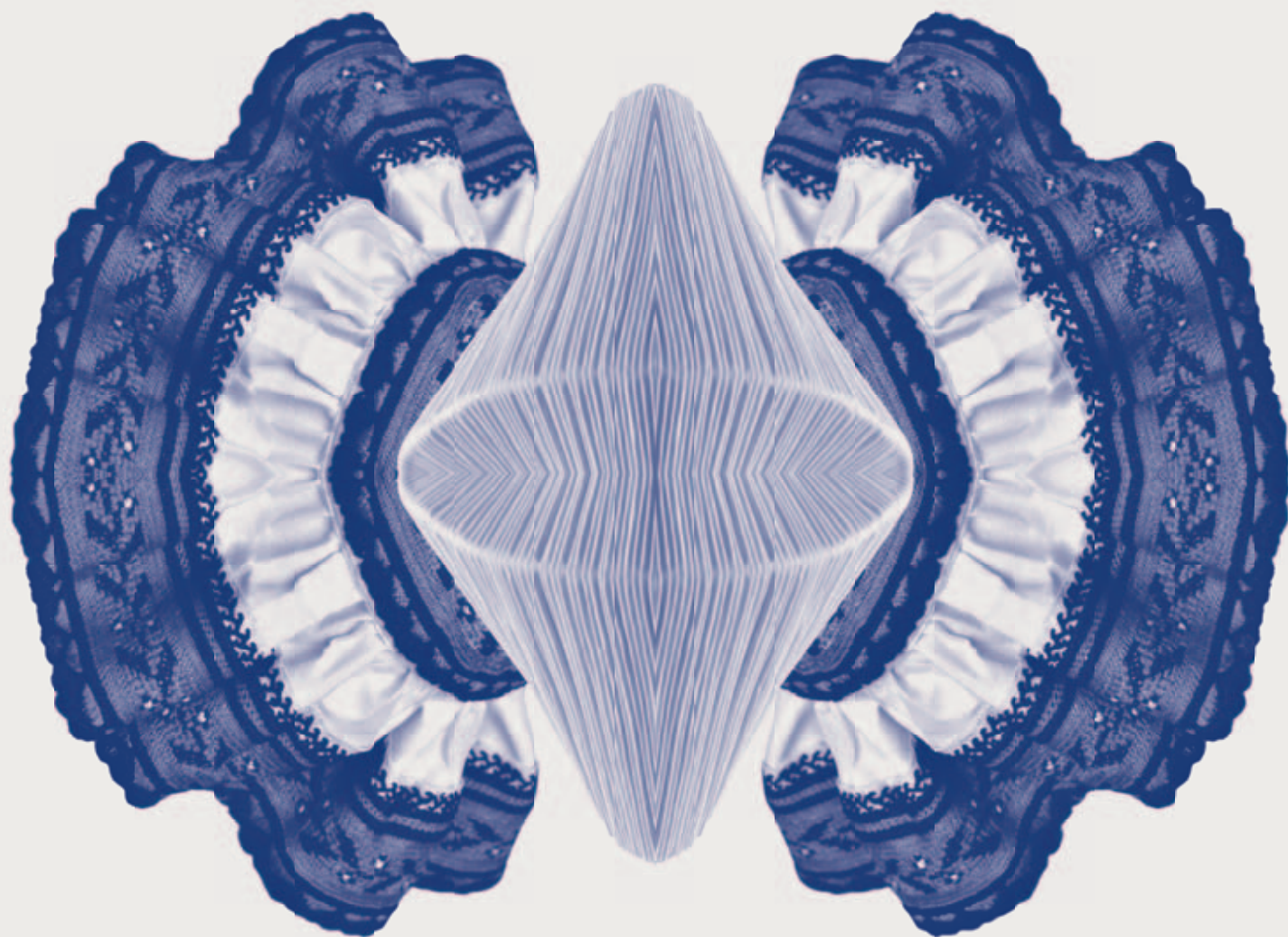


6<sup>th</sup> International  
Opera and Music  
Festival

**NdBdiva**  
National Theatre Brno Magazine

# JANÁČEK



# BRNO

17/11 – 5/12  
2018

# JANÁČEK BRNO

I'm on the trail of the melody of the Czech word: it does not grow out of chords. Its source is deeper; I recognize that it wells up within each of us.

I recognize how sweet it is from the mouths of children, its girlish passion, its manly terseness.

I recognize its span.

In Fate I expand it with children's melodic way of speaking, in Jenůfa I express the spiritual torment of Kostelnička and Jenůfa, in Brouček's excursions I turn towards the heavens, in Katya Kabanova I differentiate temperaments, in the Cunning Little Vixen I acknowledge the shadow of the forests, the morning dayspring.

Oh, all the places where I have stopped and found pleasure during my wanderings in search of the tone and its extent.

I am wallowing in nature, but I won't drown.

With The Makropulos Affair it will be necessary to draw on the dry springs. A historical modern opera. **Leoš Janáček**

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**We will always be a small minority in the world, but if a small nation manages to acquire something with its small means, it has a special and immense moral value. It doesn't matter that we are a small nation; in fact it has its advantages. We can get to know one another better and live more intimately, we can feel more at home. But it is a great thing when a small nation doesn't remain in the shadow of larger ones and also plays its part in the effort to bring humanity to a higher level. We also want to ring a bell in the belfry of the world...**

**T. G. Masaryk**

A century has gone by since the foundation of our independent state and the words of its first president, T. G. Masaryk, have more weight and profound wisdom than ever before. Amongst the great figures of the Czech nation, it was the composer Leoš Janáček who rang that imaginary bell of the world so powerfully and gave it the most beautiful gift from our nation – unique music filled with understanding and humanity.

Previous festivals have allowed us to look at Janáček's music juxtaposed against other musicians and artistic trends. This time the opera strand of the festival will belong mainly to his music and will present Janáček's complete works for the stage from his early compositions written in the last decades of the Habsburg monarchy when the Czech nation was struggling for recognition, to Janáček's later works created in the first years of our independent state.

How else to start the festival than with an opera which was written at the start of the republic and is connected like no other to the town of Brno and its surroundings? *The Cunning Little Vixen* is not only a reflection of the composer's maturity and philosophy, but it also gracefully reflects life in a young developing nation. In addition, it is the opera which opened the newly built Janáček

Theatre in 1965, the home of the Brno opera ensemble, and therefore it not only ceremonially opens this festival, but after 53 years it once again opens the reconstructed theatre building.

The height of Janáček's artistic career coincided with the first decade of the young Czechoslovak Republic, which is why the concert strand of the festival is dedicated to this one-hundredth anniversary and also showcases how composers reflected on significant historical events in the existence of the Czech state. We also want to remember the music of the nations with whom we shared territory over the centuries in the former Austro-Hungarian empire.

And so for three weeks, Janáček's Brno will be the meeting place for outstanding artists from the Czech Republic as well as from Great Britain, Belgium, Poland, the Netherlands and elsewhere, in order to pose questions through art and search for those answers. After all, even we want to ring those bells of the world...

**Jiří Heřman**, Artistic Director of the Janáček Opera company

**Patricie Částková**, Dramaturge of the Janáček Opera company

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45 minutes before the performance at the theatre box office

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It can be found in the theatres and at the NTB Advance Sales office.

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## Programme 17/11–5/12 2018

### Opera Productions

- 17. 11.** 7 pm, Janáček Theatre  
Ceremonial opening of the festival  
**Leoš Janáček – The Cunning Little Vixen** <sup>Premiere</sup>  
Conductor: Marko Ivanović, Director: Jiří Heřman  
Janáček Opera of National Theatre Brno  
reprise 18. 11., 3 pm  
Live stream as part of the OPERA VISION project
- 18. 11.** 7 pm, Orlí Street Theatre  
World premieres of operas by students of the Music  
Faculty of the Janáček Academy of Music and Performing Arts  
**Jiří Najvar – Falstaff, Daniel Šimek – Unknown**  
Chamber opera by the Janáček Academy of Music and Performing Arts
- 19. 11.** 7 pm,  
Janáček Theatre  
**Leoš Janáček – Katya Kabanova**  
Conductor: Ondrej Olos, Director: Robert Carsen  
Janáček Opera of National Theatre Brno  
The licence owner is Opera Vlaanderen, Antwerp/Ghent
- 21. 11.** 7 pm,  
Reduta Theatre (Mozart Hall)  
Concert performance of the opera  
**Leoš Janáček – Šárka**  
performed with piano accompaniment, 1887 version  
Conductor: Gabriela Tardonová  
Opera Diversa
- 22. 11.** 7pm,  
Reduta Theatre  
**Leoš Janáček – Šárka** <sup>Premiere</sup>  
Version from 1887 instrumentation by Ondřej Kyas  
Conductor: Gabriela Tardonová, Director: Kristiana Belcredi  
Opera Diversa
- 23. 11.** 7 pm,  
Mahen Theatre  
**Leoš Janáček – The Beginning  
of a Romance, Rákos Rákoczy** <sup>Premiere</sup>  
Conductor: Tomáš Krejčí, Director: Kristiana Belcredi  
Brno Conservatory
- 24. 11.** 7 pm  
Mahen Theatre  
**Leoš Janáček – Destiny**  
Conductor: Jakub Klecker, Director: Jiří Nekvasil  
The National Moravian-Silesian Theatre
- 25. 11.** 7 pm,  
Janáček Theatre  
**Leoš Janáček – The Makropulos Affair**  
Conductor: Tomáš Netopil, Director: Kornel Mudruczó  
Opera Vlaanderen
- 26. 11.** 7 pm,  
Mahen Theatre  
**Leoš Janáček – The Beginning of a Romance,  
Rákos Rákoczy**  
Conductor: Tomáš Krejčí, Director: Kristiana Belcredi  
Brno Conservatory
- 27. 11.** 7 pm,  
Brno Exhibition Centre (Pavilion P)  
**Bedřich Smetana – Libuše**  
Conductor: Robert Kružík, Director: Jiří Heřman  
Janáček Opera of National Theatre Brno
- 28. 11.** 7pm,  
Reduta Theatre  
**Leoš Janáček – Šárka**  
Version from 1887 instrumentation by Ondřej Kyas  
Conductor: Gabriela Tardonová, Director: Kristiana Belcredi  
Opera Diversa
- 28. 11.** 7 pm,  
Orlí Street Theatre  
**Jiří Najvar – Falstaff, Daniel Šimek – Unknown**  
Chamber opera by the Janáček Academy of Music and Performing Arts
- 30. 11.** 7 pm,  
Mahen Theatre  
**Leoš Janáček/Annelies Van Parys –  
The Diary of One Who Disappeared** <sup>stage version</sup>  
Director: Ivo van Hove  
Muziektheater Transparant
- 1. 12.** 7 pm,  
Janáček Theatre  
**Leoš Janáček – Jenůfa**  
Conductor: Gabriel Chmura, Director: Alvis Hermanis  
Teatr Wielki im. Stanisława Moniuszki w Poznaniu / Coproduction by the  
Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie and Teatro Comunale di Bologna
- 2. 12.** 7 pm,  
Brno Exhibition Centre (Pavilion P)  
**Leoš Janáček – From the House of the Dead**  
Conductor: Tomáš Hanus, Director: David Pountney  
Welsh National Opera in coproduction with Scottish Opera
- 5. 12.** 7 pm, Janáček Theatre,  
ceremonial closing of the festival  
**Leoš Janáček – The Excursions of Mr. Brouček**  
Conductor: Jaroslav Kyzlink, Director: Sláva Daubnerová  
National Theatre (Prague)

Festival programme subject to change.

Advance ticket sales for the festival from 13. 11. 2017.  
Main sales areas: Customer Centre NTB, Dvořákova 11, Brno  
tel: +420 542 158 120, email: obchodni@ndbrno.cz

Online sales at: [www.janacek-brno.cz](http://www.janacek-brno.cz)

## Concerts, recitals, chamber series

**18. 11.** 11am,  
Leoš Janáček Memorial  
**Leoš Janáček – Fairy Tale, Violin Sonata, 1. X. 1905**  
("From the Street")

Students of the Music Faculty of the Janáček Academy of Music and Performing Arts

**20. 11.** 7 pm,  
the Auditorium of Brno University of Technology  
**Love Herbs** Folklore concert

Songs from Leoš Janáček's collections  
Q VOX, Danaj Dulcimer Band, Marína female choir (Zvolen),  
Martin Jakubíček – organ

**23. 11.** 7 pm,  
Reduta Theatre (Mozart Hall)  
**Leoš Janáček – Little Queens**  
**Bohuslav Martinů – The Chap-Book – a selection**  
**from the version for children's choir and piano**  
**Karel Reiner – The Flowered Horse**  
**František Domažlický – Czech songs for children's**  
**choir and string quartet**

Brno Children's Choir, together with the Miloslav Ištván Quartett

**23. and 24. 11.** 11am,  
Leoš Janáček Memorial  
**Leoš Janáček – Zdenka Variations, On an**  
**Overgrown Path – 1st series (selection),**  
**In the Mists, Moravian Dances (Čeladenský,**  
**The Saws)**

Jan Jiraský – piano

**24. 11.** 3 pm,  
the Löw-Beer Villa  
**Arnold Schönberg – String Quartet No. 2 for**  
**soprano and string quartet**  
**Béla Bartók – String Quartet No. 3**  
**Leoš Janáček – Quartet inspired by L. N. Tolstoy's**  
**"Kreutzer Sonata"**

Andrea Šíroková – soprano, Škampa Quartet

**25. 11.** 11am,  
Reduta Theatre (Mozart Hall)  
**Bedřich Smetana – Macbeth and the Witches,**  
**Poetic Polkas op. 8, A Treasure of Melodies,**  
**Concert Etude in C major, Sonata in G minor**

Piano recital by Jitka Čechová

**25. 11.** 3 pm,  
Villa Tugendhat  
**Zoltán Kodály – Marosszéki táncok**  
**Erich Wolfgang Korngold – Sonata for Piano No. 3**  
**Slavko Osterc – Six petits morceaux**  
**Leoš Janáček – In the Mists**

Piano recital by Martin Kasík

**26. 11.** 7pm,  
Reduta Theatre  
**Paths to Folk Song** Folklore concert

Musica Folklorica

**29. 11.** 7 pm,  
Brno Exhibition Centre (Pavilion P)

**Josef Suk – Towards a New Life**  
**Leoš Janáček – Amarus, Na Soláni čarták,**  
**Sinfonietta**

Conductor: Gabriela Tardonová

Orchestra of the Janáček Opera of National Theatre Brno

**1. 12.** 11 am, at the Music Faculty of the Janáček Academy  
of Music and Performing Arts (MF JAMU)  
**Programme by the Music Faculty of the Janáček**  
**Academy of Music and Performing Arts**

Students of individual Academy departments

**1. 12.** 3 pm,  
Mahen Theatre  
**On a not Overgrown Path** Folklore concert

Valašský vojvoda, folklore ensemble Podskalák National Song Ensemble  
(Troubsko), Kašava Wallachian Ensemble (Zlín), Strání folklore ensemble piper  
and singer Pavel Popelka

**2. 12.** 11 pm,  
Reduta Theatre (Mozart Hall)  
**Bedřich Smetana – String Quartet No. 2 in D minor**  
**Pavel Haas – String Quartet No. 2**  
**("From the Monkey Mountains")**  
**Leoš Janáček – Quartet for two violins,**  
**viola and cello ("Intimate Letters")**

Pavel Haas Quartet

**2. 12.** 3 pm,  
Villa Tugendhat  
**Leoš Janáček – Moravian Folk Poetry in Songs**

Simona Houda-Šaturová – soprano

Martin Kasík – piano

**3. 12.** 7pm,  
Reduta Theatre (Mozart Hall)  
**Leoš Janáček – On an Overgrown Path (1st series),**  
**In Remembrance, 1. X. 1905 ("From the Street"),**  
**On an Overgrown Path (2nd series), Christ,**  
**the Lord, Is Risen, Lesser Town Palace,**  
**A Recollection, In the Mists**

Piano recital by Thomas Adès

**4. 12.** 7 pm,  
Kounicova Stadium  
**Leoš Janáček – Ballad of Blaník, Taras Bulba**  
**Jan Novák – Ignis pro Ioanne Palach**  
**Bohuslav Martinů – Double Concerto for two**  
**string orchestras, piano and timpani**  
**Miloslav Kabeláč – Mystery of Time**

Conductor: Stefan Veselka Brno

Chorus master: Michal Vajda

Czech Academic Choir



# LEOŠ JANÁČEK – THE CUNNING LITTLE VIXEN



foto: Ivan Pinkava

17/11/2018

Janáček Theatre  
reprise 18. 11.

