of all deeds – in a nutshell, the overarching idea of Dadaism. Since, according to Dada, humans cannot rid themselves of their own illusions, and subjection of another person by love only offers a seeming recourse, the initial euphoria cannot have a long duration. In keeping with this, neither does Eléonore's joy after her wedding last overly long: and since even after the wedding the hanged man remains impassive to her allurements, Eléonore kills herself. However, even after death she does not overcome the earthly illusion – which, among other things, is explained by the Dadaist rejection of suicide. Following her revival, Eléonore is no wiser than before. She again falls in love with her husband, in whom she still sees her hanged man – declaration of love that was best expressed by Satan: “It means that I am all hanged in you.” Since in the final consequence too the masochistic nature of Dadaist love, which itself heads for absolute subjugation of the other, becomes cannibalism, meant



MISCELLANEOUS

traumatization. The question of the Minotaur's identity is a challenge; it cannot be answered without accepting that there will always remain a sphere of secrecy around his personality. In the 1930's, Pablo Picasso depicted him both as a fierce and friendly creature, but always as part man, part bull. Martinů's libretto, based on George Neveux' surrealistic drama *Le voyage de Thésée* (1943), renders quite a different perspective: when the Minotaur first comes forward in the second scene of the opera, he surprisingly appears as a double of Theseus. In the following dialogue, Theseus realizes that the Minotaur is a part of his own self, capable of loving and being loved: „You are the Theseus of the wedding night. The happy Theseus whose ears are filled with Ariadne's voice.“ But Theseus decides to kill the Minotaur, because he had pledged to do so when he left Athens; killing the reportedly dangerous creature was the reason for his voyage to Crete. He feels obliged to fulfill this duty, but in doing so, he kills his own capacity to love, his own loving side. This is the special surrealistic approach to the ancient myth of Theseus who represents the prototype of a hero: here, he does not fight some outside enemy, but himself, trying to come to terms with desires that seem mutually

exclusive. Ariadne had been aware of these two sides since she saw Theseus for the first time, shortly after his arrival on her island. She loved both Theseus and the Minotaur. In her final aria, she bids Theseus farewell, knowing that their love will never again be as fulfilling as it was when Theseus, for a short time, succeeded in keeping his mind off fighting and killing. Martinů's Ariadne is a strong woman, completely aware of what she is doing. She is not a victim and never loses her dignity. Why, then, is she presented as a patient who is totally out of control, while Theseus plays the role of one of her doctors? Besides, the Cologne production shows three Ariadnes and two Minotaurs: this is much more *doublement* than the original concept of a Minotaurus who reveals himself as a double of Theseus. Such a fantastic exaggeration does not support the understanding of the opera. More than an opera composed by Bohuslav Martinů, this seems to be a theater piece by Christian Götz, with Martinů's libretto and music serving as an inspirational source. I think that Martinů's *Ariane*, one of his finest and most sophisticated works, deserves a more authentic presentation that does not undermine the intentions of the composer. It should be added that

POLKA INA from the third book of the piano cycle *Etudes and Polkas (1945, H. 308)* also exists in an arrangement for nonet. The arrangement's author is the composer Jan Novák, who arranged this polka upon the instigation of Emil Leichner in 1955. At the present time, the composition's autograph manuscript is missing. The score copy is available at the library of the Bohuslav Martinů Institute.

RECENT INVESTIGATIONS into the correspondence between Leopold Ludwig, at that time Principal Musical Director of the Hamburg State Opera, and Dr Ernst Hartmann from the music publisher Universal Edition, Vienna have brought to light that the opera *The Greek Passion* could have had its world premiere in Hamburg while Martinů was still alive. This newly rediscovered correspondence, archived at the Hamburg State Library, indicates that Hamburg was most interested in the premiere, whereas the music publisher Universal Edition, Vienna apparently had other priorities.

More in the next issue in the article by Gabriele Jonté.

a simplifying characterization of psychiatric illness, using stereotypes and clichés, promotes the stigmatization of the affected patients. A lot has been done against such discrimination during the last 50 years, and we certainly do not want to counteract this positive development. ■

(The 12 performances in Cologne took place from January to March 2006. The opera was sung in German; translation from the original French by Fritz Schröder.) Translation in the CD booklet, *Ariane*, Supraphon 1986.

not only metaphorically. Even though the sadistic way of life à la Marquis de Sade is lauded by the very Ribemont-Dessaignes as the best possible, it functions as an overcoming of one's own existence only seemingly. Immediately after Eléonore's declaration of love, Satan pops out of her object of desire, whereby human perception loses a firm foothold with definite validity.

In the carefully staged production of the Städtische Bühnen Münster production the stage director, Axel Kresin, and the set designer, Uta Fink, rendered the opera's central theme – the impossibility of love and cognition – by and large meaningfully: both the doubling of the hanged man and Satan (David Greiner) and the selfsame costumes of the female singers (Eléonore: Jule Rosalie Vortisch, mother: Almuth Herbst) lead the idea of identity ad absurdum. The Dadaist one-acter was combined with “*Le pauvre matelot*” and “*L'abandon d'Ariane*”, two of Darius Milhaud's three “minute operas”. Although at first glance this combination may appear appropriate, its rather wanton arrangement was problematic. Martinů's one-acter was framed by Milhaud's one-acters, which suggested obscure connections between the individual works – a baffling effect that was even subsequently enhanced by identical costumes. Whereas the doubling fully comports with the spirit of the opera “*Larmes de couteau*”, it completely passes it by with Milhaud's operas. Amid the Dadaist semantic pattern, the playful reception of mythology in Milhaud's operas loses its meaning. The seeming colourlessness of Milhaud's operas as a result of problematic dramaturgy is not confined to the visual level;



in a reduced form it affects the music too. The singers and Theater-Jugendorchester, conducted by Peter Meiser (a project both innovative and exceptional with school-age youths), have intrigued the audience with their enthusiasm, however, the difficulty of the performance remained evident – despite all the borrowings from jazz music

from the 1920s, Martinů and Milhaud did not follow identical musical objectives. In the spirit of the “Zeitoper” genre, Milhaud strove for interconnection of mythology, operatic tradition and “modern times”. Modernising the opera genre and saving it by means of musical updating represented an unambiguously positively motivated intention which does not comprise anything Dadaist. Martinů used the “Zeitoper” genre too, yet, contrariwise, turned it to Dada to the backdrop of Ribemont-Dessaignes' theater. Primarily jazz tones are boldly sharpened and do not have that much connection with Paris dance bars but, to a much greater extent, with the Dadaist idea of relentless corporeality. As a sounding “life”, his music emphasises rhythm and uses sudden changeovers, thus dooming delicate nuances and gradual development of action to dead art. The emphasised “vitality” is also the main difference between Martinů's setting to music and Milhaud's “minute operas”. Since neither “*Le pauvre matelot*” nor “*L'abandon d'Ariane*” pertain to the Dadaist dimension, but are focused on quotation details of musical montage (typical of “Zeitoper”), they appear in juxtaposition with “*Larmes de couteau*” very diffident. Milhaud wanted to retain operatic convention in the 20th century by means of using subtle innovation techniques. Yet, in constellation with the Dadaist “vitality” of Martinů's opera “*Larmes de couteau*”, his intention was vanquished.

[The première of *Larmes de couteau* in Münster was on 30 April 2006] ■

LARMES DE COUTEAU – PERFORMANCES AND RECORDINGS

PERFORMANCES

22 October 1969 – premiere

• Brno, State Theater
Conductor V. Nosek, Director,
Choreography: L. Ogoun

28 July 1998

• Neuköllner Oper
(together with Alexandre bis)
Cond. Christian von Götz, Dir. H. Enke

18 November 2002

(together with The Voice of the Forest)
• New York, Henry Street Chamber
Opera, Director: N. Cauty, Cond. Neal
Goren; Scene: A. Lieberman; Singers:
Ch. Winkler, T. Regal, D. Mobbs

26 and 27 November 2004

• Comedy Theatre, Prague
(together with Ariane) Stage director:
Daniel Balatka, Cond. Marko Ivanovič,
Singers: Andrea Prieckhodská, Marika
Žáková, Josef Moravec

RECORDING

CD Supraphon SU 3386-2 631, 1999
(together with The Voice of the Forest),
Cond. Jiří Bělohávek, Singers: Jana
Jonášová, Lenka Šmidová, Roman Janál.