## Letter from Leoš Janáček to Max Brod

*The mayor's son is in the throes of passion – his lover has left him – he would have murdered all of the wedding guests. He shot at them through the window of the room where his ex-lover was celebrating her wedding. He was tried and convicted.*

*And when he had served out his sentence and returned to the village, do you think that everyone avoided him?*

*No. It was as though nothing had happened.*

*They chatted away with him like they had before.*

*I'm convinced that simple folk do not take evil to be an eternal slur. It was – and now it isn't.*

*My cunning little vixen is something like that – she stole, throttled, but she was also capable of acting nobly.*

*In Act II she wanders around, she chases the badger out of its den, she settles down in his warm set. She lives it up in the pubs, she steals – and toys with the schoolmaster and the priest who return sozzled from the pub. The vixen falls in love, deeply.*

*The schoolmaster confesses his love to a sunflower in a field, the priest remembers his student love.*

*The cunning little vixen runs all around the forest.*

*Finally, the gamekeeper, returning from the pub, scares her off with a wild cry – and gunfire.*

*Both the schoolmaster and the priest pick themselves up off the ground and manage to crawl off stage.*

*In Act III the vixen has lots of cubs around her. Family happiness.*

*A poultry salesman who is also a poacher has a basket full of poultry in the forest. The cunning little vixen plays with him. She stares him down. Harašta goes after her with his gun. He chases her. Meanwhile, the cubs have taken the poultry from the basket.*

*'Kill me then, because I'm a vixen?' she shouts at the poacher. His hair stands on end when he sees the red cubs at his ducks in the basket. He fires without aiming – and the vixen is killed.*

*The gamekeeper and the schoolmaster get older – the priest has moved away. Spring in the forest – but old age too.*

*The forest and the animal kingdom appear to the gamekeeper in a dream – he is searching for his cunning little vixen. It isn't her. But the youngster totters over to him! 'The spitting image of her mother!'*

*And so good and evil go around in life once more.*

*The end.*

# Is it true or a fairy tale?

text: Patricie Částková

The organisers of the Janáček festival, the Janáček Opera of the NTB, traditionally open the festival, and this sixth edition will be even more significant as they will also be opening the reconstructed building of their home, the Janáček Theatre, and for this occasion there is no better opera than *The Cunning Little Vixen*, which also opened the building in 1965.

If Janáček's seventh opera is connected like no other to the town where he lived, it is not only because it was where Janáček wrote it. *The Cunning Little Vixen*, an incredible combination of the composer's deeply held philosophy of life on the cusp of his seventieth birthday, a colourful picture of life from the first years of the young Czechoslovak Republic and the elegance of the Bílovice forests, began its life in Brno even before the famous opera – in the Brno offices of the Lidové noviny newspaper. Another great Brno figure, Rudolf Těsnohlídek, was behind the humorous stories of the cunning vixen which always managed to trick the gamekeeper. A native of Čáslav, he made his home in Brno and Bílovice nad Svitavou, where he worked for several years either on everyday courtroom reports, capturing all of the distinctive characters and covering their stories with a huge amount of empathy, or on the cunning little vixen and her adventures with illustrations by Stanislav Lolek. But Těsnohlídek also left an inedible mark on our city with the beautiful tradition of the Republic's Christmas tree and the foundation of the Dagmar children's home.

Each Janáček opera is unique and there is nothing comparable in the opera genre to *The Cunning Little Vixen* with its interweaving of the human and animal worlds. Těsnohlídek's *Cunning Little Vixen* ended with a wedding, but Janáček was looking for a theme which would reflect his view of the world and the eternal cycle of nature, which is why his vixen dies at the hands of the poacher Harašta. But there is another young vixen here...life goes on. Everything is as it should be, which is also stated by Janáček's music – lyrical and melodic – where the orchestra 'lives it up' with the colours of the Bílovice forest and the creatures which dwell in it. Literary language is mixed with the Líšeň dialect and the handsome fox offers the vixen a cigarette and a rabbit. Everything sparkles with humour, slightly in Janáček's unkempt style, but lovingly in the way the gamekeeper looks back on his own life.

This new production is the work of the director and the artistic director of the Janáček Opera NTB, Jiří Heřman. Therefore, meeting on stage for the first

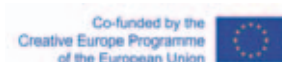
time will be the Brno maestro and one of the leading Czech directors whose productions are noted for their spiritual qualities and unique view of the story and its characters.

*I don't know of any music which is more colourful or lively than Janáček's. It has always made an impression on me with its prickly and heartfelt authenticity, it is a celebration of our life which is beautiful, and we should never forget this beauty of creation. Janáček left us forever inspired in life with all its pleasures and pains. There is no better theme or music to open the festival and celebrate the one-hundredth anniversary of the foundation of our state!*

Jiří Heřman

Marko Ivanović, the principal conductor of the Janáček Opera NTB, is already well-known as a Janáček conductor and *The Cunning Little Vixen* will be the third Janáček opera he has conducted. The main roles are principally performed by soloists from the Brno ensemble. The soprano Pavla Vykopalová is a wonderful interpreter of Janáček roles, whether it be Jenůfa, Míla or Katya, for which she won the Thálie Award. On this occasion she and Jana Šrejma Kačírková will perform the role of Bystrouška. The fox Golden Mane is a role which was created for Václava Krejčí Housková and Jana Hrochová, and the role of the Gamekeeper is played by our permanent guest Svatopluk Sem, together with Jiří Sulženko.

The National Theatre Brno is now part of the international project Opera Vision, which broadcasts live on the internet performances from more than thirty European opera houses. Project partners include Teatro Real Madrid, La Monnaie in Brussels and the Berlin Comic Opera. The Brno ensemble's first contribution will be a live broadcast of *The Cunning Little Vixen* on 18 November 2018 as part of the festival, and our main partner will be Czech Television, which will also record our new production.



# Janáček speaks to us about people's real lives, without embellishment, and very intensely.

The productions of Janáček's operas *From the House of the Dead* and *The Makropulos Affair* will be performed at the festival by outstanding international opera companies which will be accompanied by Czech conductors. Today, Tomáš Hanus and Tomáš Netopil belong amongst the conducting elite on the European stage. Both are excellent interpreters of the works of Leoš Janáček as well as promoters of Czech music abroad, where they mainly work.

text: Ondřej Pivoda

**How would you describe your relationship towards Leoš Janáček? Do you remember when you first heard his music? Has any fundamental experience influenced your internal relationship towards Janáček's music?**

**Tomáš Hanus:** I think I was ten when I used my pocket money to buy a recording of *The Cunning Little Vixen* and I played the end of the opera with the Gamekeeper's monologue. Janáček's music has stayed with me ever since and represents an incredible wealth for me. And in terms of my artistic career, Janáček's music was there at a key turning point – my first great international occasion. Gérard Mortier, the then director of the Paris Opera and one of the greatest opera visionaries of the 20th century, invited me to

the Opera Bastille to conduct the premiere of *The Makropulos Affair*. At that time, it was a risky move on his part, but he was known for giving young people a chance, he wasn't afraid of taking a risk on an unknown face. And even though I hadn't had many opportunities back home in the Czech Republic, he gave me this great start on the international stage which led to other wonderful opportunities.

**Tomáš Netopil:** I had the opportunity to hear Janáček's music during my childhood. The first time was probably at my primary school of art when I played his *Idyll for Strings* in our small school orchestra. Quite soon after I also heard some of Janáček's chamber music. Then at the conservatory I discovered the *Glagolitic Mass* which really captivated me, and since then

Janáček's music has been with me nonstop throughout my entire career as a conductor. Janáček is a composer whose music I continue to enjoy and which continues to challenge. He's a composer who I really love returning to. I try not to be too romantic in my understanding of his music and accentuate its rapacity and impulsiveness. I hope that this can be heard in my recording of the first version of the *Glagolitic Mass* which was released four years ago by Supraphon. I'm frequently professionally involved in Janáček's music and his music is closest to my heart and soul.

**You will be at the Janáček Brno 2018 festival performing *From the House of the Dead* in a production by Welsh National Opera, where you are the music director. Can you tell us something about how the preparations went for the Cardiff production of *From the House of the Dead*?**

**T.H.:** When I was in Cardiff and I heard the first notes from the rehearsals for this opera, it was a beautiful moment, very moving. But you could see it wasn't only me, someone who had known this opera for many years, but that everyone felt the same. The soloists, the members of the chorus, each of whom has a unique role in this production, the musicians in the orchestra. Everyone gave it their all, and alongside their great professionalism you could see and hear that everyone was strongly moved by this opera, that it posed questions, challenged, as well as impressed.

**The production was performed in English. Today on the world's opera stages it is more common to give operas in their**



photo: Gareth Iwan Jones

Tomáš Hanus and the Orchestra of Welsh National Opera





photo: Marco Borggreve

Tomáš Netopil

**original language. Do you think the English translation of the libretto affects how the opera sounds?**

**T.H.:** Not at all in this case, even though you might find some harsh critics of the translation of Janáček's works. I think that *From the House of the Dead* is one of those works whose message is not affected by the translation. There is also the fact that the text which Janáček left is quite incomprehensible in parts without some changes and he used words which didn't even exist in Czech. After decades spent in a Gulag-type prison, we wouldn't expect the poor prisoner to have proper word order and speak a literary language with clear ideas... Another important aspect which favours a translation of this opera is an interpretive reason – all of the nuances of the plot in the prisoners' stories are much better followed, much more spontaneously experienced by the other prisoners, when the singers understand their colleagues. In the case of Czech, even though we always try hard with the director to make everything clear and for everyone to 'understand' everything, basically it will never be the same as having a translation. And so the director, David Pountney, is correct that the action on stage can then appear more authentic and alive than if Czech was used. Naturally, I'm talking about foreign productions. Generally, I enjoy conducting a work in the original language, but there are several cases where I consider a translation as artistically correct or even beneficial. I don't take a dogmatic approach.

**How would you describe David Pountney's Cardiff production?**

**T.H.:** David Pountney is a director with a great feel for music and with an incredible knowledge of his profession as a director. His productions aren't looking to be different and shocking 'so that they're written about in the newspapers', but to be authentic.

**You are basing this production of Janáček's opera *From the House of the Dead* on a new critical edition by the British musicologist and well-known**

**Janáček specialist, John Tyrrell, who tried to get as close to the composer's intentions as possible. In what way is it different from the previous version of the opera which was completed by Janáček's pupils, Břetislav Bakala and Osvald Chlubna?**

**T.H.:** Since I've known about this opera I've never heard of Bakala and Chlubna's version ever being publicly performed. Musicians tend now towards the version by Charles Mackerras and John Tyrrell, which was already close to the Janáček original. In Cardiff we had the honour of performing John Tyrrell's new edition of Janáček's 'raw' original. Incidentally, a few years ago, Welsh National Opera also performed the premiere of Mackerras and Tyrrell's earlier version, so the premiere of the original again in the same place was quite symbolic. It is just a pity that for this world premiere of the composer's version there was very little interest from the Czech media (with some honourable exceptions).

I would add that as a musician I am very familiar with Janáček's compositional process and in some cases I have made some slight adjustments or instrumental changes which I discussed at length with John Tyrrell. In some cases, you can see and hear that the composer didn't have time to look over everything again and gradually fill in some areas (which was normal for him). But John Tyrrell is right that this version is true to life and there is no reason to fear it.

**You will be at the Janáček Brno 2018 festival performing *The Makropulos Affair* in a production by the Vlaamse Opera in Antwerp. You are now working as the music director of the opera and philharmonic in Essen in Germany. When did you start working with the Antwerp opera house?**

**T.N.:** I've been working with the opera house in Antwerp for a long time now. The first time was in 2009 and my local debut was Saint-Saëns' opera *Samson and Delilah*. That was followed by several more productions – Mozart's *Magic Flute*, Halévy's *La Juive*, and in addition to Janáček's *Makropulos Affair* there is this year's Falstaff by Verdi.

**How do you work with the Antwerp opera ensemble?**

**T.N.:** In Antwerp the French-Italian stagione system suits me really well. Rehearsals for one opera last about a month followed by a string of performances. This seems to me to be an effective system and I can rely on the singers and the orchestra being thoroughly prepared.

**Can you tell us something about how the rehearsals went for the Antwerp production of *The Makropulos Affair*? There were no Czech opera singers amongst the international group of singers for the Antwerp *Makropulos Affair*...**

**T.N.:** Well, the exceptional demands which this Janáček opera places upon the soloists and the orchestra were exacerbated even more by the

fact that we didn't have any Czech singers in the cast. Fortunately, we were able to bring on board an excellent language coach and advisor, Broněk Procházka, my colleague from the Prague National Theatre, whose help with the international team of singers was invaluable. In the case of the orchestra, many of the players had the advantage that they had already performed some of Janáček's opera works – *Jenůfa*, *The Cunning Little Vixen* and *Katya Kabanova*, which Vlaamse Opera had worked on in the past with the Canadian director Robert Carsen. Nevertheless, it had been a long time since Janáček had been heard in Antwerp. Janáček's score for *The Makropulos Affair* is indeed unique and the musical material it contains is often very complicated. As a result, when we were rehearsing the production we had to proceed very cautiously and with great attention to detail. Even though the performance only lasts about an hour and a half, within this period Janáček managed to pack an incredible amount of music. Due to the complexity of the overall work, the rehearsals were long and intensive, though very interesting. We were lucky that we had an excellent cast who managed to get to grips with the very complicated musical and linguistic elements.

**How would you evaluate your collaboration with the production's director? Did you see eye to eye in your ideas about the production from an artistic standpoint?**

**T.N.:** It was very pleasant working with the Hungarian director Kornél Mundruczó. His approach to the overall work was completely clear, although indirect, almost cinematic in narrating the story. Kornél Mundruczó has a wealth of experience from directing films which he also applied to the Antwerp production of *The Makropulos Affair*. I think it was only his second time directing an opera. On stage he lets his imagination run wild, uses various effects and video projections which support the development of the story. I'd say that the story line is played out in minimalist images. I think another of Kornél Mundruczó's strong points is his natural feel for capturing and modelling the main characters of a story.

**Do you have any other Janáček projects in the pipeline?**

**T.H.:** Yes, I do. I can't imagine ever forgetting his music.

**T.N.:** Next season in my new home of Essen the opening concert of the season will include the *Glagolitic Mass*. I've already mentioned the new performance of *Jenůfa* at the Dutch National Theatre in Amsterdam, which will take place in October 2018, and of course soon after that in November there'll be *The Makropulos Affair* at the Janáček Brno festival, which I'm very much looking forward to.



# LEOŠ JANÁČEK – THE MAKROPULOS AFFAIR



You are only this happy because  
of the strange coincidence that you  
will die so soon

text: Patricie Částková  
photo: Annemie Augustijns

This year's festival welcomes many outstanding international ensembles, but the Vlaamse Opera occupies a special place among them as it is an opera company which has had Janáček on its repertoire for many years now. Many of Robert Carsen's Janáček productions originated in Antwerp and in 2016 he was invited by the talented Hungarian film and theatre director, Kornél Mundruczó, to work on a production of Janáček's *Makropulos Affair* with the conductor Tomáš Netopil.

Kornél Mundruczó began his artistic career as a film director and he has won awards at Cannes and he regularly appears at the Sundance Film Festival. In 2003 Mundruczó successfully turned his attention to directing theatre and opera and a few years later founded his own company, Proton Theatre. He returned to the Vlaamse Opera following his success with *Duke Bluebeard's Castle/ Winter Journey*, and his *Makropulos Affair* has been so enthusiastically received by audiences and reviewers that it was the first work by a Hungarian artist to be nominated for the International Opera Award.

From a letter from Leoš Janáček  
to Kamila Stösslová

*They've been giving Markopulos in Prague.  
337 years old, but still young and beautiful.  
Would you like that too? And do you know she  
was unhappy? We are happy because we  
know life is short. That is why it is necessary  
to use each moment and live life to the full.  
Our life is one great rush – and desire. The  
latter is my lot. That woman – the 337-year-old  
beauty – no longer had a heart. That is bad.*



## Kornél Mundruczó in conversation with the dramaturg Piet De Volder

**“You cannot live without death”, I remember this statement from the presentation you gave for your directorial concept of *The Makropulos Affair*. It is the key to the opera and can be understood in different ways. Death gives life meaning and direction. But also, that eternal life causes people to lose their basic human qualities and values. It would seem that never-ending life would make monsters out of us.**

**Kornél Mundruczó:** In my eyes, Emilia Marty, the main protagonist in Janáček's opera, isn't at all human. Perhaps she is no longer among the living, she is only floating somewhere above us. Perhaps this miracle was sent down to her, because she herself is certainly a miracle. The elixir is what prolongs her life, and from our perspective, it gives substance to the universe. It is endless matter: foreign and mysterious. Emilia suffers from the profound desire to be human, but she can only become human if she dies. She is like a UFO or artificial intelligence. So I've tried to get rid of the operatic stereotypes which view Emilia as an opera diva and iconic singer. For me she is primarily a strongly provocative figure, who is very afraid that someone will discover who she really is and force her to reveal her identity or identities.