FILM

Czech television 1998, director:
Jiří Nekvasil

A SELECTIVE DIP INTO THE BOSTON SYMPHONY ARCHIVES

GREGORY TERIAN

I FIRST HEARD the Boston Symphony Orchestra 50 years ago during its 1956 European tour. The concert at the Royal Festival Hall in London took place on 24 September and was conducted by Charles Munch. The distinctive orchestral timbres and the brilliance of the playing gave the orchestra a unique quality which was particularly striking in works such as Debussy's „la Mer“, which ended the programme. Soon after RCA released a long playing record of Martinů's *Symphony no. 6 (Fantaisies symphoniques, H. 343)*, which the orchestra had premiered in 1955. It was this recording which stimulated my interest in the composer. In 1992 and 2003 I visited Boston and heard the orchestra on its home ground in Symphony Hall. On the first occasion I heard a performance of the Martinů 6th *Symphony* conducted by Roger Norrington. On the second visit in 2003 I was able to inspect the BSO archives. Much has been written about the premières of *La Bagarre, H. 155* and the 1st, 3rd and 6th *Symphonies*. I was more interested in finding details of other, less well-known Martinů premières in Boston. An abstract appears below. Following on from my visit, the Bohuslav Martinů Foundation in Prague decided to award the Martinů Medal to the Orchestra to mark its long dedication to the composer's cause. The presentation took place on 13 February 2004 at a concert when Viktoria Postnikova performed the Piano Concerto no. 4 (Incantations) with the orchestra conducted by Gennadi Rozhdestvensky.

BOHUSLAV MARTINŮ'S long relationship with the Boston Symphony Orchestra began in the unlikely setting of a Paris café when the diffident composer confronted the renowned Serge Koussevitzky with the score of his newly composed work „*La Bagarre*“.

Like many other of his countrymen Koussevitzky had settled in Paris after leaving post-revolutionary Russia in 1920. He established the Concerts Koussevitzky with his own hand picked orchestra devoted to contemporary music. Works by composers such as Ravel, Honegger, Prokofiev and Stravinsky were premiered at these concerts.

In 1924 Koussevitzky was appointed music director of the Boston Symphony Orchestra which under his inspired leadership was to become one of the great orchestral partnerships between the wars. He was without equal in his enthusiastic promotion of modern music.

That the conductor was sufficiently impressed after his meeting with Martinů is evident from the inclusion of „*La Bagarre*“ in the 1927/28 concert season with the BSO. As is well known it achieved an immediate success helped by an astute dedication to Charles Lindbergh whose recent solo transatlantic flight to Paris had captured the imagination of the public in Europe and America.

The world première took place in Boston's Symphony Hall on 18 November 1927. The Boston Herald reported: „Seldom has an unfamiliar composition, one by an unknown composer, been so enthusiastically welcomed in Symphony Hall. Music and performance were inspiring“.

In his contribution to the programme



Charles Munch © BSO Archive

notes Martinů did not mention that „*La Bagarre*“ pre-dated the famous flight, a fact which generally went unnoticed. The critic of the Boston Transcript, however, had done his homework and wrote:

The audience heaped applause upon the novel number of the day, perhaps because it is now pinned to the cherished Lindbergh; perhaps because the music as music genuinely stirred it; more probably from both impulses blended. Yet as „Tumult: Allegro for Orchestra“, mr. Martinu, out of Czechoslovakia, wrote and signed his piece in the spring of 1926, a year

before the flying colonel was born into the sunlight of publicity. Fortunate – and quick to opportunity – is an unheeded composer noting such reflected radiance and in it basking. Lindbergh or no Lindbergh, the design argues mind and imagination; the workmanship proves a practised, fertile hand. Take two salient motifs; develop them freely and incisively; contrast them, mate them, keep them in changeful and incessant interplay; spur them with rhythms; whip them with chords: Savor them discretely with atonality and other modernisms; utilize variously the present orchestral palette; blaze out the climax – and the deed is done. So much for the Allegro for Orchestra, „well worth the playing and the hearing as music written in no travail under a smoky lamp, but in fire of creative impulse out of abundance within.

Following the phenomenal success of „*La Bagarre*“, Martinů presented another work for performance in Boston, namely „*La Symphonie*“, later known as „*La Rhapsodie*“, H. 171. The première, again conducted by Koussevitzky, took place on 14 December 1928. It commemorated an event which took place towards the end of World War I. On 30 June 1918 the French government had recognised the right of the Czech and Slovak people to independence. On the following day the 1st Czech Regiment based at Darney, a village near Epinal in the Vosges, was awarded its colours, donated by the City of Paris. Among those present were Edvard Beneš and Raymond

Poincaré, the President of the French Republic. This ceremony served as the inspiration for Martinů's work.

The new compositions did not achieve the success of „*La Bagarre*“. The general sentiment is reflected in the following extract which appeared in the Boston Herald:

“Martinů, then, took his inspiration in the world of events, and he writes with a great muscularity and vigor, stressing rhythm at the expense of other factors. In „The Tumult“ this energy is unremitting. In „La Symphonie“ there is a quasi-melodic interlude for English horn solo accompanied by chords for the strings. Had „La Symphonie“ been briefer its effect would have been greater. Renewed when the interlude is done, Mr Martinů's vigors after a time begin to pall”.

The programme also included the première of Aaron Copland's *Two pieces for Strings* which had a more favourable reception.

In the 1932/33 season Koussevitzky included another of Martinů's composition, the *Concerto for String Quartet and Orchestra*, with the Orchestra's principals taking the solo parts. Marcel Moyse and Blanche Honegger were to have performed the *Concerto for Flute, Violin and Orchestra, H. 252* at the Berkshire Music Festival at Tanglewood in the summer of 1940, but the occupation of France forced the cancellation of that event.

As it was, the Boston audience would have to wait another year and the composer's arrival in America before they heard more of this music. The occasion was to be the world première of the *Concerto Grosso, H. 263*.

CONCERTO GROSSO

Martinů arrived in New York on 31 March 1941. He sought to establish himself in an alien city where he did not speak the language. In the musical press he was variously described as „cosmopolitan“, „a Parisianized Czech“ and, perhaps in more complimentary vein, as „alone among Czech composers to have passed through the struggles and evolution of impressionism“.

However, Martinů was by no means lacking in friends, including refugee musicians from Europe who had already established themselves in the United States. He wrote to Nadia Boulanger on 14 July from Hail Cottage, Edgartown where he and Charlotte had settled for the summer. In this tranquil setting he described how he was trying to get down to work, but

TO THE PARABLES

Study



Charles Munch & Bohuslav Martinů

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finding it hard to adapt to a new life where everything was so different; that, not knowing English, his only means of support was by securing commissions for new works and he asked for her help in this regard.

The real turning point in his fortunes came on 14 November 1941 when Koussevitzky conducted the world première of the Concerto Grosso. The fortuitous circumstances leading to this event were set out by the composer in the programme notes:

„The work has had a singular destiny. Written in Paris, in 1937, it was to have been published by the 'Universal Edition' in Vienna, and its first performance was set for the season of 1938 in Paris. Then came the 'Anschluss,' and I was without news of the score; the premiere was prevented by the impossibility of receiving the orchestral parts and the manuscript. A year afterwards, events prevented the 'second' premiere, this time at Prague,

where from that time my works have been banned from the repertoire. At last I expected a real premiere in Paris in the month of May, 1940, under the direction of Charles Munch. I received my manuscript after many difficulties, and after it had undergone some highly involved wanderings. Everything was ready, the hall hired, but events in France did not permit it to be heard. The whole thing was called off, and the manuscript was lost during my retreat from Paris.

„By a lucky chance, the Czecho-Slovak conductor George Szell had rescued a copy of the work from Prague, just in time. I had no idea of the existence of a copy, and it was a happy surprise to learn of it on my arrival in America.“

The sensational gloss which some papers chose to put on this story served only to enhance the standing and public awareness of the composer. On the day of the concert the following appeared in the Boston Post:

„Adolf Hitler's plans for conquest have given Boston the honor of presenting the long belated world premiere of Martinů's Concerto Grosso for two pianos and chamber orchestra at Symphony Hall this afternoon, with the Czech composer, Bohuslav Martinů, on hand for the memorable occasion. Few of the audience will realize that Hitler had any connection with the world première of this composition and that the composer risked his life

in battling the dreaded Gestapo to preserve the manuscript. Each planned premiere was stopped by Nazi invasions but the fifth attempt will be held here today“.

The audience response was enthusiastic and the reviews generally positive. The Boston Tribune reported:

„Most friendly of conductors, Serge Koussevitzky led Bohuslav Martinů on the platform, or pushed him on, to acknowledge the applause of the Boston Symphony audience yesterday afternoon; for the house was plainly pleased with the Concerto Grosso for Chamber Orchestra, which received its first public hearing, being presented from manuscript.

...there will be no forgetting the abashed and disconcerted figure of Mr. Martinů, being compelled into the view of the Symphony people and being put to the uneasy duty of making a bow or two.

What was all the fuss about? Something designed for a smaller orchestra than the Boston Symphony, even when reduced in numbers by a considerable fraction; not a great thing, perhaps, by any kind of measurement, but something new, nevertheless. Everybody ought to be glad to lend an ear to tone never heard before and coming fresh from a composer's fancy.“

As a footnote to this event, the audience had been taken by surprise at the outset



The Boston Symphony Orchestra

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when the orchestra struck up “The Star Spangled Banner”, something which had not happened since the days of World War I. Its inclusion by Koussevitzky was to prove prophetic. Three weeks later came the attack on Pearl Harbour and America’s entry into the war. The refugee composer from distant Europe overnight became a symbolic figure in the fight against Nazism and a cherished ally.