**The fact that Emilia Marty is 337 years old means that she witnessed the very beginnings of opera as a genre! She is a living history of opera. As a film-maker, do you see Emilia more as a movie icon?**

**Krzysztof Warlikowski used this perspective for his production in Paris...**

**K. M.:** I definitely don't want a celebrity from the film world. Celebrity is also a different concept today than it was in Janáček's day. In his day, Janáček created a romantic picture of an artist – a picture which no longer lives today. For me, Emilia Marty is an avant-garde star, an actor from an arthouse movie or from a film by Pasolini. Or someone like Lisbeth Salander from Stieg Larsson's *Millennium* trilogy. For me, Emilia Marty has alien strength and an androgynous body. You want to understand her because she is so different from the rest. If you want to show a scene today of Janáček's character as a true actor, you might come up with the provocative attitude of David Bowie or Bjork. It's about the different masks you can use as an artist and what lies hidden beneath those masks.

**Nevertheless, Emilia Marty, alias Elina Makropulos, has a very rich past – she is an ongoing archive. Is her melancholy explained in the score?**

**K. M.:** It's true that you can hear a lot of melancholy in the music and that the entire score is charged with tremendous longing. But for me this is more existential than a look into an artistic past. In our version the second act of the opera is not set in a theatre [the place where Emilia is accosted by her admirers, ed.]. The action is set in the flat that Emilia is renting. It's a flat in the modernist style of Marcel Breuer [Hungarian-American architect and furniture designer linked to the Bauhaus group in the 1920s, ed.]. The flat is located at the edge of a forest, where miracles occur – such as objects bobbing up and down in the air. The elixir also seeps more into the space. We see the expression of Emilia's soul in it. For me, this part of the opera is filled with melancholy. At the same time, you can sense great optimism in the music. The spirit of modernism from the 1920s and the spirit of Marcel Breuer combine perfectly with the period

when Janáček wrote his opera. I sense in Janáček's music a lot of hope and a tremendous will to renew things. It is a faith which can create an artistic way of life, and a good, meaningful society. Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály had similar visions. It is good to rediscover the importance of [historical] optimism from the 1920s: the faith that we can choose and create our own life and identity. From this perspective you can read *The Makropulos Affair* as a drama about identity in the modernist age. The search for identity makes this opera very up-to-date if we consider the possibilities that the internet gives us for choosing and changing identities. This is one explanation why Janáček's music is still so popular today and why his work continues to be revived. We can see many of his operas as echoes of our own contemporary lives.

**Back to the supernatural, which is of fundamental importance in your view of this work. Janáček himself emphasized the infiltration of the supernatural into everyday life when he mentioned the use of special lighting effects in his libretto.**

**K. M.:** The whole work is connected by transcendence and transcendental energy. This transcendental energy becomes stronger from the second act. But in the end, all that is left is a black hole. The opera starts off as a realistic modern drama, almost like a film by the Dardenne brothers or by the Romanian film-maker, Cristian Mungiu. At first, everything seems to be in a documentary style

until you find out that it's about something much more serious and existential. The whole opera then takes on the character of a Greek tragedy. I love this unexpected path that the opera takes, this excursion. There's a magical realism to it, but I also feel there's a similarity with the early Steven Spielberg – the Spielberg of the *E.T.* days. We are digging deeper and deeper into the human soul. It's also very Freudian: we come closer and closer to the object of our attention.

**Let's set aside Emilia's existence lasting for more than three hundred years and return to her original identity – Elina Makropulos: did Elina keep her original identity through all of the different ones she took on, or did she always change?**

**K. M.:** In our interpretation she has one and the same identity. She has been through an unbelievable amount of trauma. She has lost her children, her love...everything is gone. In addition to this, she has to live a life of lies. For her, the truth would mean instant death. But she is also very wise and omniscient because she looks at people from different perspectives. On the one hand, she has become increasingly alienated from the world, on the other, she knows much more than mortals do about society, people's desires, happiness, aggression and violence. She knows all there is to know about human emotions. Near death, at the start of the opera, she also knows what lies under the surface of real life; how ordinary human life

passes by. We shouldn't forget either that Elina's artistic existence over the centuries is an ideal way to form an undercover life. Thanks to her different artistic characters she can easily act as a society voyeur. Her real character remains in the shadows, offstage.

**Now specifically to your production: the visitors to Emilia's don't behave towards her in a normal manner. They act like strange aliens.**

**K. M.:** I wanted the house to be like from a thriller or a place like *Twin Peaks* in order to represent the characters around Emilia coming out from their normal life and from their comfort zones.

**Emilia is an alien in a more or less closed-off world. The phenomenon of the alien is a central motif in many of your works...**

**K. M.:** That's true. Emilia is a complete stranger in the world she finds herself. She can't live her own life – that is her tragedy. But in addition to that, she is endlessly, incredibly alone; like a forgotten extraterrestrial object.



Photo: René Ruis

The title role of Elina Markopulos is performed by the Swiss soprano **Rachel Harnisch**, who is one of the leading singers in the European opera and concert scene. Her repertoire covers music from Mozart's classic works (*The Magic Flute*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Così fan tutte*), to the great works of the 19th century (Micaela in *Carmen*, Antonia in *The Tales of Hoffmann*), to the operas of the 20th and 21st centuries (Sophie in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Clémence in *L'Amour de loin*, Blanche in Poulenc's *Dialogues of the Carmelites*). She has worked with opera houses in Zurich, Munich, Berlin, Paris, Madrid, at the Glyndebourne festival and elsewhere.

# BEDŘICH SMETANA – LIBUŠE

Conductor: Robert Kružík  
Director: Jiří Heřman

**MĚSTSKÉ DIVADLO V BRNĚ**

**Družstvo a ředitelství Čes. Národ. divadla  
v Brně pořádá na oslavu příjezdu a nastou-  
pení presidenta MASARYKA**

**slavnostní představení:**

## **LIBUŠE.**

Slavnostní zpěvohra o 3 jednáních a 3 obrazech. Na slova J. Wenziga  
hudebně složil Bedřich Smetana.

Dingent Josef Winkler. Režisér Karel Komarov.

Libuše, česká kněžna	---	Linda Šmitlová.
Přemysl ze Stádku	---	Emil Bujal i. h.
Chradim od Otavy i bratři	---	Cenek Čížek.
Stáhlán na Radbuzě i	---	Václav Šedý.
Lušebor z Dobrušky Chludce, jich strýc	---	Karel Komarov.
Radivoj od Kamenné mošty	---	Jan Kuba.
Krzava, Lušeborova dcera, obě na Libu-	---	Božena Štepková.
Radmíra, sestra obrubratří	---	Slava Tříbná.

Kmeti, leli, vladkyvě. Panny, dívky ze dvora Libušina. Přemyslova čeleď. Kopaničky. Lučičtíci. Lid. Děj na  
Vytěbrání z částí ve štádkách, z částí u mohyly za dok pohanských.

Kvartet zpěvů za scénou: Marie Fialová, Božena Štepková, Marie Havelková a Val. Šindler. — V živých  
obrazech účinkují laskavě vtipní nezaměstnaní pp. členové a pp. ochotníci.

**Úbor salonní.**

**Začátek o 7. hod. večer. Konec o 10. hod.**

**Jakmile započne předehra nebude nikdo  
do hlediště vpuštěn.**

**Sedadla vyprodána.**

**O 4. hod. odpol. v Hár. divadle zkouška pp. ochotníků, jichž se přijme 50.**

photo: Leoš Janáček Archive, MM

To celebrate the arrival of President Masaryk, the committee of the Czech National Theatre in Brno presents a gala performance of LIBUŠE.

Stage design: Tomáš Rusín  
Costume design: Zuzana Štefunková-Rusínová  
Starring:  
Libuše – Lucie Hájková  
Přemysl – Jiří Hájek  
Premiere 7 September 2018

This year's festival is dedicated to the hundredth anniversary of Czech state, and it was Leoš Janáček who suggested a gala performance of Smetana's *Libuše* in 1918 in honour of the first president of the republic, T. G. Masaryk, which is why this opera with its depiction of the origin of the nation is an essential part of the programme. This new production by the Janáček Opera NTB, directed by Jiří Heřman and conducted by Robert Kružík, is a young generation of artists' view of this symbol of Czech culture.

*Our production looks at the values of our society and also, I believe, at the hope for our nation, which was clearly set out by T. G. Masaryk and the first lady of the Czechoslovak Republic, Charlotte Garrigue Masaryk. Performing Libuše at the Brno Exhibition Centre gives this production an added dimension. The celebrations marking the opening of the Brno Exhibition Centre were linked with the first exhibition of contemporary Czech culture, and we hope that our production will be a continuation of these cultural ideals and lead us back to the basic aspects of humanity and the reasons for existing on such a threatened planet.*

Jiří Heřman

festival reprise

**27/11/2018** Brno Exhibition Centre,  
Pavilion P

# LEOŠ JANÁČEK – FROM THE HOUSE OF THE DEAD



There is a divine spark  
in each creature..

text: Patricie Částková

Several decades ago, international interest in Janáček's music began to take off in Great Britain, where Janáček still has a firm place in the repertoire of the leading British theatre companies. Welsh National Opera is coming to the Czech Republic for the first time, an ensemble which although established as recently as 1973 was already being labelled by the New York Times in 1992 as 'one of best opera companies in Europe'. For several years it has been led by the outstanding British director David Pountney, and since 2016 its musical director has been the Czech conductor and pupil of Jiří Bělohlávek, Tomáš Hanus.

David Pountney is one of the most important international proponents of Czech music and the works of Janáček in particular. He was in Brno as a 'Janáček' director in 2004 when he collaborated on a magnificent production of *Jenůfa* with the Vienna State Opera. He first came across Janáček's opera when he was studying at Cambridge University: 'I remember exactly where it was. I was visiting my friend Mark Elder, who is now a very famous conductor – we were students, I was 16 or 17 or something – in his parents' house in north London. And we got some records from the Hornsey Library. And there were some LP's of *Katya*. I'll never forget hearing the opening music of *Katya*, the beginning of the overture, the prelude, which has such an incredible sound. That was it. I was hooked.'

And it was one of Janáček's operas, a production of *Katya Kabanova* for the Wexford Festival in 1972, which helped the young director gain recognition. At that time, Pountney was working for Scottish Opera and when he received an offer from Welsh National Opera to direct *Jenůfa* he came up with the courageous idea of staging a whole Janáček cycle: 'And shortly after that while I was already working at the Scottish Opera, I was invited to go to the Welsh National Opera to do *Jenůfa*, so I proposed to my boss in Scotland that we should make this the start of a joint cycle of Janáček productions between Wales and Scotland. As a result of that we did *Jenůfa*, *Katya*, *Makropulos*, *From the House of the Dead* and *The Cunning Little Vixen* between those two companies in the 1970s. And two of those productions are still alive today: *From the House of the Dead* and *The Cunning Little Vixen*, which we did in Wales only two years ago.'

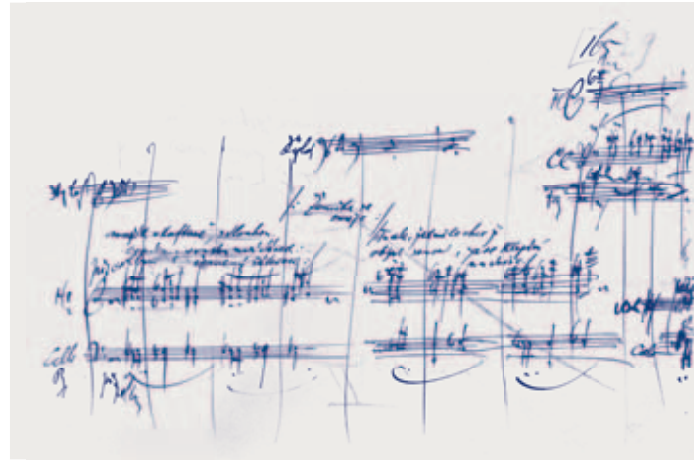
It was this famous production of *From the House of the Dead* in an English translation by David Pountney which was resurrected in the autumn of 2017 as part of Welsh National Opera's Russian cycle. The original production, however, was given a musical overhaul by the WNO musical director, Tomáš Hanus, who used a new critical edition by the internationally respected Janáček scholar, Professor John Tyrrell. As a result, the producers were able to work with a form of the opera which probably comes closest to what Janáček had in mind before he was able to complete it.

### Why did Janáček decide to set Dostoevsky's memoirs to music?

**John Tyrrell:** I'd love to know the answer to that one! We don't even know the circumstances of how Janáček came across the book. My guess is that he picked up his Russian edition of Dostoevsky's *Memoirs from the House of the Dead* when he was in Berlin for the première there of *Katya Kabanova* in May 1926 (this Russian edition was published in Berlin). At first sight it seems such an unpromising text for Janáček to consider – setting an opera in a Russian male prison meant virtually excluding women's voices, which had dominated all his recent operas. One thing that may have attracted him were the monologues based on the prisoners' accounts of how they ended up in prison. Each act has a long monologue – almost a little play within a play; Act 3 even has two monologues.

### How did he usually go about writing his operas? Was the work on *From the House of the Dead* different in any way?

**J.T.:** Unlike all his previous operas where Janáček had some form of libretto before he began composition, in *From the House of the Dead* he had only a very rough scenario written on a few scraps of paper. One of the scraps contained page numbers of sections of the Dostoevsky book that he intended using and it seems that Janáček simply started composing with his copy of the Dostoevsky in front of him. This is very different from, say, *The Cunning Little Vixen* where Janáček also constructed his own libretto from a novel, but did take the time to write out a rough libretto before he started composition. Another big difference in *From the House of the Dead* is that the first time in an opera he stopped using score paper, i. e. paper with printed stave lines for the instruments, but instead began with blank pieces of paper on which he wrote his own stave lines (freehand!) according to what instruments he needed at that particular moment. It was the first time that he composed an opera in this way and it led to a more chamber-like orchestration (e.g. in comparison with *The Makropulos Affair*). With the libretto or text before him he would write out the new opera in full score, very fast – essentially a type of improvisation involving a large number of musical motifs and not much repetition or development. There was no preliminary sketching or planning of motifs. The result is a continuous draft but one whose musical logic is precariously thin at times. He would write each act like this, usually with a long pause in between. The pauses were essential – he needed to get away from the material for a while – and he regarded them as little treats, planned well in advance, to give him a deadline to work to. Mostly the 'treats' were trips to his holiday locations of Hukvaldy and of Luhačovice. In the case of *From the House of the Dead*, the first planned trip, having completed Act 1, was Písek, where Kamila Stösslová lived. This visit was a crucial turning-point in his relationship with Stösslová and had also a surprising impact on the opera. Stösslová was now seen (in Janáček's imagination) as Aljeja, the young tartar boy, and the passages between him and Goryanchikov acquired an extra poignancy. And from now on Kamila received detailed accounts in Janáček's letters of how he was getting on with the opera.



Autograph *From the House of the Dead*

photo: Leoš Janáček Archive, MM

### Janáček himself prepared and translated the libretto directly from the Russian original. Because of this, it contains a number of words from Russian and Ukrainian, and this has often led to various modifications of the text. Does the new edition reproduce Janáček's original libretto exactly?

**J.T.:** Yes, and this is a departure from previous editions. When the opera was first presented in Brno in 1930, i. e. two years after Janáček's death, and prepared for performance and publication by his pupils Osvald Chlubna and Břetislav Bakala, it was thought that the many Russian and Ukrainian expressions in the opera would be unintelligible and so most of them were replaced by something in Czech. For the new edition we thought that it should reflect Janáček's score as closely as possible, omitting all of the extra orchestrations by Chlubna, and similarly all the Czech replacements of Russian words. I regard the exotic sound of these Russian and Ukrainian (and sometimes Moravian) expressions as part of the of soundscape of the opera.

### Janáček died unexpectedly without completing the opera. It is likely that he would have made further alterations during rehearsals in collaboration with the conductor, as happened with his previous works. What form did he leave the unfinished opera in?

**J.T.:** It is an exaggeration to say that Janáček did not complete the opera. The opera is complete in his autograph score. Furthermore that autograph score was then copied out under Janáček's supervision by his two most trusted copyists, Václav Sedláček and Jaroslav Kulhánek. The copyists came to Janáček's house where he was able to clarify dubious notes and, in many cases, make fresh suggestions and corrections so that the copyists' score is often different from Janáček's autograph score. Furthermore Janáček carefully went through Acts 1 and 2 after his copyists were finished and made further adjustments such as doublings of instruments and adding metronome marks in Act 1. Act 3 was the only act not looked through in this way: the score of Act 3 was on Janáček's desk in Hukvaldy when he died in August 1928. If he and the conductor František Neumann had remained alive (Neumann died six months after Janáček), the opera would probably have made its way to the Brno stage in 1929 where any further problems would have been ironed out and some practical

adjustments of tempo and dynamics would have been made by composer and conductor, who had worked closely together in this way on Janáček's last three operas. Unfortunately, however, this did not happen and instead Bakala as conductor, and Ota Zitek as stage director were responsible for the new première and decided that the opera was so different from its predecessors and the method of Janáček's writing it so odd that they concluded that it was 'just a sketch' which needed extra help. The version of the opera that they (together with Chlubna) produced was furthermore set in stone by its publication by Universal Edition.