Martinů’s good fortune continued into 1942 with a commission from the Koussevitzky Foundation for a major orchestral work and his appointment as a guest composer in residence at the Berkshire Music Centre at Tanglewood.

The First Symphony quickly took shape and was premiered by Koussevitzky on 14 November 1942 to great acclaim. In all, three of his six symphonies were written for and premiered by the Boston Symphony. Koussevitzky’s role in the successful



Pierre Monteaux, Serge Koussevitzky & Charles Munch

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In addition to the symphonies, the Boston audiences also heard the world premiere in 1943 of the *Violin Concerto no.2, H. 293*, written for Mischa Elman, one of the great virtuosos of that era.

THE PARABLES

Koussevitzky retired as chief conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra in 1948 after 24 years in the post. He had been a committed promoter of Martinů’s cause throughout his tenure.

By a stroke of good fortune Charles Munch, Martinů’s long time friend from the Paris years, was appointed as Koussevitzky’s successor. The continued advocacy of Martinů’s music in Boston was thus assured.

Over the years Martinů had forged a close rapport with the orchestra. Many of the personnel had been brought over from France before the war. Martinů was able to engage with them and felt at home in their company, something the composer valued, particularly during his early years in America. The Boston Symphony of that era was thought of as the finest “French” orchestra in the world.

Martinů’s orchestral works continued to be programmed under Munch. The *3rd Piano Concerto, H. 316* was featured with Rudolf Firkušný as soloist and there were notable performances by Munch of the 1st and 5th Symphonies which the composer much admired. *The Field Mass, H. 279* was performed in Tanglewood. Perhaps the finest of the Martinů symphonies resulted from the Munch years. The *6th Symphony “Fantaisies Symphoniques”* was dedicated to the conductor on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the Boston Symphony. It was premièred on 12 January 1955 and performed on the Orchestra’s 1956 tour in Paris (as requested by the composer) but not in Prague or London. The legendary RCA recording was released soon after. Following the success of the 6th Symphony, Martinu received another commission from Munch. „*The Parables*“, *H. 367* was to be his last work for the Boston Symphony Orchestra. The first two movements entitled „*The Parable of a Sculpture*“ and „*The Parable of a Garden*“ were completed in Rome in July 1957. Martinů drew his

inspiration from „*La Citadelle*“ by Antoine de Saint-Exupery, one of the writers he most admired, whom he had got to know in New York. Saint Exupery was also a famous aviator. He served in the Free French Air Force and had disappeared in 1944 during a reconnaissance flight prior to the Allied landings in the South of France. (The wreckage of his aircraft was found in the sea some sixty years later). „*La Citadelle*“ appeared posthumously.

On 22 January 1958 the composer wrote to Munch from Pratteln, where he was staying with the Sachers, with the news



Charles Munch

© BSO Archive

transplant of Martinů’s career to America proved pivotal. Without the impetus he provided there can be little doubt that Martinů’s standing as a significant 20th century symphonist would be greatly diminished.



Tanglewood

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that he was in process of completing the final movement in which fanfares and battery of drums come into play. It was entitled „*The Parable of the Labrynth*“ taken from another of the composer’s favoured



Charles Munch



literary figures, Georges Neveux. Martinů wrote that the work would be of 24 minutes duration and require a large orchestra. He asked when Munch would be performing it in Paris so that he could attend. He requested that payment for the work be forwarded to Pratteln so that it could be converted into Swiss francs.

It appears that Munch was not one to respond promptly and Martinů wrote again on 12 February to announce the completion of „*The Parables*“. He was about to despatch the score to Boston and expressed the hope that Munch would



Symphony Hall Boston © BSO Archive

like the work and play it a lot. Martinů made a further request for payment (\$1,000), citing the need to have something to declare to the tax authorities and also pointing out the benefits to Munch of



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Bohuslav Martinů in the garden with a small cat in Vieux Moulin, 1937

© PBM

deducting the payment from his own income return!

Martinů goes on to mention the great success Paul Sacher had achieved with the première of „*The Epic of Gilgamesh*“, H. 351 and suggests that Munch should perform it at Tanglewood where it would have a big impact, the text being in English. Interestingly, he also enquired if Munch will be visiting Prague in 1958 adding that he would much like to be there and see his sister and brother.

On 27 February Martinů wrote again to say that he had posted the score. He asked for urgent confirmation of its arrival saying that he always worried about the safety of his scores in transit by post. He enquired as to the period for which Munch would require exclusive performing rights and asked him not to forget to send the cheque in payment. He was anxious to know what Munch thought of the work and again requested the date of the conductor's coming visit to Prague.

The première of „*The Parables*“ was eventually fixed for the matinée concert at Symphony Hall on Friday 13 February 1959. These Friday concerts commenced at 2.15 pm and were the usual setting for world premiere performances in Boston.

„*The Parables*“ were to be performed after the interval to be followed by Albert Roussel's „*Rapsodie Flamande*“, a sombre but typically robust piece which is now all but forgotten. These two late but very different works from the respective pens of Martinů and his mentor made an engaging pairing.

„*The Parables*“ was well received by both public and critics. It was perfectly suited to the unique timbres and blend of the Boston Symphony sound which the composer knew so well.

In its turn, Munch's masterly realisation gave full expression to both the drama and serenity which are to be found in the score. It was a fitting final celebration of the association of composer, conductor and orchestra.

The critic Harold Rogers wrote:

Of all composers writing today, perhaps none more than Bohuslav Martinů „hears a different drummer,“ as Thoreau once said. For Martinů does not keep pace with his companions; he steps only to the music he hears, however measured, however far away. Thus we are not surprised to find him, more often than not, leading them all. In „The Parables,“ given its world premiere yesterday afternoon by the Boston Symphony, we again note what we have learned before—that Martinů is not afraid to build on the past, yet in listening to his distant drum he devises timbres that strike the ear in novel ways. Only a true individualist can bring forth music of such original beauty.

By a happy coincidence direct transmission of the Boston Symphony concerts to Europe had just been inaugurated and Martinů was able to hear the performance at Pratteln, relayed by Swiss Radio. He expressed his admiration and appreciation to Munch.

The composer's health was to deteriorate rapidly over the coming months and on 28 August came news of his death at Liestal. Munch was deeply affected. Days later at the Besancon Festival, he gave the European première of „*The Parables*“ with the Orchestre National. It was a very different performance to that given in Boston. Taken at a measured pace, it had the feeling of an elegy with Munch saying an emotional farewell to his long-time friend.

THE PARABLE OF A GARDEN

And when I am in the garden, which with its fragrance is my own domain, I sit on a bench. I contemplate. The leaves are falling and the flowers fading. I sense both death and new life. But no oppression. I am all vigilance, as on the high sea. Not patience, for there is no question of an end but the pleasure of change. We go, my garden and I, from the flower to the fruit. But then on to the seed. And from the seed toward the flowering of the year to follow.

Sources

BSO archives (with thanks to Bridget Carr)
Charles Munch by Genevieve Honegger. La Nuee Bleu 1992 (correspondence with Munch)
Tha Parisian reception of B. Martinů by Jana Urbanová 2005 (correspondence with N. Boulanger)

Sound archive

A large archive of historic sound recordings is maintained at Symphony Hall including donated private collections. Recordings of performances by Munch of Martinů's 1st, 5th and 6th Symphonies have been preserved. Unfortunately the original radio tape of the première of „*The Parables*“ was destroyed in a fire at Station WCRB. A recording of the Koussevitzky première of Martinů's 3rd Symphony is held by the New York Public Library. Mischa Elman's première of the Violin Concerto no. 2 was issued on a 1995 Eklipse CD in an inferior transfer. A recording of the Concerto Grosso on 78 discs is said to exist, presumably the performance given by the BSO in New York on 10 January 1942.