### The work had to be completed for the first staging, and changes were also made to the overall tone as well as the instrumentation. The new edition reverts to Janáček's original intentions. How different an opera can audiences expect?

**J.T.:** Janáček's original version began to be uncovered through the efforts of Rafael Kubelík, who in 1961 conducted a version based not on the copyists' score but on Janáček's autograph (so not containing Janáček's last thoughts and changes). The new edition tidies up many little problems but in particular omits the extra orchestration during some of the climactic passages in the opera (the end of Act 2, for instance, or the orchestral reaction to the death Filka in Act 3). One of the most striking changes comes between the two plays the prisoners perform in Act 2. Chlubna went overboard there and wrote a whole laughing chorus over Janáček's orchestral music. In the original score there are a few bars of laughter for the tenors and basses, and after that the laughter all went into the orchestra. Chlubna turned it into a kind of polyphonic chorus with everybody singing. Not only does this change the whole character of the work but it also created a specific problem because over the original orchestral music there was an announcement of the second play. For that to be audible, Chlubna had to add a repeat bar for Kedril to make the announcement. Chlubna's most notorious addition – the 'optimistic' chorus that he devised to conclude the opera – mercifully disappeared from all performances when Janáček edition issued a new score in 1964 with Janáček's original ending.



# LEOŠ JANÁČEK – ŠÁRKA

A production by Opera Diversa in collaboration  
with National Theatre Brno, commissioned by the  
Janáček Brno 2018 festival

**My Šárka? Everything within it is so close to my  
last work! A passionate introduction. Gloomy dense  
forests smelling of moss.** Leoš Janáček



Ondřej Kyas



Kristiana Belcredi

text: Patricie Částková

The opera work of Leoš Janáček is renowned across the world but when he was a young composer, he showed little interest in the genre. All of this evidently changed with the opening of the Czech opera stage in 1884. In December of the same year Janáček established and began editing the music journal *Hudební listy*, where he himself wrote a column dedicated to Czech opera in Brno. At the start of 1885 he also began to show an interest in composing opera when he wrote an outline to Chateaubriand's short story *The Adventures of the Last Abencerage*. However, his first real attempt at working on an opera began with *Šárka*.

Janáček used Julius Zeyer's libretto, which had been serialised in the journal *Česká Thalie* in the winter of 1887. This involved the fourth part of Zeyer's extensive poetic epic *Vyšehrad*, which the author had originally intended for Antonín Dvořák. Janáček was taken by the text based on the Czech legends on the wars between women and men which erupted following the death of Princess Libuše. Even at this stage he showed himself to be a great dramatist and his adaptation of the libretto contributed towards the briskness and clarity of the opera. Janáček sent his debut work to Dvořák, who responded positively, thus giving Janáček the courage to ask Zeyer for his permission to use his libretto. The poet, undoubtedly put out by the fact that a young, inexperienced composer had deigned to interfere with his text, was uncompromising and refused to give permission. Nevertheless, Janáček continued writing and finished part of the instrumentation, though he then set it aside and forgot about it over time. This might have been the end of the story of Janáček's debut work had he not come across the old score for *Šárka* while making the preparations for *Jenůfa's* premiere in Vienna. With the help of his pupil, Osvald Chlubna, he finished the instrumentation and *Šárka* was performed at the National Theatre in Brno in 1925.

As part of this year's festival, *Šárka* will be performed in two versions. The first will be a concert performance of the version which Janáček completed in 1887 as a piano score, and the second will be the opera performed on stage with an orchestra. However, it will not be the version which was premiered in 1925 in Brno. A regular feature of the festival is music which is related to or inspired by Janáček's work, and in this case the Brno composer Ondřej Kyas was approached to provide the instrumentation for the existing piano version of *Šárka*.

The entire project consisting of the two performances was entrusted to the Ensemble Opera Diversa, which has already acquired a firm position in the Brno cultural scene, both for the opera productions of the creative duo of Kyas/Drábek, as well as for its series of concerts offering less well-known compositions from the 20th century. Ondřej Kyas is the ensemble's founder and has five full-length operas and a series of mini operas to his credit. The project will also feature the participation of other leading members of the Ensemble Opera Diversa including the conductor Gabriela Tardonová and the director Kristiana Belcredi.

**21/11/2018** Concert performance,  
Reduta Theatre  
(Mozart Auditorium)

**22/11/2018** Staged performance,  
Reduta Theatre  
reprise 28. 11.





photo: Brno City Archive

Postcard from 1928

Leoš Janáček  
Lidové noviny, 24. 12. 1927

## My town

It was the year 1886.

There was a constant coming and going from St Anne's hospital on Pekařská Street to the king's monastery. Cholera raged and there were lots of funerals that we singers had to attend.

Kláštevní náměstí was full of Prussians, like a swarm of black ants. Only yesterday 'our' soldiers were there. Now they had fled.

The millstream from the monastery gate – at that time Vincenc Brandl lived in the adjacent house – flowed lazy and dirty and then under a small bridge.

From Pekařská over the bridge to Křížova.

A cross beside the bridge.

Tracks crossed each other wildly and in the abrupt curve a wagon skidded and turned over. Coffee poured out from the torn sacks.

The narrow pass blocked!

I was a witness to this bedlam.

Opposite St Anne's sat a small house. It had a solitary window on the first floor. On the ground floor there were a few steps down to the cobbler's.

Oh, he was an unbelievable grumbler!

'Repair this?! Heels gone, uppers like wings, there is nothing to hold them together!'

Behind the hospital was the 'Lakerwiese' school, and behind that was a smelly tanning factory.

This was as far as we knew the town. Any further and we'd have got lost.

When I was an older boy I used to go for violin and piano lessons past the Hutter pond. A pond? More like a swamp and rubbish dump surrounded by a long alley of chestnuts. Behind this was a secluded house where my teacher lived, the virtuoso Vilemína Normanová-Nerudová.

And it was as though Lužánky park didn't exist for me.

And to Černá Pole? There was the anguish of the workers.

At that time it wasn't a large town.

On the outskirts were the city cemetery and the St Wenceslas or 'Old' cemetery; the Zábřovice church and the Brothers of Charity hospital.

In those days the Elizabeth Convent was an isolated building. If you were walking to Pisárky or the Yellow Hill, it was practically an excursion.

You could really explore the whole town on foot.

Along the 'long' bridge across the Svatka river to the Viennese bridge through the courtyard of the Ypsilanti house with a Turk sitting crosslegged, carved out in stone on the gate, along the tannery to the Serpent fountain under the František church. From there into the dark, gloomy cellarlike room of No. 7 Starobrněnská street along which I hurried every day when I taught at the Organ School.

Running is one thing, but how could one love the town at this time? And then one day the town underwent a miraculous transformation.

My antagonism towards the gloomy town hall vanished along with my hatred of Špilberk Castle in whose depths there had been so much suffering, and with it my antipathy towards the streets and their teeming crowds.

The light of freedom blazed above the town – the rebirth of October 28th 1918!

I was part of it, I belonged to it.

And the blast of the victory trumpets,

the holy quiet of the King's Convent,  
the night shadows and the breath of Green Hill.

And seeing this upsurge and greatness in my town inspired me to write my Sinfonietta from this understanding of my town Brno!



# LEOŠ JANÁČEK – JENŮFA

1/12/2018 Janáček  
Theatre



## The question is how to find the 'code'

text: Patricie Částková  
photo: Magdalena Oško

'A spectacular and folkloric production' was how the New York Times described the production of *Jenůfa* by the Latvian director Alvis Hermanis, created for Brussels' La Monnaie in 2014. Today Hermanis is one of the leading European directors, despite the fact that until he was fifteen it looked as though he was more interested in professional ice hockey. His first theatre experience was in Riga, but in 2003 he was awarded the Young Director prize at the Salzburg Festival, which opened the doors to German-speaking theatre companies and to collaboration with ensembles in Vienna, Zurich and Berlin. His first encounter with opera was also thanks to the Salzburg Festival, where in 2012 he was offered the chance to direct the opera *Die Soldaten* by B. A. Zimmermann. Since then he has worked on operas for companies such as the National Opera de Paris and the Teatro alla Scala. The Brussels production of *Jenůfa*, where Hermanis placed two different approaches beside each other – one inspired by Moravian folk culture seen through an Art Nouveau interpretation, and the second grimly realistic – is today a highly regarded work which has been performed by other opera houses such as the Teatro Comunale in Bologne. In Brno, Hermanis's production is performed by the opera company from the Grand Theatre of Stanisław Moniuszko in Poznań, conducted by its artistic director, Gabriel Chmura.

# Marie Mergeay in conversation with Alvis Hermanis

## Your roots lie in the theatre. So what was it that led you to the opera?

I had heard that opera directors are better paid (laughs), only to discover that it isn't true!... not even if you have worked, as I have, at the highest level in the German-speaking theatre world. No, but seriously, there are several good reasons for venturing into opera. What really attracts me to it is the set: I want to visualize a story and music. I see that as the great challenge. And also I feel a tremendous hunger for beauty and that aesthetic component is rare in contemporary verbal theatre.

## Why couldn't you get enough beauty in the theatre?

Good question! A hundred or perhaps even fifty years ago things were different, but today nobody expects to find "beauty" in the theatre. Not beauty in the ironic sense of the world, but beauty as an aesthetic category. Sometimes I feel that in modern verbal theatre the organ for experiencing beauty has been "amputated". In music, on the other hand, you can't escape it; what we call music is architecture, form – it has to do with harmony and in that respect it is synonymous with beauty. The trouble with contemporary verbal theatre is that it concentrates entirely on the statement, the content, on the socio-political message, while ignoring aesthetics. There are of course exceptions. A wonderful example is Romeo Castellucci, who is obsessed with beauty in his work. But these days theatre directors more often behave like political activists than artists.

## Where do you stand in this? You have a reputation for being a director who looks for hyperrealism, who takes a documentary approach, focusing on social reality. Isn't that politics?

Hyperrealism is just one side of my work. As for politics, I would just like to say this; I come from Eastern Europe and from a generation that has developed a certain allergy to anything that smacks of "political" art. I witnessed the transition from communism to capitalism and learned that fundamentally nothing has changed. Art is too complex and subtle an instrument to be used to improve socio-political conditions. That's why I'm so obsessed with opera at the moment, because I imagine it allows tremendous freedom – as if it was a different reality. Also, at a certain stage in your life, it is good to change direction. I am now forty-eight and a novice when it comes to directing

opera, but I have decided to concentrate exclusively on opera for the next four seasons. I feel I'm beginning a new life!

## How do you decide about what you are going to direct?

In the opera it is different from the theatre; opera directors are not in a position to come up with their own projects, but I am able to choose between different projects. In the verbal theatre, the director is in charge, which can be very lonely. In opera you aren't on your own because there is the music! And the music has a structure that has to be respected. This is all new to me and, so far at least, I think it's wonderful. *Jenůfa* is the fourth opera I got to direct.

## I believed you also described yourself as old fashioned?

Yes, and with pride! I am quite old school. In the next few years I am going to work on various projects: Verdi, Puccini, Berlioz, Wagner... I always begin by trying to steep myself in the historical context in which a score was written. I really believe that the sounds we call "music" are determined by the time and place in which they were written. But there is a difference between gaining a thorough understanding of a work and representing it. Here I am talking about the spirit of a work, not so much its exact reproduction with props, costumes and so on. I want to understand how the music is generated by specific context. It's question of finding the "code" for each period in time. That is my starting point, but that doesn't mean its scenic rendition can't be thoroughly modern. For *Jenůfa* I have followed a similar approach. To understand Janáček's music, I went to Moravia, to the isolated villages where at the end of the nineteenth century Janáček went and studied the local music traditions. What fascinates me about his music is its blend of modernism and ethnography. That was crucial to our concept: at the beginning of the twentieth century modernism in music and in the plastic arts was not opposed to ethnography. In fact, folklore and traditions were its greatest source of inspiration. Think of Diaghilev's Ballets Russes. *Jenůfa* illustrates that same influence and fusion. Another good example of modernism at the time was Czech variant of Art Nouveau – with Mucha as its number-one exponent. For me the extreme refinement of this Belle Époque style, with the flower as an important motif, corresponds to Janáček's aesthetic – of almost unbearable



photo: Magdalena Osko

beauty. The Moravian village culture and in particular the exuberant traditional costumes of that region, along with the Czech Art Nouveau, are the two cornerstones of our concept. We want to show that even today tradition and modernism (together with high-tech artifice) can go hand in hand. It is newer a literal translation. The costumes, for example, are never an exact reproduction of Moravian national dress, but a reinterpretation of them, based on their extraordinary wealth of detail and artisanship of the opera costume ateliers. In the sea the work of video artist Ineta Sipunova will help us translate music into movement, into ornament. Abstract and expressionist body language will preside over the acting style and the choreography, whereas the corps de ballet, in Alla Sigalova's choreography, will serve as a sort of moving ornament.

## What is *Jenůfa* about in your opinion?

Oh dear, I was afraid you would ask me that... people always say that opera libretti are so incoherent, but I believe you should approach an opera libretto as a metaphor for something bigger, something deeper. So *Jenůfa* is a story of the pain and sacrifice which are necessary to achieve happiness. That's the way things are in life; pain and happiness are inextricably linked, as you see at the end of the opera. I don't think there is much more to it than that. I certainly don't see it as social drama. But the story is well written! It could easily be a Bergman film script or an Ibsen play. A hundred years ago there were strict rules of course – but today we don't need to concern ourselves with the morality of that time, with the incident of a woman's child being sacrificed in a Moravian village so that woman can marry another man. I think it makes more sense to see it as a poetic metaphor.

## You mentioned the end of the opera...

The ending is positive, isn't it? At least that's what the music suggests... There are famous productions in which *Jenůfa* meets her fate. Personally I believe she does find happiness in the end, but of course she has paid a high price for it.



## Folklore concerts

# DISCOVERING FOLK SONG WITH JANÁČEK



Leoš Janáček with members of the Work Committee for Czech Folk Music in Moravia and Silesia in Strání, 1906

Our people don't only want to say words, they want to sing what is in their hearts. That a well-known song will come to him which suits his mood and what his inner self wants to say, what to partially cover, to half express, it doesn't take long to make a singer from our people. There are often cases where they know 600 verses and melodies. Each period of his life has an expression in song, where at the right time, in the right place, in the right company, the proper mood can easily be evoked.

Leoš Janáček

The three concerts labelled 'folk' in the Janáček Brno 2018 festival programme not only aim to present Janáček to the music public as an exceptional composer, but also as one of the most distinctive representatives of Moravian folk music. His interest in folk music was mainly linked to his search for inspiration for his own compositions, though at the same time it was to develop into a lifelong love. This involved nearly four years of systematic work, both collecting (folk songs, instrumentals and dances) and theoretical work. It is, therefore, possible to label Janáček as one of the founders of modern Moravian folk music studies. These three concerts present Janáček's legacy in three different ways.

The first concert is devoted to Moravian-Slovakian Horňácko. For a long time, this rugged area located on the Moravian-Slovakian border has kept folk music and culture alive. This was why it attracted (and continues to attract) the attention of a number of artists. Not only did Janáček discover here a thrilling richness in music, but also folk musicians and singers: the first violin Pavel Trn and his band, the singer Kateřina Hudečková and her brother and graduate from the Brno Organ School, Martin Zeman, a collector of songs and dances who became an important colleague of Janáček. We should also remember the very close contacts between Horňácko and the nearby town of Myjava in Slovakia and the surrounding hilly pastures. Janáček was greatly taken by the local musicians, especially the band led by the first violin Samko Dudík. This concert, dedicated to Janáček's favourite region, has been organized by Musica Folklorica, a musical collective in the tradition of the Horňácko musicians and Janáček's very modern understanding of folk music. The band's programme transcends the limits of folk traditions and projects into its arrangements the contemporary ideas and musical education of its members.

The second concert is entitled 'Flowers of Love' and presents folk songs from the collections of Leoš Janáček in several stylized forms. In this case too, inspiration can be found directly from Janáček who worked with folk songs in this way: not only did he write piano and vocal arrangements of folk songs, but also orchestral compositions which used folk references. At the same

time, he was one of the first to present on stage the authentic artists from this tradition – folk musicians, dancers and singers – in order to show the public the raw form of folk culture, which so many artistic works had used in so many different ways. As part of the concert the songs will be performed in interpretive as well as more rustic versions, as solo and choir performances, as well as a source of inspiration for musical improvisation. The programme will include the male-voice quartet Q Vox, the organist Martin Jakubiček, from Strážnice the Cimbálová muzika Danaj with soloists Magdalena Múčková and Jan Gajda, and the female choir Marína from Zvolen, Slovakia.