Bohuslav Martinů

- **Památník Lidicím 1943** (*Memorial to Lidice*), H. 296
- **Concertino for Piano Trio and String Orchestra**, H. 232
- **Rhapsody-Concerto for Viola and Orchestra**, H. 337
- **Concerto for Piano Trio and String Orchestra**, H. 232

Trio Wanderer

(Vincent Coq – Piano, Jean-Marc Phillips-Varjabedian – Violin, Raphaël Pidoux – Cello), Tabea Zimmermann – Viola, Gürzenich Orchestra of Köln, James Conlon – Conductor

TT: 71:12
CAPRICCIO 2005, SACD 71 053

I can unreservedly recommend this beautiful Martinů CD to all who want to familiarise themselves with Martinů's work, as well as those who know Martinů's oeuvre inside out and seek interpretational delicacies. The CD, well conceived in dramaturgical terms, primarily presents Martinů to us as an author of specific concertos, as is the case of the two concertinos for piano trio and string orchestra, and also the concerto in two movements for viola and string



orchestra entitled Rhapsody-Concerto. Each of these "concertos" in a way represents a new conception of this form. However, at the same time, we can find in them all the signature elements of Martinů's music, as well as harmony with this form's tradition. Both concertos for piano trio accompanied by string orchestra originated in 1933. Yet they differ: The second concerto, composed a few months later, is called Concertino and in sonic terms has rather a chamber character and is extremely pregnant. We can hear the clear-cut and pointed line of three solo instruments, which "emulate" an entire string orchestra. This Martinů conception is brilliantly underscored by the interpretation of Trio Wanderer. Their approach is bold in its accuracy, refined vocally and de-romanticising of the whole piece. Despite this general conception, a number of distinct melodious solos

and compact passages are present in Concertino and, especially, in the earlier originating Concerto. Unlike the Concertino, the Concerto for string trio more significantly links up to tradition; we can find in it baroque tendencies, just like in many other Martinů concerto and concertino works. With both compositions, we appreciate the sound of passages that in other interpretations are usually bedimed and quelled as a result of inappropriately selected tempos and the endeavour to give preference to the three soloists as against the orchestra. In America in 1952, Martinů created a totally different type of concerto (Rhapsody-Concerto). With the purity of her playing and sensitive arching of slow melodies, the violist Tabea Zimmermann beautifully renders the rhapsodic nature of the entire work. Impressive moments also await us in the refined accompaniment of Gürzenich-Orchester Köln, conducted by James Conlon. In addition, the orchestra presents itself independently in yet another composition: the eight-minute commemoration Memorial to Lidice 1943, written by Martinů in memory of the victims of the appalling massacre perpetrated by the Nazis on innocent civilian inhabitants of the Czech village of Lidice. Slow and majestic music is jarringly juxtaposed with contrasting mighty dramatic incursions. The constraint and sensitivity of interpretation, which here on no account should be construed as aloofness, make this recording truly exceptional.

Eva Velická

Jennifer Koh
Portraits

- **Karol Szymanowski**, *Violin Concerto No. 1, Op. 35*
- **Bohuslav Martinů**, *Violin Concerto No. 2, H. 293*
- **Béla Bartók**, *Two Portraits, Op. 5*

Grant Park Orchestra
Carlos Kalmar – Conductor

Cedille CDR 90000 089
DDD / TT: 65:15 / Text: English
Recorded: Live in Concert, July 1&2, 2005
(Martinů, Bartók)

The Korean-American violinist Jennifer Koh is currently one of the most extraordinary young artists there is. She is courageous, fond of experimenting and, with the extension of her education, embarks upon extremely compelling projects. Further proof of her singularity is her latest CD, comprising works by Szymanowski, Martinů and Bartók. Prague audiences were afforded the opportunity to familiarise themselves with this violinist at a concert within the 2003 Bohuslav Martinů Festival, when together with Bohuslav Matoušek she performed *Duo Concertant for Two Violins and Orchestra*, H. 264. Jennifer Koh can take pride in successes attained at international



competitions (victory at the Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow, Concert Artists Guild Competition) and prestigious concert performances with leading orchestras (Cleveland Orchestra, Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra). The CD bears the title "Portraits", according to the name of Bartók's work. But it also refers to the intention to present prominent composers of the first half of the 20th century who endowed violin literature with distinct works that, however, are not played overly often on concert stages. Violin Concerto No. 1 by Karol Szymanowski originated in 1916 and represents a type of Late Romantic concerto serving as a showcase for a soloist's virtuosity. Jennifer Koh's interpretation, however, is not confined to exhibiting

cadences and tirades; she conceives the work as an entirety in a delicate chime with the orchestra. Martinů "tailored" his Violin Concerto No. 2 in 1943 for Mischa Elman, who premiered it in the same year. The concerto has been recorded in a yet to be surmounted performance by Josef Suk (Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, Václav Neumann/1976). Yet Jennifer Koh's violin imparts this concerto with a female conception, a new beauty. She masters the extraordinarily difficult introductory cadence in the first movement with technical finesse, and at the same time we can already feel here how deeply the interpreter identifies herself with Martinů's music. Where appropriate, she underscores the concerto's lyricism (a beautiful melodious line in the second movement), while she plays the distinctly rhythmic passages (of even a dance nature in the third movement) with levity and pregnancy. Béla Bartók's "Two Portraits", in the part "Idealistic", reveals the violinist's other face – a meditative stance concurrently communicating the intimate message of the composer, who dedicated the work to his friend Steffi Gyer. Upon hearing any of the three works, the listener will be completely drawn into the respective world of each concerto through the sophisticated and singular interpretation of the soloist and orchestra. I highly recommend getting hold of this CD.

Lucie Berná

THE 4th MEETING
OF THE EDITORIAL
BOARD

THE MEETING OF THE EDITORIAL BOARD was held at the facilities of the Bohuslav Martinů Institute. The main points of the discussion were fully concerned with the first published series of the edition and the updating of the existing editing principles. On the last day of the meeting, Aleš Březina presented the editing problems concerning Martinů's work of the Concerto grosso (H. 263). The meeting was concluded with a joint visit to the opera Greek Passion at the National Theatre. Participants at the meeting: Aleš Březina, Sandra Bergmannová, Lucie Berná (Bohuslav Martinů Institute), Klaus Döge (Richard Wagner-Gesamtausgabe), Jarmila Gabrielová (Charles University, Department of Musicology), Christopher Hogwood (Cambridge), Kateřina Maýrová (Czech Museum of Music), Daniela Philippi (Musikwissenschaftliches Institut Mainz, Ch. W. Gluck-Gesamtausgabe), Giselher Schubert (Paul Hindemith-Institut), Paul Wingfield (Trinity College, Cambridge), Eva Špinarová (Editio Bärenreiter Praha), Anette Thein (Bärenreiter, Kassel), Eva Velická (Bohuslav Martinů Institute), Vít Zouhar (Palacký University Olomouc, Department of Music).

NEWS FROM
GÖTEBORG

BETWEEN 18 and 23 June I attended a conference organised by the IAML (International Association of Music Libraries, Archives and Documentation Centres) that took place in the Swedish city of Göteborg. I gave a short presentation about the Bohuslav Martinů Institute, its activities and objectives. The conference took place in several rooms concurrently; I appeared in the small hall within the IAML section Broadcasting and Orchestra Branch in the lecture block entitled Collecting, Promoting and Distributing Orchestral Music. Some 30 people were in attendance. In my lecture I introduced Bohuslav Martinů, his life and work, and subsequently familiarised the conference participants with the Institute's projects; for example, the The Bohuslav Martinů Complete Edition, the BM Newsletter, digitalisation of autograph, the library's projects, etc. In the end I gave a practical presentation of the online catalogue of Martinů compositions on www.martinu.cz and using a few examples showed various possibilities of searching in the catalogue, in which it is also possible to find contacts to the compositions' publishers and the orchestral materials lending service. I also offered archive staff assistance in possible mediation of borrowing these materials and asked them for help in seeking out lost Bohuslav Martinů's autograph manuscripts. In the ensuing lively discussion everyone showed interest in The Bohuslav Martinů Complete Edition project.

Zoja Seyčková

UNFAITHFUL MARIJKA

– AN “INDEPENDENT” FILM

Research

MARTINŮ'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE CZECH FILM MUSIC

LUCIE BERNÁ



“I AM HERE to make some money, films etc.” Martinů wrote this line from Prague to his friend Rudolf Kepl exactly one year after the premiere of the film *Unfaithful Marijka* – the only feature length film which Martinů composed the film music for. Martinů was in contact with the medium of film throughout his entire life – both passively as a viewer and actively as a creator of film music and later as an author of television operas. In the 1920s, he expressed his openness towards all new things – his musical language included jazz influences and the avant-garde artistic trends influenced his musical dramatic works (the dada-opera *Tears of the Knife*, H. 169 and later surrealism in the opera *Juliette*, H. 253) and so it was only a matter of time before he would also meet up with the film phenomenon. This article endeavours to answer to what extent the

Martinů was involved with film music and which part of his work he dedicated to it. Much will be illuminated by his correspondence with his family and friends, his own literary works and the testimony of his contemporaries.

The reflexes of film immediately pass through several areas of Martinů's work. In 1925, he wrote a piano cycle entitled *Film en miniature*, H. 148, followed by the ballet *On tourne*, H. 163, 1927 and the opera *Les Trois souhaits* (*The Three Wishes*), H. 175, 1928/29. In these two works, Martinů reckoned with film projection – part of the ballet set under the sea was to have been depicted on the screen. In the opera *Les Trois souhaits*, the making of a film constitutes the main framework of the plot. The third act contains an entire enclosed passage of film music.