The third concert is a colourful regional and artistic mosaic: it offers music, dance, solo and choral singing – both secular and sacred. The programme aims to present the wide range of Janáček's regional interests: from Lachia and Wallachia to Luhačovice Zálesí and Moravian Slovakia, to the area surrounding Brno, the legacy of this musical giant is still alive and inspiring. The programme presents both folk ensembles working directly with Janáček's written songs and dances, and ensembles, groups and individuals representing different localities (Strání, Vnorovy, Strážnice) which the composer was enormously impressed by. Janáček's native region of Lachia and its rugged folk culture is represented by the Ensemble of Folk Music and Dances Valašský Vojvoda from Kozlovice, the area of Luhačovické Zálesí by the Valašský soubor Kašava from Zlín, Brno and its ceremonial dances of the *Little Queens* by the folksong ensemble Podskalák Troubsko, the lowlands of Moravian Slovakia around the river Moravia are represented by Věčně Mladý Danaj a CM Vítězslava Pálenského from Strážnice, the municipality of Strání on the Moravian-Slovakian border by Skupina Fašánčárů and Gajdoš Pavel Popelka. The concert entitled *On a not Overgrown Path* is not only in honour of Janáček the collector, but it is also proof that the efforts of this outstanding figure to protect folk songs, music and dances were not in vain.

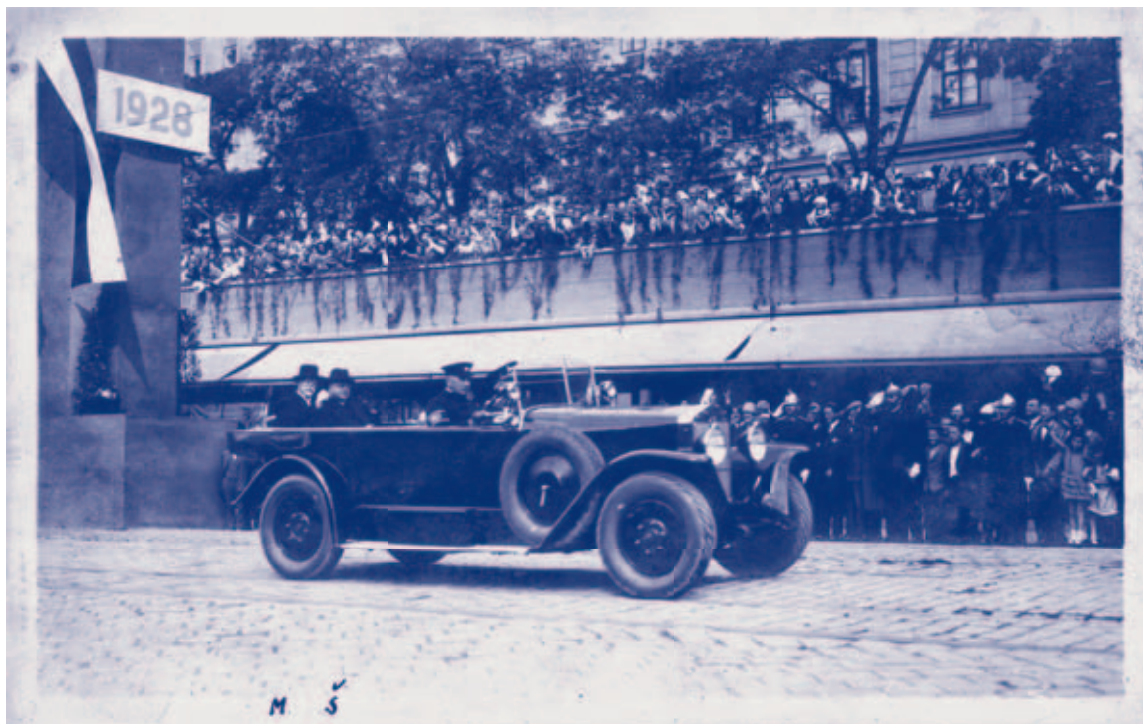


photo: Brno City Archive

President Masaryk and Jan Šrámek  
during a visit to Brno on 9 June 1928

# JANÁČEK AND MASARYK

text: Jiří Zahradka

The 28th of October 1918 was a day of celebration. In his Brno home on the corner of Smetanova and Giskrova (today's Kounicova) streets, Janáček contentedly went to bed thinking of his teaching duties at the Organ School. But just one day later and many things had changed. The classes were deserted – as the composer himself noted in the class register: '29th October 1918 – a day off due to the declaration of the Czechoslovak state.' And from that moment on, new opportunities began to open up for the nearly sixty-five-year-old composer, thanks to which he could accomplish many goals which would have been impossible under the old political system. Within a year the Organ School had been transformed into a conservatory and was then nationalized. Together with the committee of the National Theatre Brno Družstvo [cooperative], the entire theatre management was reorganized, and a new, highly competent leadership was installed. Janáček was well aware of the fact that the establishment of Czechoslovakia and the setting out of its vision was to a large extent the work of the academic and politician Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk. Janáček and Masaryk had many things in common – they were from a similar generation, both came from poor backgrounds, both studied away from home, Masaryk pre-empted Janáček's studies in Vienna and Leipzig. They were also linked by a similar set of values as well as their attraction to Russian culture, in particular literature, while they saw the German question in a similar light. Masaryk liked music, although he was mainly a great admirer of Bedřich Smetana, who Janáček was more critical of.

We do not know when Janáček first became aware of the work of T. G. Masaryk. Prior to 1918 he never mentioned him in his correspondence, notebooks or feuilletons. However, he did own a copy of *The Basics of Concrete Logic*, published in 1885, which he had read and annotated. The only thing we do not know is when Janáček's respect for Masaryk was apparent in the first days following the foundation of Czechoslovakia. He even personally helped organize the Brno celebrations for the arrival of President Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk on 21 December 1918. At the second meeting of the newly appointed committee of the National Theatre Brno Družstvo on 19 Decem-

ber 1918, Janáček suggested that the president's arrival should be marked by a gala performance of Smetana's *Libuše*. He also recommended that the performance be held in the grand City (today's Mahen) Theatre instead of the Czech theatre on Veveří street. As *Libuše* had not been on the repertoire of Brno's National Theatre for ten years, Janáček had to guarantee that they would be able to rehearse a production of sufficient quality in just two days in a new space and with improvised stage design. It was a courageous, politically sensitive plan, as was seen by the tension caused by the press's announcement that Czechs should not go to the German theatre, and that this act gave Brno Germans the excuse not to actively celebrate this significant day. In addition, there were concerns that the performance could end up being an artistic debacle. However, the performance of *Libuše* was a success, as Janáček wrote in a letter to his muse Kamila Stösslová:

**There is quite the celebration here today. I suggested that we perform *Libuše* for the first time at the City Theatre. The whole theatre has been sold out since 9am yesterday! I wonder how it'll turn out. [...] I am writing this after the gala theatre performance. By chance our Legionnaires came with their Italian officers. There was some welcome in the theatre!**

It was not long before the paths of these two extraordinary men crossed once more and soon they were to have their first face-to-face meeting. The reason for the meeting was the pressing issue of the transfer of the Brno City Theatre to the Czech ensemble and the negotiations with the current German ensemble. The issue of reaching an agreement with the Brno Germans on the use of the City Theatre building was extremely complex, politically delicate and under close public scrutiny. On the one hand was the view that the Germans should transfer the theatre completely to the Czech National Theatre, while on the other, various different compromises were discussed. The situation became so tense that on 8 April 1919 the committee of the theatre Družstvo decided to send a deputation to President Masaryk consisting of Leoš Janáček, Jaroslav Helfert, František Koželuha, Jiří Mahen and Václav Štech. According to Janáček's notebook, the deputation was received in Prague Castle on 26 April 1919 at 11am. The minutes for the committee meeting of 30 April 1919 tell us what happened at the meeting: "Dr. Koželuha explained what the Družstvo deputation had achieved with President Masaryk. Having heard our arguments, Masaryk stated that the issue of the Brno theatre was also a political issue and, therefore, a compromise with the Germans should be reached". There is an interesting comment in Janáček's notebook, where alongside information about the range of Masaryk's voice (B-flat) we also read that: 'diplom. Moderation in expression', 'like lying in a stranger's bed', 'Farewell, Maestro'. The note obviously referred to the transfer of the German theatre (the 'stranger's bed'). There was another meeting between the Družstvo deputation and the president, although on this occasion Janáček was not present. As Masaryk had recommended, the situation was finally resolved with a compromise which was acceptable on both sides: from the start of the new season the Germans would perform at the City Theatre on Mondays and Tuesdays and the Czechs for the rest of the week, while at the Reduta Theatre the Germans would perform on Wednesdays to Sundays and the Czechs on the first two days of the week.

During this period, Janáček decided to dedicate his new work, concerning the issue of the Czech mentality and character types from the recent and distant past, to the president-liberator. This was the two-part opera *The Excursions of Mr Brouček*, which Janáček completed in 1918. Janáček had actually changed the dedication for this opera several times, starting with Gabriela Horvátová, then Karel Kovařovic and finally T. G. Masaryk. He accepted this dedication, though he apologised for being unable to attend the premiere on 23 April 1920. Janáček tried to personally present the piano score of the opera to the president, but without success. 1920 was also a significant year as T. G. Masaryk celebrated his seventieth birthday on 7 March.

Brno also took part in the celebrations, organizing a concert in honour of the president on 21 March. Among the pieces played was the premiere of Janáček's *Ballad of Blaník*, which the composer also dedicated to President Masaryk. Janáček was supposed to have given the opening address at the gala concert, and according to his notes he had been thinking about his new work in relation to Masaryk's *Czech question*. The speech, however, was never given, as shortly before the concert Janáček received the news he had long awaited that the Brno Conservatory had been taken over by the state, but he also discovered that the Ministry of Education had not been counting on him working in the new school. Furious, Janáček stormed off from the concert. A year later, on 16 September 1921, Masaryk made his first official visit to Brno and Janáček had also been invited to welcome the president at Brno station. We do not know if he spoke to the president, but the composer wrote a few of Masaryk's speech melodies onto his invitation, which were to become the basis for the feuilleton *Engraved Words*, which was published in the *Lidové noviny* newspaper on 22 November of the same year. Another unsuccessful attempt at a meeting between Janáček and Masaryk was the Prague premiere of *Katya Kabanova* on 30 November 1922. Janáček invited Masaryk to the premiere personally and also asked for a private interview to discuss the so-called master schools. The president apologised for being unable to attend the premiere or give the interview. Another meeting was to take place in 1924 on the occasion of Janáček's seventieth birthday celebrations. In the summer, the Brno National Theatre performed at the City Theatre at Královské Vinohrady, where they twice gave *Jenůfa*. President Masaryk had promised that he would attend the second performance. At the urging of the opera director and conductor, František Neumann, Janáček left Hukvaldy for the performance on 9 July, but again the meeting never took place as the president was at the last minute indisposed and he sent the foreign minister, Edward Beneš, in his

place. Masaryk also turned down an invitation to Brno for the world premiere of the opera *The Cunning Little Vixen* in 1924. Finally, on 8 December 1924, on the occasion of a concert organized for the composer's birthday, the president accepted an invitation sent by a representative of the Czech Philharmonic, Václav Talich, and representatives of the Hudební Matice Umělecké besedy (a Czech music publishing company) Boleslav Vomáčka and Jan Löwenbach. This time, Masaryk did in fact attend the concert and spoke to Janáček for about 15 minutes. At the end of the concert, they both even took to the stage to a standing ovation. Shortly afterwards, the president sent Janáček a letter of thanks on the occasion of his retirement. Then in 1927, Janáček was invited by the president for afternoon tea at the Spanish Hall in Prague Castle. However, as 1,000 people were invited, it is doubtful that Masaryk and Janáček could have spoken about anything of substance. The penultimate meeting in the history of Janáček and Masaryk's relationship was the president's attendance at the Prague performance of the *Glagolitic Mass* on 29 April 1928, which was part of the Czechoslovak Choral Community festival. This time, Masaryk did not receive Janáček in his box, evidently due to protocol, as the composer had attended the concert with his muse Kamila Stösslová and not his wife. These two remarkable people met for the last time at the laying of the foundation stone of Masaryk University's Law Faculty on 8 June 1928, where Janáček's *Chorus for the laying of Masaryk University's foundation stone* was performed. Shortly afterwards, Janáček died and Masaryk sent his condolences to his widow, Zdenka Janáčková.

The relationship between these two outstanding men was filled with respect, and in the case of Janáček, even with a touching devotion. Janáček held Masaryk in high regard as a president, philosopher, intellectual and moral authority. On the other hand, Masaryk was aware of Janáček's uniqueness, even though he did not understand his work very well. In addition, Janáček was also in a difficult position due to his lifelong critical attitude of the work of Bedřich Smetana, who Masaryk and his wife Charlotte greatly admired. Perhaps this was why the president-liberator was on better terms with some of Janáček's composer colleagues.

photo: Brno City Archive



T. G. Masaryk at the Exhibition of Contemporary Culture in Brno, 1928

But the poles rose high above the Volga and  
the surface of the Volga was as white as Katya's  
soul in the moonlight.

Leoš Janáček





# LEOŠ JANÁČEK – KATYA KABANOVA



text: Patricie Částková  
photo: Marek Olbrzymek

The premiere of the production of *Katya Kabanova* by National Theatre Brno's Janáček opera ensemble was one of the highlights of the last festival. Now it is returning so that Janáček's genius can again meet on stage with one of the best living opera directors, Robert Carsen, whose productions excel in their distinct poeticism, dramaturgical tightness and emotive, lively and immensely impressive theatre. *Katya Kabanova* is one of Carsen's five productions of Janáček's operas, originally created for the Vlaamse Opera. It has been performed in more than 20 opera houses around the world since its premiere, which is not surprising as the production, with its impressive set in which the whole stage is covered by water which mirrors Katya's emotions as well as her tragic end, is one of Carsen's best works.

19/11/2018 Janáček  
Theatre

24–25



# The fateful eights and the Sokol movement

Although the concert series for the Janáček Brno 2018 festival is formally dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the foundation of Czechoslovakia, the establishment of the independent Czechoslovak state also coincided with the most creative years of Janáček's life and the composer's 'great later years' when he composed some of his most important works.



photo: Brno City Archive

The Exhibition of Contemporary Culture in Czechoslovakia, 1928

text: Jiří Zahrádka

**29/11/2018** Brno Exhibition Centre,  
Pavilion P

**4/12/2018** Kounicova  
Stadium

The dramaturgy for the concert series offers works which are closely connected to the republic's foundation, to the concept of a 'national music' and to the issue of the music of the nationalities living on our territory or in the countries of the former Austro-Hungarian monarchy, and there are also examples of how composers reflected these important historical events in their work. As part of the concert series the festival offers two symphonic evenings which are closely linked to the foundation of Czechoslovakia.

The first of these concerts will be held on 29 November 1919 in an area which is closely connected to the first years of new state – the Brno Exhibition Centre. The exhibition grounds were built in 1928 for the ambitious Exhibition of Contemporary Culture in Czechoslovakia, which gave a grand display of the achievements of the first decade of the young state. Janáček was very enthusiastic about this exhibition, visiting it on several occasions, while his concerts and theatre productions were also performed as part of the exhibition. Flags also flew here in mourning on the day of the composer's death on 12 August.

The orchestral concert presents two compositions inspired by the Czech Sokol gymnastics movement, and two seldomly played cantatas by Janáček. Performing at the concert under the baton of Gabriela Tardonová is the excellent Chorus of the Janáček Opera along with the Opera orchestra, which has successfully performed the composer's works on several occasions and even performed premieres when Janáček was still alive.

The gala Sokol march, *Into a New Life*, by Josef Suk (1874–1935), is closely associated with the Czech Sokol traditions, which stretch back to the 1860s. Although from the start the founders of this important gymnastics movement stressed its apolitical nature, the movement was later to become a crucial element in the national emancipation process. Its political influence reached its peak in the days of the foundation of Czechoslovakia and the subsequent two decades. The Sokol members were also often members of the Czech creative elite, for example, Janáček and Suk, but also T. G. Masaryk. Josef Suk had considered writing a composition for a gala Sokol meeting even before the First World War, but he did not start work on it until 1919 when he began to outline his march. In 1920, on the occasion of the VII Sokol Rally, the first in the new republic, a competition was announced for a march for the entry of the gymnasts into the stadium. Suk entered his composition under a pseudonym and won the competition. Even though his march caused some friction amongst the Sokol officials, in the end it was accepted. Suk added a fanfare to the composition and orchestrated the original piano composition for four hands. The march was extremely well received and so in 1930 and 1934 the poet Petr Křička and his brother, the composer Jaroslav Křička, added more text to the composition so that the popular march could be accompanied by singing. This version met with the composer's approval but was later forgotten, so there will be a unique opportunity at the festival concert to hear this version again.

Leoš Janáček's (1854–1928) *Sinfonietta* is also closely linked to the Sokol movement. At the start of 1926 he was approached by the editorial board of *Lidové noviny* to write "a few notes" as a greeting for the VIII Sokol Rally in Prague. Janáček decided on a fanfare, drawing inspiration from an experience two years earlier. In 1924, following a gruelling session with the exam committee at the Prague Conservatory, he spent 'three untroubled days' in Písek with the family of his lady-friend and muse, Kamila Stösslová. And it was here on an afternoon walk that he visited a promenade concert of military brass music in Palacký park, where he heard fanfares, the melodies of which he copied into his notebook. The military music of the František Palacký 11th Infantry Regiment contained fanfare marches during which, and to the amazement of the audience, 'in the main part the solo players and groups of musicians stood while playing and lifted their instruments, decorated with flags, high into the air.' It was evidently this pleasant memory which came to mind when he began to outline his fanfare for the Sokol rally two years later. He began work in March 1926 and the fanfare eventually developed into a symphonic composition which he named *Military Sinfonietta* due to the incorporation of military music. This was offered to the organisers of the rally and was then included in a concert programme of the Czech Philharmonic dedicated to the Sokol youth. The composer's new work was first heard at a concert on 26 June 1926, which was also broadcast on the radio. Members of the Prague garrison music played alongside the musicians of the Czech Philharmonic and the concert was a great success. One oversight, however, was that the *Military Sinfonietta* was presented under the title *For the Sokol Rally*. Janáček was decidedly against such a title. Shortly afterwards the fanfare from the *Military Sinfonietta* was published in the *Lidové noviny* as a greeting and it was also heard from Týn Church for the 'procession of the guests and Sokol members through Prague'. The first published version of Janáček's famous composition was by Universal Edition in 1927, afterwards it came out simply under the title of *Sinfonietta*, as we know it today.

'Amarus? The royal monastery in Old Brno, its gloomy corridors, old church, extensive gardens, my poor adolescent life spent there in solitude and sorrow, all of that was so close to Amarus.' In Jaroslav Vrchlický's poem *Amarus* Janáček discovered features which were surprisingly similar to his own life – his childhood in a monastery without his mother and without love. Janáček completed the lyrical cantata for soloists, mixed chorus and orchestra

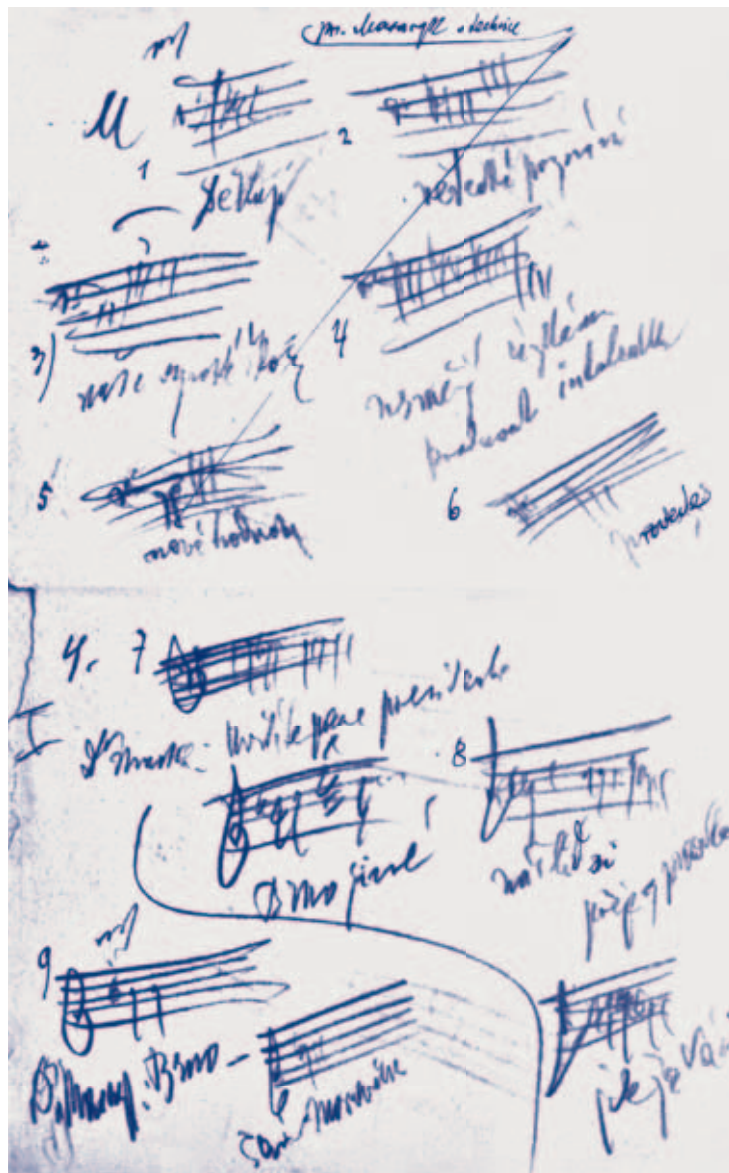


photo: Leoš Janáček Archive, MM

Janáček's notations of T. G. Masaryk's speech melodies during a visit to Brno on 19 September 1921

at the start of 1897. Soon afterwards he sent the score to his friend, Antonín Dvořák, for his assessment. Despite the fact that Dvořák apologised for not having had much time to look over the work, his response to *Amarus* was positive and he noticed 'distinct progress in all respects'. The cantata *Amarus* marks the high point and end of the romantic element in Janáček's artistic development, at the start of which was his first opera *Šárka* (1887–88). However, at the same time, *Amarus* prefigures Janáček's new musical language, which was developed to the full in *Jenůfa*. The cantata was first performed in its entirety by Ferdinand Vach and the Moravian Mixed Teachers' Choir on 25 February 1912.

The cantata *The Čerták on Soláň* for tenor, mixed chorus and orchestra after the poem by M. Kurt (real name Maxmilián Kunert) was commissioned by the choirmaster of the Prostějov choir Orlice, Vilém Steinman, who asked the composer in 1910 to write a composition for the fiftieth anniversary of the choir. Janáček worked on the composition in 1911 and the premiere was performed in Prostějov on 23 March 1912, conducted by Vilém Steinman, with the Orlice choir, the players of Brno's Eighth Army Regiment and the orchestra of the Brno National Theatre.

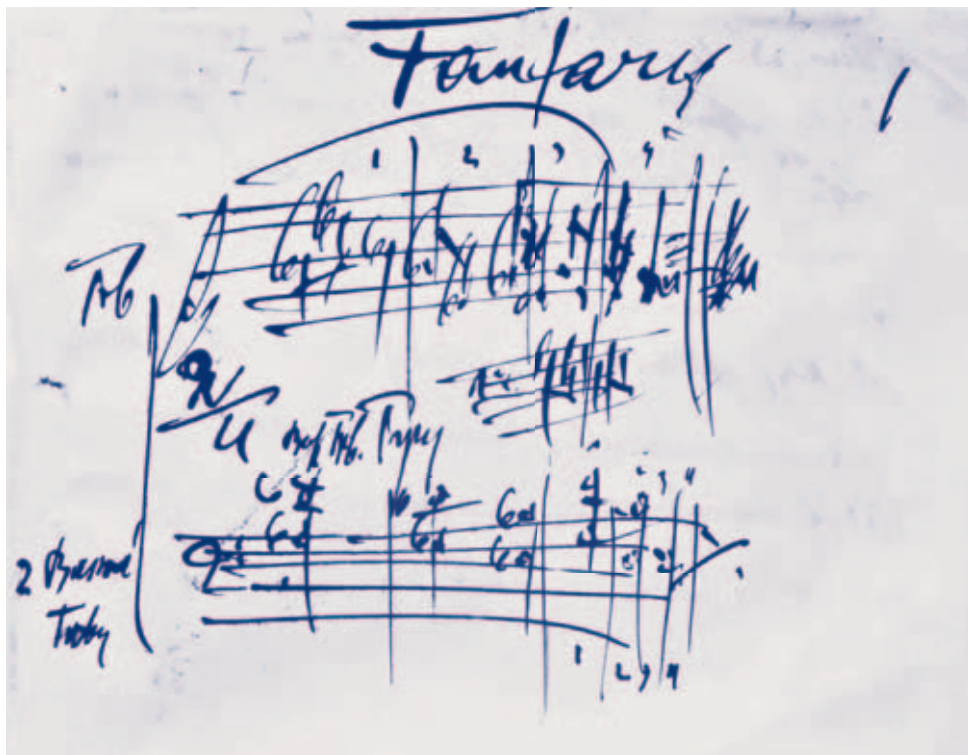


photo: Leoš Janáček Archive, MM

Sketch for *Sinfonietta*

The second orchestral concert on 4. 12. 2018 will be performed in the legendary space of the Brno Stadion, where Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass* was first performed in December 1927. The Brno Philharmonic will be performing under the baton of Stefan Veselka. The concert's dramaturgy will be focusing on the number 8, which is considered to be a fateful number in our modern history. This is hardly surprising as the years 1918, 1938, 1948 and 1968 are connected with fundamental political events which changed the fate of the nation and individuals. It is, therefore, of small wonder that Czech composers have also reacted to these fateful moments in their works.

In 1918, and with the expectation of an end to the horrors of World War I, Leoš Janáček completed his 'Slavonic rhapsody' *Taras Bulba*, based on Gogol's novella. Janáček had started writing it in 1915, but the harsh repression against anyone showing sympathy towards the Russians led him to postpone working on the composition. He returned to it in 1918 when he completely reworked and finished the composition. It was first performed in 1921 by the orchestra of the Brno National Theatre, conducted by František Neumann. *Taras Bulba* is evidence of Janáček's ardent Slavism and Russophilism.

The declaration of the Czechoslovak Republic was the motivation behind Janáček's symphonic poem *The Ballad of Blaník*. Janáček was inspired by Jaroslav Vrchlický's eponymous poem from the collection *Rustic Ballads*. It is unclear exactly when this work was written, based on the tale of the sleeping Blaník knights who are prepared to come to the aid of the nation at its most difficult time, but it may have been in the autumn of 1919. The premiere took place on 21 March 1920 at a concert celebrating the 70th birthday of T. G. Masaryk, to whom Janáček also dedicated this work.

The life of Bohuslav Martinů (1890-1959) is also linked to the tragic year of 1938, when the composer visited his homeland for the last time in his life. In March he was present at a performance of *Julietta* at Prague National Theatre and he spent the summer in his home town of Polička. Everywhere was the pervading atmosphere of unease resulting from the German threat. In September Martinů was invited to Switzerland by the Sacher family, where he began composing his *Double Concerto*. Later, he remembered those dramatic days: "Here in this isolation, bordered by three countries, I experienced Munich and completed a work which contains the dramatic traces and atmosphere of those days, the first warning of a gale that would sweep across Europe."

Bohuslav Martinů's *Double Concerto for String Orchestra, Piano and Timpani* is undoubtedly one of his most important works and is also one of the most frequently played abroad.

No less painful for Czechoslovakia was the year 1968, when the country was occupied by the armies of the countries of the Warsaw Pact on 21 August. A large number of composers responded to this event in their work – Marek Kopelent, Petr Eben, Miloslav Kabeláč and Karel Husa. The cantata *Ignis pro Ioanne Palach* by Jan Novák (1921-1984), a pupil of Bohuslav Martinů, was written immediately after the self-immolation of Jan Palach in protest at the political situation in Czechoslovakia. There was an immediate reaction from Brno composers in particular, including Josef Berg, Alois Piňos and Evžen Zámečník. As an experienced Latin scholar, Jan Novák wrote the Latin text to the cantata himself. This very emotional, rousing work, was first heard on 15 April 1969 in the Rudolfinum in Prague.

One link which connects all of these fateful events is perhaps Miloslav Kabeláč's (1908-1979) most famous symphonic work, *The Mystery of Time*. This composer is undoubtedly one of our most important artists from the second half of the 20th century, and this also applies in an international context. He worked slowly and thoroughly on his compositions, which is also the case for *The Mystery of Time*, which took him four years to write. He completed it in 1957 and the composition was performed by the Czech Philharmonic conducted by Karel Ančerl. Kabeláč's friend, Eduard Herzog, described the composition as: "A meditation on cosmic events, on its vast space and firm laws which govern it. [...] The author wanted to express his deep emotional trepidation from such an outlook and the conviction that all apparent randomness is governed by a strict and unwavering order..."

These two orchestral concerts will undoubtedly bring a unique programme to a unique space, performed by outstanding musicians.



# The piano is an everyday part of my life



British composer **Thomas Adès** is one of the most distinctive figures of his generation. As a composer he often conducts his own work, but what is less common is that he is also an outstanding pianist. He excels both as an accompanist and a member of a chamber ensemble, while his solo recitals have been given in prestigious venues such as New York's Carnegie Hall and London's Wigmore Hall.

text: Patricie Částková

On his need to play the piano, Thomas Adès said: "I've always played the piano as an everyday part of life – in a way I've had to make my own repertoire as I don't play Rachmaninov concertos or Chopin *Etudes*, but the piano is my home, as some people are at home in a swimming pool. So I suppose to extend the swimming analogy, I am perhaps a fish, rather than a champion swimmer."

His concert programmes often feature the music of Leoš Janáček, whose works he admires and who has a truly insightful view into them. He also used Janáček's piano works in a study entitled *Nothing but Pranks and Puns* – where he playfully paraphrases Janáček's conversation with Adolf Veselý for the journal *Hudební rozhledy*, where the composer described his *Capriccio* as 'capricious – nothing but pranks and puns'.

Part of Adès's extensive discography includes a recording of Janáček's *The Diary of One Who Disappeared* and shorter piano pieces, which will be added to this year by an excellent new recording of the Janáček's complete works for solo piano. This will provide the basis of Thomas Adès's programme when he first performs in the Czech Republic as a pianist.

One of the advantages that has been stressed concerning Adès's interpretation of the piano works is his ability to view the work of the composer from the inside and also to perceive Janáček's piano work as a composer: "In his pieces, like *Along an Overgrown Path*, Janáček will refract things, very simply, by a knight's move in the harmony. What that creates is a sort of dislocation, a shuttering in the structural image, that is very like putting a pencil in the water: instead of seeing a straight line, you see a line moving across in waves and ripples. And with that you step into the moment, you step into his moment. It becomes very real, it becomes the present tense of your actual experience. It's a magical effect.

The more I think about the title of that piece, *Along an Overgrown Path*, I realise that it's a Proustian thing. Janáček wants to recapture the distant past, which is no longer there, the moment has vanished. But, once, the path was not overgrown. The music is the memories, which are still alive. It's the same with *In the Mists*: that is a very exciting structure. All Janáček's pieces are, really. In a way you could look at them and say they are all just ABA ABACA, very simple binary or tertiary structures.

But you realise with Janáček that when he says something twice it's immediately different the second time, because of where it is in the structure. You feel that time has passed. There may even have been a modulation that makes the tonic feel like memory. And I think that's the way, in Janáček's operas, his characters move through time in the music. There's nothing in his music that's pretending to create an external form: what the music is doing is taking the moment you're listening to and making the exact same moment it would have

been when he was listening to it. So you perceive the reality of time: that it's vertical rather than horizontal and you can look down into the past.

I said before that one often tends to create an illusion of stability in a piece that leads to the end. But in Janáček, this can work the other way round. He'll take one moment, and show you the inner instability in that moment, and then hold that as a sort of frozen moment of emotion, of pain or apprehension, and freeze it in time. And the ramifications of several of those moments placed next to one another are then only revealed on the last page. In that piece, *In the Mists*, nothing changes, but you're aware that every time the silence comes back, and he tries another doorway, it transforms from being a phenomenon that opens a new possibility to something that closes the structure. Yet the material doesn't change. There's no rhetoric in a way. So thereby Janáček rediscovers a kind of classical purity. Haydn can do that, and Beethoven can do that, but it's a thing that was almost lost in the middle of the nineteenth century. There was that attempt to create an illusion of revelation and redemption through music that possibly diverted something quite fundamental about what we're doing when we write a note."

Mr. Adès is best known as a British composer, one of the most skilled and original of his generation. But he is also an active conductor and, as he showed in his solo recital at Carnegie Hall, an impressive pianist. In the four astonishing pieces of *Along an Overgrown Path* are hints of Moravian folk tunes, hunting calls, peasant dances, mournful elegies and more. Mr. Adès captured the elusive allure of the music in his sensitive, beautifully shaded playing.