Martinů's first order specifically for film came in 1922. It involved the composition of music to accompany the scenes from a documentary film entitled *Folk Dances and Customs in the Slovácko Region*, H. 134 as they were projected on the screen. The Moravian Museum in Brno has a preserved manuscript with a number of short piano works which Martinů composed for this silent documentary. According to a monograph by Miloš Šafránek, Martinů contributed to the music for the French “talkies” film *Melo*, H. 223 dating from 1932, but this manuscript has not been preserved. *Unfaithful Marijka* was followed by a commercially oriented documentary on the manufacture of shoes in Tomáš Baťa's factories. This short film, entitled *The Slipper*, H. 239 with a length of eight minutes is a highly successful example of Martinů's “film” work. In the spring of

1935, he also completed the music to another short documentary film entitled *City of the Quick Water: Mariánské Lázně*, H. 240 – in this case, the music accompanied pictures of a drive through the city. The last domestic order came at the beginning of 1938 from the Luxor Company for a film entitled *Different Air* (*Jiný vzduch*) by the director Martin Frič. In February of 1938, Martinů wrote home to Polička about a new order for film music, but the order eventually went to Julius Kalaš. As no known manuscript sources have been preserved, it is difficult to say if Martinů even began the composition of the work for *Different Air*.

Film is mentioned only rarely within the framework of Martinů's publication activities in the inter-war period when he provided the Czech press with reports on French culture. Martinů knew the film work of Arthur Honegger, Darius Milhaud, Jacques Ibert and Maurice Jaubert. Even though he admired Arthur Honegger, Martinů did not consider his music for the film *Napoleon* (1927) by the director Abel Gance to have been a success. Honegger created 36 film compositions with inventive dramaturgical effectiveness and comprehensibility for the audiences. Jacques Ibert wrote the music for the films *Don Quixote* (1934) and *Golgotha* (1937). He managed to maintain the balance between vulgarity and refinement and he elegantly assimilated jazz and entertaining music in much the same way as Darius Milhaud. Milhaud contributed, for example, to the music for Jean Renoir's film of *Madame Bovary* (1933). Germaine Tailleferre mainly dedicated herself to music for documentary films. A distinct personality in the area of musical dramaturgy was René Clair – his film *Quatorze Juillet* (*Fourteenth of July*) dating from 1932 introduced the innovative and functional interconnection of music and pictures. The music was the work of the talented Maurice Jaubert.

At home in Czechoslovakia, Czech film production was rich from both the point of view of the number of films made and the varied genres. Here too, a strong group of proven film music composers formed. The most frequently used authors in the 1930s were Jára Beneš (he created the music, for example, for the director Karel Lamač's film entitled *The Imperial and Royal Field Marshal* (*C. a k. Polní maršálek*) dating from 1930), Karel Hašler and Miloš Smatek (their collaborations gave rise to, for example, the music for Martin Frič's film entitled *At the Empty Shop* (*U snědeného krámu*) dating from 1933) and Eman Fiala (he wrote the music for Svatopluk Innemann's comedy *Men Offside* (*Muži v offside*) dating from 1931). It is also not possible to overlook the work of the members of the Liberated Theatre (*Osvobozené divadlo*) – the films of Jiří Voskovec and Jan Werich with music by

Jaroslav Ježek. The significant personalities of film music included Otakar Jeremiáš, Julius Kalaš, Jiří Srnka and František Škvor. The composition of film music became the "daily bread" for this group of composers. The name Martinů never appeared in the credits for any commercially successful films. One of the reasons was the fact that Martinů mainly lived in Paris from 1923 and working with a composer based abroad put many film makers off. Martinů usually returned to Czechoslovakia during the summer holiday period and upon the occasion of the premieres of his works. Somewhat outside the framework of the period production were those films, whose representatives attempted to achieve greater artistic invention and placed greater demands on their audiences. These included the film *The River* (*Řeka* – 1933) by Josef Rovenský which encapsulated a lyric lovers' conflict filmed outdoors along the River Sázava, the psychological drama *Ecstasy* (*Extáze* – 1932) by Gustav Machatý or the ethnographically oriented film *Land of Song* (*Země spíva* – 1933) by Karel Plicka, which was worked on by the excellent film editor and documentarist Alexander Hackenschmied.

Unfaithful Marijka is also one of the remarkable works of Czech cinematography. The film's plot takes place in Kolochava in Sub-Carpathian Russia and Ivan Olbracht



Recording music for the film „Don Quijote“ 13. 3. 1933, from the left: Jacques Ibert, Fjodor Ivanovic Saljapin (sung songs in the film)
Photo R. Forster (La revue musicale 1933)



From the left: R. Bernard, A. Honegger, M. Jaubert – recording music for the film „Miserables“
Photo Cl. Pathé-Natan

but it suffered from audience non-comprehension. The following film project also brought together several literary personalities: Vladislav Vančura, as the director, and Ivan Olbracht and Karel Nový who worked on the script. Olbracht drew on his previous supreme prosaic works *The Goat in the Valley* (*Golet v údolí*) and *the Bandit Nikolai Shuhai* (*Nikola Šuhaj loupežník*). Ivan Olbracht also appeared in the film several times in the role of a Czech hiker. The cameraman was Jaroslav Blažek, while the editor was Jiří Slavíček – the son of the painter Antonín Slavíček. Bohuslav Martinů was approached as the future composer of the film music for this project by one of the film's producers, Ladislav Kolda. In 1933, Martinů attended the premiere of the ballet *The Chap-Book* at the National Theatre (19. 9. 1933) and

director neglected to mention one other significant character from the film, Olena the crone, Petro's mother who betrays Marijka's infidelity. Vančura revealed the following of his plans for the direction of the film: "The film will show all of the layers of the citizenry in Carpathian Russia – Russians, orthodox and reform Jews, Czechs – the social motif takes up the most room, the love affair is not emphasised (...) The actual direction will be sparing, we will look for parts of actions in such a way so that we can place them in a calculated series. A selection of documents, reports." It is difficult to say to what extent Martinů was interested in the artistic intentions of the film's creators or whether this order mainly represented the securing of a source of financial income for him.

"I had lost a lot of time with that film and I had to hurry back so that I could work again. Apparently the music has already been recorded (...) and apparently they liked it a lot. I don't know when the premiere will be yet." The film's premiere took place on 2. 3. 1934 at the Prague Kotva cinema. On the eve of the premiere, Ivan Olbracht tried to "prepare" the filmgoers with the following words: "It is surprising how the people from Verchovina got into the roles which the very lively dramatic plot gave them. And a great majority of them had never even seen a theatre or a cinema and it was not even possible to explain to the excellent actress, Olena the crone, what a cinema actually is and until her visit to Prague she continued to believe her original impression that she had been engaged by the circus.



chose the characters from among the local inhabitants. The film's director, Vladislav Vančura, stood out for his unconventional film work realised independently of any official film studios. Two years before, he had impressed the critics and audiences with his film *Before Graduation* (*Před maturitou* – 1932) – the film music was written by E. F. Burian. Jindřich Plachta played one of the roles in this psychological film about the lives of secondary school students. Vančura's next film work was supported by significant literati and scientists of the day, such as Vítězslav Nezval, Roman Jacobson and Miloslav Dismán. The film *On a Sunny Hillside* (*Na sluneční straně* – 1933) was about the modern way of bringing children up collectively. It connected bold means of expression with Vančura's experiments,

as such he was able to meet with the creators of the film.

What was therefore the main plot line of the film for which Martinů was required to write suitable music? In an interview for the press, the director Vančura described it in these words: "The motif? The film tells of the situation of workers hired to work as lumberjacks – the story is two-thirds authentic. The love drama takes place between three individuals, Marijka, her lover and her husband. He finds out about his wife's infidelity, he deliberately lets go of the steering oar during the floating of the wood, the raft breaks up, his adversary dies, the husband returns, the woman kneels at his feet, says nothing and lives on." Apart from the lover Danilo and Marijka's husband Petro Birčák, the

In a letter home dated October 1933, he wrote: "I have been very busy and I have various concerns. I have received an order for the music for a film which is called *Marijka* and is set in Sub-Carpathian Russia. Of course, I will have a lot of work with it, but at least I will also earn a few shekels from it. I will have to find a small room with a piano so that I can work in peace – there will be a lot to write. I will receive 15,000 CZK for it and it has to be finished by the middle of December." Originally, Martinů was also supposed to attend the recording of the music, but he had to leave for Paris in January 1934. The recording work was assigned to the conductor František Škvor and the National Theatre Orchestra. The last mention of the film appeared in a letter at the turn of February and March 1934:

(...) The speech of the mountain folk is also natural: they speak in their own way. The people from Verchovina speak in their own dialect, the Jews speak Yiddish, German and Czech, the Czechs speak Czech, all speak in the linguistic gibberish which exists there."

The work on the feature length film was a new intensive experience for Martinů. He had to adopt the specifics which go together with work on film music as E. F. Burian summarised them in his work on film music: "If we consider music in the "talkies", we must especially proceed from the assumption that this involves so and so many metres of sound which dynamically and rhythmically resolve the various areas in the strip of film." The composers sketches (the only source which is available today) include textual



From the left: Ivan Olbracht, Vladislav Vančura & Bohuslav Martinů, Prague, 1933 © PBM

notes and time details on the length of the musical sections for the individual scenes (for example “work on the wood” 9 seconds, “the crone is going into a shop”, etc).