Anthony Tommasini, *The New York Times*

Adès has many virtues as a pianist, beginning with the fact that he plays rather like a composer: He can see, feel, a piece from the inside. Also, he makes a beautiful sound, and can produce a variety of colors.

Jay Nordlinger, *New York Chronicle*

As a pianist Adès brings to the music a sense of detail that enriches the score without making anything stick out unnaturally.

Eric C. Simpson, *New York Classical Review*



I'm holding onto the roots of the life of our people; that is why I am growing and why I will not succumb!

Leoš Janáček



photo: Petrík Borecký

# LEOŠ JANÁČEK – THE EXCURSIONS OF MR BROUČEK

A tour guide  
of the national character

5/12/2018 Janáček  
Theatre

What forms the character of a nation, its history, traditions and sets of values? Is it the elites, outstanding figures, great works of art, exceptional ideas and actions, crucial historical moments? Or is all of this just fossilized symbols, and the nation is in fact just the ‘ordinary people’ who always have been in the majority and have never been interested in the elites, the exceptional and outstanding, who look down on them suspiciously and actually hate them? We will not find the answer from famous sociologists but in Janáček’s surrealist, burlesque opera *The Excursions of Mr Brouček*, brought to the Brno festival by Prague National Theatre in a production by the Slovak director, Sláva Daubnerová.

After thirteen years, this March saw the return to the Prague National Theatre of the only one of Janáček’s operas to receive its world premiere on this stage – the burlesque and highly satirical *Excursions of Mr Brouček*. The motive behind the new production of this work, which is an exceptionally demanding work on all counts, was, quite simply, the year in which we are writing – 2018. A century has now passed since one of the great turning points in our history – when the foundation of Czechoslovakia kickstarted – or was supposed to kickstart – a new, modern, free and democratic era. It was in this era that the Brouček opera biology matured: in 1918 Janáček was getting the recently completed opera ready for publication and its performance at the Prague National Theatre, which had to wait until April 1920. However, *The Excursions of Mr Brouček* is not only connected with the period 100 years ago in terms of time, but mainly (and paradoxically) thematically. The fact that Janáček himself could see the contemporary importance of his latest opera, the composition of which dated back to 1908, can be seen by the fact that after Karel Kovařovic and Gabriela Horvátová, he finally dedicated it to T. G. Masaryk. But it wouldn’t have been Janáček had there not been – deliberately or inadvertently – something provocative and incorrect. He had written an opera at a time when no-one had expected they would be celebrating Czech and Czechoslovak statehood, freedom and democracy. No Libuše, St Wenceslas, Charles IV., Žižka or Comenius, none of the ‘wise people’ and their ‘pious traditions’ – the main character in Janáček’s ‘national opera’ is a philistine, coward, hypocrite, liar, lout, drunkard, glutton and scrooge: Mr Brouček. Apart from good food and beer, this landlord of modest dwellings loves a simple view of the world. He would never do anything voluntarily that he didn’t have to, is generally suspicious of anything foreign and different, and regards being well-read as meaning having a knowledge of the popular learning books, he hates artists and intellectuals, and works ‘creatively’ with the truth, always for his benefit, therefore, the type of Czech person who has his place in the literary sun thanks to Svatopluk Čech at the end of the 1890s, paradoxically at a time of cultural blossoming in Czech society. Although Mr Brouček was initially popular, later on he was consigned to the dustbin of history as a satirical throwback to the petite Czech bourgeois which had failed to understand the direction society was headed or how to reconcile themselves with it. Even thirty or forty years after the birth of this character, Leoš Janáček remained fascinated by its idiosyncrasy. In the first part of the opera, *Mr Brouček’s Excursion to the Moon* – his limited boorishness is juxtaposed against the aesthetic and intellectual pomposity of the lunar inhabitants. His unshakeable egoism, spinelessness and mendacity then appear in the second part, *Mr Brouček’s Excursion to the 15th Century*, where Brouček’s adversaries are the uncompromising Hussite warriors ‘for God’s truth’. In March 1917, Janáček wrote to the librettist, František Serafínský Procházka: ‘Mr Brouček encapsulates our narrow-mindedness – he was made for the stage’. Even after one hundred years, during which Czech society has undergone quite a journey, Janáček’s words and his ‘national opera’ have lost none of their aptness and topicality. On the contrary, Mr Brouček, and everything that

he represents would seem to be the most widespread type of ‘ordinary Czech person’ today, the anonymous co-creator of our future history.

**Ondřej Hučín**

*The Excursions of Mr Brouček* are basically a Prague tourist guide to a deep state of cultural and moral crisis. It deals with the relationship of an average individual’s relationship towards art and his own cultural history. In the production the two excursions are connected by one area, a kind of Palace of Culture, a lapidarium where gradually various cultural symbols are collected, from Kafka’s Prague and its architectural gems, to the sculptural decorations of the National Theatre to the bronze fragments at the Vítkov Memorial, celebrating the victorious milestones in Czech and Czechoslovak history.

The moon appears to Mr Brouček as a highly aestheticized world of art which has its own life and contemplates all of the expressions of mortal life, while Brouček as a consumer has his needs just like the patrons and donors. The excursion to the moon then becomes an ironic journey through the history of art in an attempt to ‘sell’ the best to the earthlings: from references to antiquity in the form of the new style of the National Theatre generation, to da Vinci’s pictures and Michelangelo’s frescoes, modern art to feminist artists. Janáček wanted to criticize the emptiness of art, or to relativize what is considered as an ideal of beauty in art. He, on the other hand, searched for beauty in the everyday, sometimes ugliness, but principally authenticity (he and Svatopluk Čech unwittingly managed to rehabilitate the sausage in art). As though at the stage he foresaw that modern art would also one day find itself in a crisis. It’s a two-sided criticism in his relationship towards Brouček and in his relationship towards art. This is why the production contains references to the era of modern art when there was a rebellion against the norms of bourgeois society and the start of a cultural revolution as well as the start of a culture focusing on the ‘I’.

The Hussite part brings more serious themes such as reflections on whether there is still any sense today in fighting for some kind of truth. At a time when we are commemorating one hundred years since the foundation of Czechoslovakia, where our two small nations attempted to form their own identity in a disintegrating Europe, it is hard to think of a more apt opera than *The Excursion of Mr Brouček to the 15th Century*. But this opera is really more about today than any anniversary commemoration. It deals with incredible frustration, scepticism and apathy. An absolute lack of faith in moral values and the institutions which should protect them. A mistrust of the state. As a result of this we became absolutely resistant and learned to live and operate in this condition. If this opera offers us anything, then it is a call to each of us to avoid becoming one of the millions of Broučeks in our nations.

**Sláva Daubnerová**

# Chamber concerts

The Janáček Brno 2018 festival is offering audiences a total of nine chamber concerts and piano and vocal recitals featuring outstanding Czech and international musicians including the pianists Thomas Adès, Jan Jiraský, Martin Kasík, Jitka Čechová, the singer Simona Houda-Šaturová and the renowned ensembles the Pavel Haas Quartet and the Škampa Quartet. In this programme the individual concerts are also following the leitmotif of the whole festival: the 100th anniversary of the foundation of Czechoslovakia. The programme, therefore, not only contains the music of Leoš Janáček, but also the works of Janáček's contemporaries from the countries of the former Austro-Hungarian monarchy and their successor states, as well as compositions by the founder of Czech national music, Bedřich Smetana.

text: Ondřej Pivoda

## **Matinée at the Leoš Janáček Memorial**

The pianist Jan Jiraský will welcome visitors to his morning performance on 24 November in the authentic surroundings of Janáček's study in the Leoš Janáček Memorial. From 1910, the composer lived and worked in this garden house, hidden at the side of the grand building of Janáček's former Organ School, creating all of his major compositions including *The Excursions of Mr Brouček*, *Katya Kabanova*, *The Cunning Little Vixen*, *The Makropulos Affair* and *From the House of the Dead*, the orchestral compositions *Taras Bulba* and the *Sinfonietta*, as well as the cantata the *Glagolitic Mass*. Today the building houses the composer's study in its original state, dominated by Janáček's Ehrbar piano, where the maestro composed practically all of his works. Today, Jan Jiraský is considered to be a specialist in the interpretation of Janáček's piano works, and he has recorded all of them on both a modern instrument and on the composer's original Ehrbar. In this intimate atmosphere, with the aura of Janáček's extraordinary personality, Jiraský will perform a cross-section of Janáček's piano works, which will feature the early *Thema con variazioni* from 1880, a selection from the cycle of shorter poetic compositions *On an Overgrown Path*, the impressionist-styled piano cycle *In the Mists* and two impressive *Moravian Dances*.

## **Škampa Quartet and Villa Löw-Beer**

The afternoon concert on 24 November, featuring one of the leading Czech quartets, the Škampa Quartet, offers a programme consisting of quartet music by Leoš Janáček and other composers from the countries of the former Austria-Hungary. In the beautiful surroundings of the Art Nouveau Löw-Beer Villa they will perform Janáček's *Quartet after Tolstoy's 'Kreutzer Sonata'* from 1923. The composer was inspired to write this composition after reading the short story by the Russian novelist Tolstoy about a woman who is terrorized by her despotic and chronically jealous husband. 'I had in mind a poor woman, tormented, beaten, abused...', wrote Janáček in one of his letters about the main idea behind his quartet. The motif he described was also apparent in many other works – for example, *Jenůfa* and *Katya Kabanova*. The Austrian composer Arnold Schönberg was a generation younger than Janáček and he also managed to introduce non-traditional, innovative musical ideas. In his *Quartet no. 2 in F-sharp minor with soprano solo* from 1908, Schönberg gave audiences an incredible sequence of chords which were like 'from other plan-

ets' as is stated in the poem by Stefan George which Schönberg set to music. Béla Bartók and Leoš Janáček both shared a great interest in folk music. Bartók's one-movement *String Quartet No. 3* from 1927 contains several elements of Hungarian folk music which are spiced up with new harmonic approaches and experimental playing techniques.

## **Piano recital by Martin Kasík**

On 25 November, the leading Czech piano virtuoso, Martin Kasík, will perform in the unique surroundings of the Tugendhat Villa. His programme will contain piano pieces by composers from the successor states of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. The culture of these countries was also interlinked after the First World War thanks to the continuation of personal contacts and connections between individual artists. Nevertheless, in the interwar period in Central Europe we can observe a varied mixture of different styles and trends. The folklore style of *Marosszékitáncok* by the Hungarian composer Zoltán Kodály from 1923–1927 is an impressive and technically demanding arrangement of folk dances from Transylvania. The *Piano Sonata No. 3* from 1931 by the Jewish Brno-born Erich Wolfgang Korngold, who became famous as a film composer in Hollywood, takes its musical language from late German romanticism influenced by Richard Strauss. There is an entirely different world contained within the Neoclassical cycle *Six petits morceaux* by the Slovenian composer Slavko Osterc, who studied composition at the Prague Conservatory under Vítězslav Novák. The influences of Claude Debussy and the impressionist sound world can be heard in Janáček's cycle *In the Mists* from 1912.

## **Bedřich Smetana piano works**

The recital dedicated to Bedřich Smetana, the founder of Czech national music, will take place on 25 November 11 at the Mozart Hall in the Reduta Theatre with the pianist Jitka Čechová, a recognized interpreter of Smetana's music. Smetana's unique piano work follows in the footsteps of Robert Schumann and Franz Liszt, and places exceptional demands on the pianist's technical arsenal. The programme offers a wide range of Smetana's piano works, from the rousing pieces and dance compositions from the cycle *Poetic Melodies* and *Poetic Polkas*, to the early *Piano Sonata in G minor*, to the mature virtuosity of *Study in C Major* and the brilliant fantasy *Macbeth and the Witches*, inspired by a scene in the fourth act of Shakespeare's tragedy with the dramatic entry of the witches.



### Simona Houda Šaturova in Villa Tugendhat

On 2 December, the fascinating space of the Tugendhat Villa will also feature the soprano Simona Houda-Šaturová, an important Czech concert and opera singer who regularly appears on the concert stages of the leading European orchestras. Accompanied by Martin Kasík on piano, the audience is guaranteed an unforgettable experience when they perform Janáček's complete cycle of *Moravian Folk Poetry in Songs*. This is the composer's most extensive vocal work which contains fifty-three arrangements of Moravian folk songs. They date back to 1892–1901, a time when the composer was intensively studying folk music and when he began work on his opera *Jenůfa*. Today this collection represents Janáček's underappreciated grand tribute to the poetic magic of Moravian folk songs.

### Smetana – Janáček – Haas

Today the Pavel Haas Quartet is undoubtedly one of the best chamber ensembles. On the 2 December at the Mozart Hall of the Reduta Theatre we will be able to hear three milestones in the Czech quartet repertoire which reflect the turbulent lives of their composers. Bedřich Smetana's *String Quartet No. 2* from 1882 documents the end of the composer's life, when he was afflicted by the loss of his hearing accompanied by a constant whistling in his ears, he also suffered from psychological problems and lived apart from society. Smetana's brilliant work mirrors this loneliness, suffering and spiritual turmoil, though at times some happy memories shine through. The *String Quartet No. 2 'Intimate Letters'* from 1928 reflects Leoš Janáček's relationship with Kamila Stösslová, thirty-eight years his junior, and who he met in Luhačovice in 1917. The quartet is the composer's intimate confession and the individual sections form a musical love letter addressed to Kamila. The *String Quartet No. 2 'From the Monkey Mountains'* from 1925 by the Brno Jewish composer and pupil of Janáček, Pavel Haas, contains no inkling of the composer's tragic fate, who died in a concentration camp in Auschwitz. The quartet is the work of a carefree youth, full of élan, melodic invention and smart rhythmic and sound effects, which are underlined by the use of jazz percussion.

### Thomas Adès plays Leoš Janáček

One of the festival highlights will be a piano recital by Thomas Adès, which will take place in the Besední dům on 3 December. Thomas Adès is one of the leading contemporary composers and his works are performed by international orchestras and opera houses. There was a production of his opera *Powder Her Face* in Brno in 2016. Adès's great love, however, has remained the piano, which he studied at England's most prestigious schools from an early age. Janáček is one of his favourite composers and he recently recorded Janáček's complete piano works. At the concert he will play all of Janáček's main compositions for solo piano and some more minor works.

### Brno Youth for Janáček

The Janáček Brno 2018 festival will also benefit from the presence of young musicians. Students from the Janáček Academy of Music and Performing Arts will perform at the Leoš Janáček Memorial on the morning of 18 November. The programme will consist of Janáček's chamber works including the graceful *Fairy Tale for Cello and Piano*, the *Violin Sonata* and the dramatic *Piano Sonata 1. X. 1905 ('From the street')*. On 23 November at the Mozart Hall of the Reduta Theatre, the Brno Children's Choir with choir-leader Valeria Matašová will perform *The Little Queens* – old ceremonial national dances with songs by Leoš Janáček from 1889 – a selection from Bohuslav Martinů's *Špalíček* and choral cycles from composers imprisoned in the concentration camp at Terezín: *The Flowered Horse* by Karel Reiner to text by the writer Norbert Frýd and *Czech Songs* by František Domažlický.



Pavel Haas Quartet



Simona Houda-Šaturová



Jan Jiraský





Kamila Urválková

Photo: Leoš Janáček Archive, MM

# The forest is the echo of our souls!

And she was one of the most beautiful women. Her voice was like a viola d'amore. Luhačovice Slanice was in the blaze of the August sun. Why did she walk with those three fiery roses and why did she tell me her young story? And why was the end so strange?

Leoš Janáček

The Moravian-Silesian National Theatre is a regular guest at the festival, and travels to Brno from the region of Janáček's birth. This year it is performing a new production of one of Janáček's more seldom played operas, *Destiny*, directed by its director Jiří Nekvasil and conducted by musical director Jakub Klecker.

Janáček's fourth opera, *Destiny*, was written during a very difficult time for the composer. His beloved daughter, Olga, had recently died and a few months later his *Jenůfa* was rejected by the National Theatre in Prague. Janáček left for Luhačovice where he met the attractive 18-year-old Kamila Urválková, the one-time lover of the composer and conductor Ludvík Čelanský. Kamila told Janáček the story of her affair with Čelanský and how he had used it for his opera *Kamila*. Janáček, who had fallen under her spell, decided to create 'an entirely new, modern opera' in which Kamila would be exonerated. Despite the undoubted musical quality of the opera, Janáček never lived to see a production of *Destiny* and the opera was first performed in 1958. This will be the fifth Janáček opera directed by Jiří Nekvasil, and in the case of *Destiny* it has been a highly anticipated encounter.