Within the framework of the film, the music is divided into larger enclosed passages which join several scenes and which are alternated with relatively long sections without any music at all. The most dramatic scenes – the lumberjacks’ revolt and the looting of Rosenthal the Jew’s shop – were left with only the authentic sounds and no musical background with the intention of making them as realistic as possible. All of the exteriors were filmed in Koločava, where four fifths of the film was made. The interiors and dialogues were recorded in a studio in Prague. The creators did not have sufficient technical equipment available and therefore they brought all of the main characters to Prague so that they could re-record their dialogues and the other sounds for the film in a studio.

Vančura most certainly also chose most of the non-actors under the influence of Soviet film. For this reason, they have the minimum of text – they are filmed in their natural everyday activities (cutting wood, building a house, caring for livestock). The director deliberately avoided lyrical situations. The language of Martinů’s music

The music is also incorporated into the film’s plot and it sounds authentic in the scenes – for example in the long passage of the celebration before the joint departure of the lumberjacks to work where the local band of village musicians plays to accompany the dance. The massive *a cappella* vocals of the folk songs “Červená ruža” (Red Rose) and “Ciganka moja” (My Gypsy Girl) were subsequently recorded in the Prague studio by the film’s Ukrainian actors. Upon the basis of this, Martinů’s authorship of the music in these authentic passages appears to be very sparing, even though there is no direct mention of this in the literature. The sounds for the mass scenes (for example the lumberjacks’ revolt and the looting of the Jew’s shop) were also subsequently recorded in the

towards any experimentation in the composition of the film music. Indeed, the opposite is true – the film music is in the spirit of his music language of the time. In the same year, he worked on *Mariken of Nimègue*, the second part of the folklore inspired opera *The Plays of Mary, H. 236*, and the music to *Marijka* also foreshadows some of the procedures used in the later cantata *Bouquet of Flowers H. 260*. The hand of Martinů can be seen in the used instruments where the piano and the accordion could not be absent (also used, for example, in the opera *Tears of the Knife, H. 169*). The richness of the musical material for the film is based on work with several short, but melodically distinct motifs. Thanks to this extraordinary elaborateness, the lyric scenes are always accompanied by a modified melodic motif.

to come across Martinů’s film music in concert halls or cinemas – it was only thanks to the initiative of the Bohuslav Martinů Foundation that *the Slipper* was performed at the Bohuslav Martinů Festival in 2002 and *Unfaithful Marijka* was played at the Laterna Magika Theatre within the framework of the Bohuslav Martinů Festival in 2003. The name of Martinů has, however, also been connected with film in the present period – his music was successfully used by Aleš Březina in Andrea Sedláčková’s film *Victims and Murderers (Oběti a vrazi – 2000)*. This did not happen by chance – a more thorough acquaintance with the music of Bohuslav Martinů (with the exception of his very early pieces) often shows a kinship with the structured musical language of film music. The substantiation of this would, however, require a more thorough analysis.

Translation – Andy Letham
Firts published in Czech journal *Opus Musicum*, No. 5/2005

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was required to express the emotions between the protagonists of the film. The common scenes with Marijka and her beloved Danilo have no words and are coloured merely by music and it is these passages of the film which are the most musically successful. For example, the scene when Danilo and Marijka run away from Olena the crone and go to collect the hay is combined with jump cuts to tree felling in the forest where her husband Petro is working to make them a living. The singing motif of the violins in parallel sixths with the accompaniment of the piano alternates with a string tremolo with a four-tone motif in seconds. The most effective musical section is the accompaniment to the floating of the wood, during which Petro stages the accident and kills his adversary Danilo.

Prague studio. However, these passages sound very acoustically implausible in the film. In one scene, however, Martinů unfortunately did not manage to avoid excessive musical descriptiveness. Olena the crone secretly observes Marijka as she is getting ready for a meeting with Danilo. The threatening string tremolos accompanying the negative figure of Olena are too forcibly and inaccurately alternated with the love idyll of Marijka and Danilo.

“A film without music is like a person without a head.” The conclusion once again contains a quote from the texts of E. F. Burian which is highly apposite with regard to the films of V. Vančura. Despite the fact that his film most certainly did not fit the mould of the contemporary production, Martinů did not deviate

Martinů was not satisfied with the mere repetition of a “leitmotif” for each emotively charged scene as is often the case in film music.

The film music and the camera received favourable reactions from the critics, but the direction and editing fared worse. The critics did not like the weak plot structure of the story and the inadequate knowledge of film technique. Only the attempt to realistically depict the life of a simple person in his authentic environment was acclaimed as a contribution to Czech film. If we are to assess the work of Bohuslav Martinů, we will certainly not find its focal point in the composition of music for films. It is only possible to consider how the offered collaboration with the director Martin Frič on the film *Different Air* (1938) would have turned out. It is also a rarity



CONCERTS

17 September 2006

Holywell Music Room, Kidlington, UK
Oxford Coffee concerts
www.coffeeconcerts.com/Diary.aspx
 Frances Angell – Piano
 Jan Schmolck – Violin
Five Short Pieces, H. 184

21 September 2006

Nám. T. G. Masaryka, Zlín, Czech Republic
 The Bohuslav Martinů Philharmonic Orchestra
 Soloists: Ivan Ženatý – Violin, Yveta Matyášová – Soprano, Marta Beňáčková – Alto, Jozef Kundlák – Tenor, Martin Babjak – Bass
 Bratislava Choir, Ladislav Holásek – Choirmaster, Cantica Laetitia Girls' Choir, Josef Surovák – Choirmaster
 Jakub Hruša – Conductor
Bouquet of Flowers, H. 260

2 November 2006 / 7.30 pm

Dvořák Hall, Rudolfinum, Prague, Czech Republic
 Czech Philharmonic Orchestra
 Ronald Zollman – Conductor
 Adrian Thompson – Tenor
Symphony No. 4, H. 305

20 November 2006 / 7.30 pm

Salon Philharmonia, Krocínova I, Prague I, Czech Republic
Salon Philharmonia Chamber Cycle
 Lukáš Pospíšil – Cello
 Petr Benda – Violin
Duo No. 1 for Violin and Cello, H. 157

25 November 2006 / 10.30 am

Lichtenštejn Palace, Prague, Czech Republic
 Czech Chamber Music Society
 Prague Brass Quintet
 Štěpán Kos – Piano
Sextet for Piano and Wind Instruments, H. 174

30 November 2006

Nám. T. G. Masaryka, Zlín, Czech Republic
 The Bohuslav Martinů Philharmonic Orchestra
 Soloists: Tereza Surovická – Soprano, Markéta Masná – Alto, David Szendiuch – Baritone
 Cantica Laetitia Girls' Choir, Josef Surovák – Choirmaster, Stanislav Vavřínek – Conductor
 Actors of the Zlín Municipal Theatre
The Opening of the Springs, H. 354

2 and 7 December 2006

Janáček Hall, Czech Centre, Paris, France
 Aposiopée – Ensemble de jeunes voix
 Natacha Bartosek – Conductor
The Opening of the Springs, H. 354

9 December 2006 / 3.00 pm

Dvořák Hall, Rudolfinum, Prague, Czech Republic
Afternoon in Rudolfinum
 Czech Philharmonic Orchestra
 Zdeněk Mácal – Conductor
Symphony No. 1, H. 289

LONDON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

European Tour conducted by Sir John Eliot Gardiner

Palais des Beaux Arts, Brussels, Belgium
8 November 2006

Concertgebouw, Amsterdam, Netherlands
9 November 2006

Barbican Centre, London, UK
 Leif Ove Andsnes – Piano

MARTINŮ QUARTET ON TOUR IN ENGLAND

String Quartet No. 2, H. 150
29 October 2006

Norwich (Martinů, Kramář)
2 November 2006

London, Wigmore Hall (R. Strauss, Dvořák, Martinů)
4 November 2006

Birmingham (Mozart, Martinů, Brahms)
11 November 2006

Dalry Town Hall (Martinů, Dvořák, Mozart)

FESTIVALS

STRINGS OF AUTUMN International Music Festival, Prague

24 September–19 November 2006

www.strunypodzimu.cz

27 September 2006 / 7.30 pm

Prague Crossroads (Church of St. Ann), Old Town, Prague
 Maurice Bourgue – Oboe and Artistic Manager, Karel Košárek – Piano, The Talich Quartet, Zuzana Ržounková – French horn, Daniel Karas – Bassoon, Petr Hojáč – Trumpet, Vincent Penot – Clarinet
Les Rondes, H. 200, Quartet for oboe, violin, cello and piano, H. 315

THE YOUNG STAGE FESTIVAL (FESTIVAL MLADÉ PÓDIUM)

5–14 September 2006

Pardubice, Czech Republic

5 September 2006

Smetana Trio
Piano Trio No. 2 in D minor, H. 327

7 September 2006

P. Nouzovský – Cello, Yukio Ichimura – Piano
Sonata for Cello and Piano No. 2, H. 286 and No. 3, H. 340

THE PRAGUE AUTUMN

12 September–1 October 2006

Prague, Czech Republic

12 September / 7.30 pm

Rudolfinum
 BBC Philharmonic
 Gianandrea Noseda – Conductor
 Jaroslav Svěcený – Violin
Concerto for Violin and Orchestra No. 2, H. 293

INTERNATIONALE MUSIKFESTTAGE BOHUSLAV MARTINŮ 2006

1–15 November 2006

Basel, Switzerland
www.martinu.ch
 Artistic Director: Robert Kolinsky
 Patronage: Václav Havel, Former President of the Czech Republic

OPENING CONCERT – CHAMBER MUSIC 1 November / 7.30 pm

Musik-Akademie Basel (6.45 pm – Pre-Concert Talk by Jakob Knaus)
 Alison Balsom – Trumpet, Robert Kolinsky – Piano, Ensemble Basilisk (Sasha Rozhdstvensky – Violin, Katarzyna Nawrotek – Violin, David Seghezzo – Oboe, Markus Forrer – Clarinet, Tomasz Sosnowski – Bassoon, Jean-Claude Forestier – Percussion)
Madrigals, H. 266
Sonatina for Trumpet and Piano, H. 357
Les Rondes, H. 200

CINEMA EVENING 5 November / 7.30 pm

Municipal Cinema Basel
 Andrea Sedláčková and Madeleine Hirsiger present the film
"Victims and Murderers"
 („Oběti a vrazi“, Czech Republic 2000)
 Directed by Andrea Sedláčková – Music by Bohuslav Martinů

CHILDREN'S CONCERT 8 November / 5.00 pm

Museum Jean Tinguely
 Ballet Music by Bohuslav Martinů
 Biel Symphony Orchestra
 Thomas Rösner – Conductor

JAZZ CONCERT 12 November / 7.30 pm

Museum Jean Tinguely (7.00 pm – Composer István Hajdu in conversation with Adrian Mears)
„Jazz Impressions of Bohuslav Martinů“
 by Adrian Mears Octet
 Composition commissioned by the Internationale Musikfesttage B. Martinů
 Adrian Mears – Trombone & Composition, Matthieu Michel – Trumpet & Flugelhorn, Domenic Landolf – Tenors Sax & Woodwinds, Daniel Pezzotti – Cello, Wolfgang Muthspie – Acoustic & Electric Violin, Peter Madsen – Piano, Stephan Kurmann – Bass, Jeff Boudreaux – Drums

CLOSING CONCERT – OPERA EVENING 15 November / 7.30 pm

Foyer of the Basel Theatre (6.45 pm Pre-Concert talk by Aleš Březina)
 Gennady Rozhdstvensky Conducting the Basel Symphony Orchestra
 Marc-Olivier Oetterli – Bass baritone, Stella Grigorian – Mezzo-soprano, Hans-Jürg Rickenbacher – Tenor, Barbara Kandler – Mezzo-soprano, Stefan Bootz – Bass, Jan-Martin Mächler – Tenor, Philippe Meyer – Bass, Raphael Wittmer – Tenor, Anna Vichery – Soprano
"The Marriage, H. 341" by Martinů and Mussorgsky – two different operas to the same text; inspired by the comedy "The Marriage – A completely unlikely event in two acts" by Nikolaj Gogol

THE BOHUSLAV MARTINŮ DAYS

3–12 December 2006

Prague, Czech Republic

3 December 2006 / 7.30 pm

Concert of Prize-Winners from the 2006 Martinů Foundation Competition in the Category of Violin
 Martinů Hall, Academy of Performing Arts in Prague, Malostranské náměstí 13, Prague

5 December 2006 / 7.30 pm

Homage to Pierre Fournier (1906-2006)
 Suk Hall, Rudolfinum, Prague
 Jean Fonda Fournier – Piano
 Tomáš Janník – Cello
(Beethoven, Fauré, Debussy, Martinů)
Martinů: Sonate No. 1 for Cello and Piano, H. ????

6 December 2006 / 7.30 pm

"Konírna" Concert hall of the Nostitz Palais in Prague, Maltézské náměstí 1
 Quatuor JOACHIM
(Martinů, Dutilleux, Rouse)
Martinů: String Quartet No. 1?, H. ???? and String Quartet No. 2, H. ????

7 and 8 December 2006 / 7.30 pm

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

12 December 2006 / 7 pm

The National Theatre, Prague
The Greek Passion – Second Version, H. 372 II
 Sung in Czech, with English and German subtitles

OPERAS

Plays of Mary, H. 236

8 October 2006 / 2.00 pm
 13 October 2006 / 7.00 pm

Josef Kajetán Tyl Theatre, Plzeň, Czech Republic

The Knife's Tears, H. 169

The Two Blindmen by Offenbach and Rothschild's Violin by Fleischmann/Shostakovich

28 November–2 December 2006

Second Movement Opera, London
 a triple bill of rarely performed works including two UK stage premieres – staged in an old banana warehouse in Covent Garden
 more info at www.secondmovement.org.uk/06future.htm

The Greek Passion – Second Version, H. 372 II

28 November 2006 / 7.00 pm
 12 December 2006 / 7.00 pm

The National Theatre, Prague, Czech Republic
www.narodni-divadlo.cz



Events prepared by Jindra Havlíčková

ADDITIONS

TO THE MANUSCRIPT ARCHIVE

A SIGNIFICANT ENRICHMENT to the Bohuslav Martinů Institute's library is the autograph of *Duo for Violin and Cello No. 2, H. 371*, from 1958. On its title page, the fifteen-page autograph bears the composer's dedication to Mrs Trauti Mohr-Bally. The composition was commissioned by the Swiss musicologist Dr Ernst Mohr from Basel to mark the anniversary of his wife's and was for many decades in the family's ownership. Owing to the extraordinary kindness shown by Dr Mohr's children, and especially Mr Bernhard Mohr, acting on their behalf, this precious autograph has been donated to the Bohuslav Martinů Institute. There it will be available as a copy upon request to all those interested in perusing it.

BIBLIOTHEQUE National de France has sent to the Bohuslav Martinů Institute a copy of a 30-page autograph of *String Trio No. 2 (1934, H. 238)*. It was donated by Trio Pasquier and together with the

tion. Martinů wrote it in 1917 and it was dedicated to Zdena Maxová.

THE NATIONAL Library of the Czech Republic has provided the Bohuslav Martinů Institute with the autograph of *Duo for Violin and Cello No. 1 (1927, H. 157)* in digitalised form.

THE PAUL SACHER Foundation has unearthed yet another Martinů treasure – a folder designated as Beilagen (Supplements) has been found in the hitherto unexamined part of the archive. Undoubtedly the most precious document in this folder is the complete typed manuscript of the early phase of the **1st version of the libretto of The Greek Passion**, still containing, among other things, the character of Captain Fortunus and the fight between the priests Grigoris and Fotis. These scenes were cut from the final form of the Passion's London version.



Autograph manuscript of *String Trio No. 2 (1934, H. 238)*

recently discovered autograph of *String Trio No. 1 (1923, H. 136 / Newsletter 1-2006)* represents a valuable source of Bohuslav Martinů's trio literature.

THE ARCHIVE of Northern Illinois University (Rare Books and Special Collections) has donated to us a copy of the autograph of *Sonata No. 3 for Cello and Piano (1952, H. 340)* and a copy of this sonata's violoncello part (the violoncello part, however, is just a transcript in someone else's hand).

WE HAVE MANAGED to acquire from a private individual a copy of the until recently missing small piano composition entitled *Valse capriccio (H. 107)*. It concerns only the last page of this composi-

CORRESPONDENCE

OUR LONG-TIME benefactor, the Swiss collector Roland Kupper, has acquired for his collection yet another of Bohuslav Martinů's **precious postcards**. That in question was addressed to Professor Ladislav Dlouhý in Roudnice nad Labem. Martinů sent it on 16 July 1915, i.e. in the early war period, for which there exist significantly fewer documents than in the case of the post-war years. Roland Kupper has kindly provided a copy of the postcard to the Bohuslav Martinů Institute.



Mr **TATSUO SHINOHARA** from Japan has donated to the Bohuslav Martinů Institute **eleven precious original letters** written by the composer between 1947 and 1959. They are addressed to his relatives in Polička. The main subject matter of the letters written by Martinů abroad (in the USA and Western Europe) is concern for his relatives, his determination and hope for return to his homeland, and also dismay at the political situation. Furthermore, Martinů writes about his compositional work and the course of his compositions. In the last letters (1958-1959) he expresses his sorrow at the death of his brother and sister, and regret that he could not be present at their funerals. Those interested can study the donated correspondence in digital form at the Bohuslav Martinů Institute.

The Bohuslav Martinů Foundation has received as a gift from harpsichordist Professor **Zuzana Růžičková** an extremely interesting letter Bohuslav Martinů sent on 22 September 1949 to her. It concerns the composition *Sinfonietta giocosa for piano and orchestra* with which Prof Růžičková wanted to complete her studies of piano at Prague's Academy of Performing Arts. The letter documents not only the problematic availability of performing materials issued outside communist Czechoslovakia, but also, indirectly, the then situation as regards performing works by Bohuslav Martinů, at that time resident in the USA. Bowing to pressure exerted on the part of the school's management, Prof Růžičková had to abandon her intentions to perform a composition by the "renegade" composer.

News prepared by Lucie Berná and Aleš Březina

NEW RECORDINGS

● **THE BALLET** *La revue de cuisine (The Kitchen Revue, 1927, H. 161)*, in arrangement for saxophone quartet, has been released on CD by the Berlin-based ensemble Clair-Obscur. The score of this arrangement for saxophone quartet is available at the library of the Bohuslav Martinů Institute. More information: kontakt@o-ton-produktion.de (Mr François Smesny).



● **WE HAVE RECEIVED** from Mrs Barbara Renton recordings with **statements by B. Martinů's contemporaries**. Interviews with Zaidee Parkinson, Howard Shanet, Peter Pindar Stearns and Nathaniel Burt date back to 1981 and relate to the period when Martinů was living and working in the USA.

The materials have been transferred on to a CD. The Bohuslav Martinů Institute would welcome native speakers who could carry out their transcription.

● **THE ARCHIVE** of historic recordings has been enriched by a rare recording of *Little Suite – from the stage music to the drama Oedipus, H. 248 A*, by André Gide (1936). The five-minute recording was made at Czech Radio Brno in 1964. It is the one and only recording of this composition.

● **THE BOHUSLAV MARTINŮ Institute** has acquired from Czech Radio Prague a historic recording of *Symphony No. 1 (1942, H. 289)*. It was made in 1946 when this first symphony was performed within the Prague Spring festival at a concert given by the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Charles Munch.

NEWS FROM POLIČKA

MARTINŮ FEST 2006

As has become a tradition, the third weekend of May in Polička was devoted to Bohuslav Martinů's music. The ninth edition of Martinů Fest had its gala opening on Thursday 18 May. An evening meeting of the town's representatives and honourable guests was preceded by a solemn ceremony by Bohuslav Martinů's grave and a private viewing of Mirek Hykša's pictures. It was followed by a chamber concert given by Jaroslav Šonský (violin) and Patricia Bretas (piano) at which they performed pieces by J. Brahms, O. F. Korte, B. Smetana, I. Stravinsky and, naturally, B. Martinů (*Sonata No. 3 – for violin and piano, H. 303*). The festival's second day, with the subtitle Echoes of Prague Spring, was given over to baroque music. The morning concert for secondary school students, presented by Ilja Hurník, and the evening concert at Saint Michael's Church, comprising pieces by H. I. F. Biber, A. Poglietti, C. Farina and J. C. F. Fischer, were performed by the Prague-based baroque orchestra Collegium 1704. On Saturday, compositions by W. A. Mozart, J. Haydn, J. Ibert, B. Martinů (*Madrigals No. 2 and 3 for Brass Trio, H. 266*) and L. van Beethoven were performed by the Prague Brass Quintet. This year's Martinů Fest concluded in a concert given by the Czech

National Symphonic Orchestra conducted by the Uruguayan conductor Roberto Montenegro. Alongside works by J. V. H. Voříšek and F. Mendelssohn, the orchestra played B. Martinů's *Overture for Orchestra, H. 345*, during which members of the Smetana Trio performed as soloists. The accompanying programme of Martinů Fest included a screening of the documentary *Martinů and America*, followed by a concert entitled "American Spring" at which *Sonata for Flute and Piano, H. 306*, from Martinů's American period was heard. The accompanying programme also contained a gala concert given by pupils of Polička's Bohuslav Martinů Primary Art School and the opening of the exhibition to mark the 50th anniversary of the premiere of *The Opening of the Springs, H. 356*.

EXHIBITION TO THE 50th ANNIVERSARY OF THE OPENING OF THE SPRINGS' PREMIERE

One part of the exhibition, running from 20 May to 27 August, dealt with the history of a May custom whose roots stretch all the way back to pre-Christian times. Visitors may have been surprised by the mention in the Kosma Chronicle concerning worshipping of springs or the fact that in spring in many places people used to carry out cleaning of water springs as commonplace work, not as a festive ritual. Visitors could peruse part of a magazine article by the Vličov teacher Josef Karel who wrote about the form of this custom in the Vysočina region in the 18th and at the beginning of the 19th century. This article served as a source of inspiration for Miloslav Bureš, a Polička poet, to write the Song about the Rubínka Spring. Visitors could compare to what extent Bureš drew upon Karel and to what degree he transfigured the form of the ritual in his poem.

NEW PROJECT IN THE BOHUSLAV MARTINŮ INSTITUTE

ON 1 AUGUST 2006 the Bohuslav Martinů Institute launched a new project unique in the Czech Republic entitled "Further education of music editors".

The two-year project is being financed by the European Social Fund, the state budget of the Czech Republic and the budget of the City of Prague. The project partners are Editio Bärenreiter Praha and the Music Information Centre. It aims to create a methodology for training new editors specialised in the Czech milieu and Czech materials. In 2008 the new methodology will be verified by means of a pilot course. The course will be intended for specialists and interested parties living and working in the territory of Prague. It will be focused on their gaining knowledge in the areas of information technologies, fundamentals of editing work and specialist foreign-language terminology pertaining to publication of music materials. We will keep you updated about the project in forthcoming issues.



In 1954 Bureš sent the poem to Bohuslav Martinů, who was living in Nice at the time. The poem revived in Martinů his memories of Tři Studně (Three Wells), where he stayed in July 1938. A showcase devoted to Bohuslav Martinů's stay in Nice in 1955 displayed his letters to M. Bureš and the manuscript of the cantata's score.

The exhibition's other sections were given over to recordings and film adaptations of *The Opening of the Springs* from 1956 and 1981. Also mentioned was the legendary 1960 Laterna magika staging. Furthermore, the exhibition contained documentation of two premieres or, if you will, the cantata's official Polička premiere and the Prague preview, as well as a gala concert to mark the premiere's 50th anniversary that took place in Polička on 7 January 2006. The exhibition's final section was devoted to works of art whose creators were inspired by *The Opening of the Springs*. In addition, visitors could see part of the special gala dress of young girls who used to clean the

springs during the ritual, as is described by Josef Karel. Also on display were ordinary working clothes worn during everyday work.

FAREWELL TO THE BOHUSLAV MARTINŮ MEMORIAL

Don't worry, the Bohuslav Martinů Memorial in Polička is not being closed down. However, owing to the museum's ongoing reconstruction, the current display concerning Bohuslav Martinů's life and work (first opened to the public in 1984) temporarily closes on 31 August 2006. The adjacent video and audio room, where it is possible to watch documentaries about Bohuslav Martinů or listen to recordings of his music, is available to visitors. Nevertheless, you can already look forward to a brand-new display that will combine exhibiting of physical material from the museum's extensive archive funds and audio-visual projections. Lucie Jirglová

NEW CDs IN THE BOHUSLAV MARTINŮ INSTITUTE



The Prague Spring Festival Legendary Broadcast Recordings (1947–1968)

Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninov, Martinů, Stravinsky, Beethoven, Berlioz, Dvořák, Smetana, Mozart, Prokofiev
Martinů: *Symphony No. 6, H. 353* (Czech Radio Symphony Orchestra, Rudolfinum – conductor, Charles Munch – conductor, Rudolfínium, 27 March, 1967)
Andante AN 2150 / 4 CD – set / 2006
Texts: English, French, German



Bohuslav Martinů: The Greek Passion An opera in four acts

Live recording, conductor – Jiří Bělohlávek, Orchestra, choir and ballet of the National Theatre Opera, Prague Chamber Choir, chorus Master – Pavel Vaněk, Prague Philharmonic Children's Choir, Chorus Master – Jiří Chvála

Recording from the premiere on April 13, 2006, in the National Theatre
2 CD / CD 1 TT: 52:22 / CD 2 TT: 57:50
National Theatre Prague, 2006 / Texts in Czech & English
Not for sale. To be used for documentary and other non-commercial purposes.



Resonanzen. Paul Sacher. Dirigent und Anreger

Haydn, Mozart, Bartók, Stravinsky, Martin, Martinů, Milhaud, Fortner, Berio, Holliger
Martinů: *Memorial to Lidice, H. 296*
MGB CD 6240 / 4 CD set
TT: 57:20, 73:36, 56:38, 78:56 / 2006
Texts in German, French, English



Jennifer Koh: Portraits

- Karol Szymanowski, *Violin Concerto No. 1, Op. 35*
- Bohuslav Martinů, *Violin Concerto No. 2, H. 293*
- Béla Bartók, *Two Portraits, Op. 5*
Grant Park Orchestra,
Carlos Kalmar – conductor
Recorded live in Concert, July 1+2, 2005 (Martinů, Bartók)
Cedille CDR 90000 089 / DDD / TT: 65:15 / 2006
Texts in English