"I first encountered Leoš Janáček's opera *Destiny* more than forty years ago and since then I have maintained a strongly personal and faithful relationship towards it. My father, Miloslav Nekvasil, also an opera director, had received an offer to produce this work with the opera ensemble of the West Bohemian Theatre in České Budějovice. This was only the second production of this opera in our country. The premiere took place in the spring of 1978, and it was also the first production of this opera in the form which Leoš Janáček had written it. The world premiere of *Destiny* was given in Brno in 1958, 30 years after the death of Janáček and more than 50 years after the opera was written. The work had been dramaturgically arranged by Václav Nosek and was directed by Václav Věžník. The production failed to respect the remarkable composition of the opera, and so as a result of the self-assured arrogance of the producers, the world premiere did not give an honest account of the opera, which had waited so undeservedly long for its world premiere. At the time when my father was rehearsing the production of *Destiny*, the opera had recently been released on vinyl (1975-1976), conducted by František Jílek with the compelling Vilém Přibyl in the main role as the conductor Živný. I fell in love with the opera when I first heard it, and despite all of my opera experience over the years, I have never ceased to be captivated and fascinated by this work. I was fortunate enough to be present when my father and the stage designer Oldřich Šimáček were working on ideas for their production of *Destiny*. I remember how sceptical Mr Šimáček had been about the whole work, and how he felt that entering this unexplored territory was too risky, but mainly I remember how enthusiastic my father was about it and his unshakeable faith in the work! What probably stuck most in my memory were the obvious parallels in the 1st Act of *Destiny*, where you can hear fragments of conversations and stories from the spa guests, which had the atmosphere of Alain Resnais's film *Last Year in Marienbad*. I saw the film a few years later and this association still resonates within me today. In the same way, over the years there has been a lasting impression from the masterly opening of the 1st Act of Father's production

of *Destiny* in České Budějovice. Now I have in front of me (older than my father when he produced *Destiny* in 1978 – I'm the same age as Leoš Janáček when he had already written *Destiny* and tried time and time again to have it produced) the task of bringing *Destiny* to the National Moravian-Silesian Theatre in Ostrava for the first time. In the 99-year history of our theatre, it is the only one of Janáček's operas which has not been performed here. This is undoubtedly a historic occasion for the National Moravian-Silesian Theatre – after the premiere of *Destiny*, the National Moravian-Silesian Theatre will be the second theatre in the world (after the National Theatre Brno) to have performed all of Leoš Janáček's operas! Our production will be just the sixth to be shown in Czechia – three times in Brno (1958, 1987, 2012), in České Budějovice (1978) and a noteworthy production by Robert Wilson in Prague's National Theatre in 2002. *Destiny* is a wonderful and unique opera in Janáček's repertoire. It has strong autobiographical elements inspired by real meetings, figures, localities and situations related to Janáček's life. The opera's main character is a composer and the main theme is the tragic story of love and his life, which becomes the subject for his opera, blurring the boundaries between reality and art. For the opera to reach its conclusion, the final unfinished act has to end with the reality of the composer's death. The only possible ending! The first of Janáček's three greatest opera experiments (for me the second is the two-part *Excursions of Mr Brouček* and in particular his final work – *From the House of the Dead*). All of his operas are on the border between dream and reality with the unexpected merging of these worlds! A unique modern collage. And *Destiny* – three novelistic images in an ornamental, poetic language, where it often appears impossible to articulate the most important words! I disagree with the age-old argument that the main problem with *Destiny* is the opera's libretto. In the first place, this is one of Janáček's highly original concepts, unique in his opera works for its complex ideas! The verse form of the libretto, written by his collaborator Fedora Bartošová, a friend and peer of his daughter Olga, who died shortly before Janáček began work on *Destiny*, brings a world of Art Nouveau styled images and metaphors. Often she did not want to, nor could she, use words to get directly to the heart of the matter – somewhere only music can reach – the music which the composer Živný pursues, and which Leoš Janáček was able to give to the opera. I see our stage production as a view into the world of a composer where the borders between reality, memory and art are blurred. Life is opera and opera is life! Recently I was very much taken by one line from the libretto: 'The forest is the echo of our souls!' This should also stand for our production."

Jiří Nekvasil

LEOŠ JANÁČEK –  
DESTINY

24/11/2018 Mahen  
Theatre



## Lights flicker in nocturnal urban landscapes and music is played in the halls and towers.

Architecture and Other Music. Peter Greenaway, *Prospero's Books*



photo: Robert V. Novák

Villa Tugendhat

# MUSIC AND BRNO ARCHITECTURE

text: Patricie Částková

Brno can be proud of a number of architectural monuments, and lovers of functionalism would certainly put the Villa Tugendhat in first place, but in the 1930s there was also the Stadion Concert Hall and the pavilions of the Brno Exhibition Centre. As part of the festival it will be possible to visit some of these – not only as museums or busy exhibition spaces – but also as music and theatre venues.

The Villa Tugendhat, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's architectural gem which he designed for Greta and Fritz Tugendhat in 1929–1930, is a building which pointed to the future of modern housing. Thanks to the uniquely designed communal interior with its famous onyx wall, the villa has become a regular venue for concerts and cultural events. It has already found its place in the Janáček Festival and in 2018 you can look forward to a piano recital by Martin Kasík and *Moravian Folk Poetry in Song* performed by the excellent soprano Simona Houda-Šaturová.

The Stadion Concert Hall on Kounicova Street was the venue for the premiere of Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass*. A summer stadium with an exhibition pavilion for Brno markets, where concerts were also put on, was built here in 1922. Shortly after opening, the grand W. Sauer organ, which had originally been located in the hall of the Rudolfinum in Prague, was installed here. When the decision was made to build the Exhibition Centre, the pavilion was given to the Sokol movement, which installed a new gym and social rooms. As a result, the original hall was surrounded by new buildings, the interiors of which have remained more or less unchanged until today, including the organ. Due to the reconstruction of the Janáček Theatre, after many years the Stadion Hall once more became the venue for philharmonic concerts and has also been included in this year's programme. Here you will be able to hear the Brno Philharmonic conducted by Stefan Veselka perform one of the great orchestral concerts from the festival programme, the theme of which will be the commemoration of fateful eights in our history.

The Villa Löw-Beer is the oldest festival venue which was built in 1904 by the Viennese architect Alexander Neumann. The Art Nouveau villa, the centre of which consists of a hall with central illumination and Art Nouveau motifs, was purchased in 1913 by the textile businessman Alfred Löw-Beer, the father of Greta Tugendhat. His wedding gift to his daughter was the upper area of the villa's land, where the Villa Tugendhat was built. During the war the villa was occupied by the Gestapo and later it served as a children's home, but today the reconstructed building can once more show off its beautiful Art Nouveau architecture. Music by Janáček, Bartok and Schoenberg will be played here by the Škampa Quartet as part of the festival.

The Brno Exhibition Centre, one of Brno's most outstanding architectural areas, was one of the most important functionalist architectural complexes of its time. Its most imposing feature is Pavilion A, the Palace of Trade and Industry, by the architects Kalous and Valenta, while other pavilions such as today's post office were the work of leading architect Bohuslav Fuchs. The Exhibition Centre was opened in 1928 with the Exhibition of Contemporary Culture in Czechoslovakia under the patronage of President T. G. Masaryk. The grounds of the Exhibition Centre were heavily damaged during the war and afterwards the city's residents voluntarily helped in its reconstruction. The grounds continue to expand with modern multifunctional halls and Brno's Opera also found a venue in the largest of these, Pavilion P. Two opera productions will be given here as part of the festival; Smetana's *Libuše* performed by the Brno ensemble, and Janáček's opera *From the House of the Dead* performed by a rare festival guest, Welsh National Opera, and a concert of Janáček's works performed by the Orchestra of the Janáček Opera NTB.

# LEOŠ JANÁČEK – THE DIARY OF ONE WHO DISAPPEARED



## I met a young Gypsy girl

text: Patricie Částková  
foto: Jan Versweyveld

Our distinguished guest at this year's festival is the Vlaamse theatre company, Muziektheater Transparant, which has gained a great international reputation in opera since its establishment in 1994. At the centre of its repertoire is the staged performance of operas, either their own versions of already existing operas, or compositions which have been written especially for them. They are bringing to the festival their own distinctive take on Janáček's song cycle *The Diary of One Who Disappeared* directed by the outstanding Belgian director Ivo van Hove, who has to his credit a large number of wonderful opera and theatre productions by the leading European theatres.

*The Diary of One Who Disappeared* is a unique cycle of 22 songs for tenor, mezzo-soprano, three female voices and piano inspired by Janáček's last great love, Kamila Stösslová. It was her bewitching eyes which Janáček was reminded of by the poem entitled *From the pen of a self-taught man* about a young village man, Janík, who falls in love and secretly absconds with the Gypsy girl, Zefka.

Although *The Diary* was originally intended for the concert hall, Janáček's vivid writing lends itself directly to a stage performance, and in the hands of the Muziektheater Transparant it has been given a whole new form. Two artists have been invited onto the project – the writer Krystiana Lada, and the Vlaamse composer-in-residence, Annelies Van Parys (1975), who in 2014 wrote her first opera *Private View* and her compositions are regularly performed by ensembles such as Ictus, Nadar, Spectra, Oxalys, SMCQ Montreal, NYNME New York and Recherche Freiburg.

Lada and Van Parys have expanded the work with their own contribution in the form of musical numbers written for Zefka and the female voices. Therefore, the 22 scenes do not only reflect Janáček's own sadness about his unrequited love for his much younger muse, Kamila Stösslová, but through the eyes of Krystiana Lada and Annelies Van Parys there develops another layer dealing with themes such as expulsion, identity and integration. Their music resonates in the character of Zefka the Gypsy girl as an outsider in Janík's world. Van Parys interrupts the fast rhythm of the composition. In Janáček's cycle the tenor's shortest song lasts only 39 seconds and the overall length of all of the 22 songs is only 37 minutes. The longest part of Janáček's cycle are the songs written for the alto in the middle of *The Diary*. It would appear that the discovery of the female character cooled the blood of the young villager. The parts

composed by Van Parys examine this new time dimension emphasized by the timbre of the woman's voice – the forward energy of the male tenor part is musically balanced by the pause in time, mirroring the male rhythm in the female voice. In Janáček's cycle Van Parys highlights the female perspective. *The Diary* revolves around the male protagonist who projects his idea of a free, mysterious woman onto the female character of Zefka – just as Janáček projected his ideal of pure femininity onto Kamila. In Van Parys's composition, Zefka becomes an active character. Not only can she now be seen, but she looks back at her non-Gypsy lover. The new libretto acts as a base for the composition and has been inspired by traditional female Romany poetry and its metaphors.

Director Ivo van Hove's scenic treatment brings Janáček's work up to the present day through the representation of Janík as a successful photographer and shifting the location from the countryside to the town. Van Hove has added a selection of Janáček's love letters to Kamila to the cycle, creating an intimate portrait with the ever-present feeling of endless departures and farewells, as well as the impossibility of maintaining real contact with another person, whether in time or space. The audience is, therefore, witness to the inner monologue of an old man who has become lost in the endless landscape of his memories, and fantasizes about who he is, who he was and who he never became.

**Ivo van Hove**, one of Europe's leading theatre and opera directors, began his artistic career in 1981 with his own productions. He is also a very successful artistic director and led the Het Zuidelijk Toneel ensemble from 1990–2000, and was the head of the Holland Festival from 1998–2004. He has been the director of Toneelgroep Amsterdam since 2001. Van Hove's productions have been warmly received at the Edinburgh International Festival, the Venice Biennial, Holland Festival, Theater der Welt, Wiener Festwoche and at theatres in London, Lisbon, Paris, Verona and New York. As a director he has worked with ensembles such as Deutsches Schauspielhaus Hamburg, Staatstheater Stuttgart and the New York Theatre Workshop.

The Belgian composer **Annelies Van Parys** studied at the conservatory in Ghent. In 2011 she was awarded the prestigious laureat of the Royal Flemish Academy for Arts and Sciences of Belgium. Her compositions include a chamber adaptation of Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*, music for *Index of Memories*, the compositions *An Oresteia* and *RUHE*, which have been performed more than one hundred times across the world. In 2014 she was commissioned by the Muziektheater Transparant to compose her first opera *Private View*. Her compositions have been performed by renowned musical ensembles such as Ictus, Nadar, Spectra, Oxalys, SMCQ Montreal, NYNME New York and Recherche Freiburg.

**Ed Lyon** is one of England's most in-demand tenors. He graduated from the Royal Academy of Music in London and today works with the leading British opera houses (Royal Opera House, English National Opera, Opera North, Glyndebourne and Welsh National Opera) and international theatres (Teatro Real Madrid, Opera Comique Paris, De Nederlandse Opera, Brooklyn Academy of Music, Festival d'Aix in Provence, Teatro alla Scala, Theater an der Wien, Opera National de Rhin, etc.).

The French mezzo **Marie Hamardis** a graduate from the prestigious Ecole de Musique in Geneva. In 2016 she was invited onto the Britten-Pears Young Artist Programme in Aldeburgh in England. She now works with theatres in Rotterdam, Amsterdam and Geneva where she has played in *The Magic Flute*, as well as in Monteverdi's operas *The Coronation of Poppea* and *L'Orfeo* etc. She also appears in concert performances (Rossini's *Petit messe solennelle*, Kodaly *Missa Brevis*, etc.).



# Youth for Janáček

From a media angle, what links the process of preparing two original operas by students from JAMU's Music Faculty and the production of two of Janáček's earlier works for the Janáček Brno 2018 festival is the youth of the creative teams and performing artists.

text: Veronika Kacetlová

The director **Kristiana Belcredi** is working on two of Janáček's earlier works for the festival (the ballet *Rákoš Rákoczy* and the opera *The Beginning of a Romance*), which are more than one hundred years old today. She tries as far as possible to take into consideration the level of her students while also making her own interpretation accessible to the audience. **Daniel Šimek** and **Daniel Najvar** are budding composers who see the creation of an original opera for the Janáček Brno 2018 festival as an important study assignment.

They do not have to connect their work with the name of Leoš Janáček, despite the fact that the dramaturgy for this year's festival is all about his music. Both of them have produced the material to be performed at the festival, while directors, conductors and stage designers want to follow and be actively involved in more of their work.

## The Beginning of a Romance + Rákoš Rákoczy

The Brno conservatory is preparing a new production made up of two of Janáček's earlier seldom played works for the Janáček Brno 2018 festival. The first of these is the ballet *Rákoš Rákoczy* and the other is Janáček's second opera *The Beginning of a Romance*. The production director, Kristiana Belcredi, decided to join both works into one intertwining complete work, though at the same time not denying that each has the right to be heard on its own.

The opera *The Beginning of a Romance* was not written in Janáček's distinctive style, which is why the composer tended to disown it during his most creative later period, and even today it is not a particularly sought-after opera. It has been shown nine times on Czech stages since 1945, five of which were productions by students at JAMU, and four were joint productions with another early Janáček opera.

Since the end of the Second World War, Janáček's ballet *Rákoš Rákoczy* has only been performed twice. In 1978 it was performed by the Ostrava State Theatre, complete with an ill-fitting libretto with a plot reminiscent of Gogol's *The Government Inspector*, which did not suit the character of Janáček's ballet. *Rákoš Rákoczy* was brought back to life for a second time with the opera *The Beginning of a Romance* by Magdaléna Švecová in 2004, when these works were performed as a graduate production by JAMU's Music Department in collaboration with the choreographer Ladislava Košíková and the group Hradištan at the Janáček Brno International Music Festival.

As part of the idea behind the production of *The Beginning of a Romance* and *Rákoš Rákoczy* were several strands linking both of these works by Janáček. The stories for both parts of the evening take place within the First Republic – the events of *The Beginning of a Romance* occur a few months after the end of the First World War, while *Rákoš* is two years after the first part. Up until the turning point in the first third of the adaptation of Janáček's ballet, both parts are combined by the everydayness of rural life. The central female character of *The Beginning of a Romance*, Poluška, becomes the sister of the main female character of the ballet, Katuška. Each girl experiences the suffering caused by love, though in the end they both find happiness.

In the words of K. Belcredi, Janáček's *The Beginning of a Romance* is an ordinary opera. Through its music Janáček celebrates folk culture and the Moravian character of rural life, with folk motifs recurring in the naive and simple plot of the libretto. The baron Adolf charms Poluška with his sweet words, and she wishes to marry him. The baron, however, falls in love with the countess Irma and in the end Poluška decides to marry her fiancé Tonka. The director's treatment of the opera plays with the full ramifications of the characters' speech and actions, and the artistic team elaborates on the comedy and humour of specific situations in Janáček's work.

Only the two main characters and the basis of the plot remained from the libretto which was added to Janáček's ballet. The community has declared that the soldier Janek is dead as he never returned home after the war, and the villagers urge Katuška to marry Rákoš. The unhappy Katuška tries to bewitch a better groom, but instead of a man, she charms a wood spirit. Ghosts attack the villagers and whoever they touch takes on the glowing coloured form of the ghosts, dances with them and acts in the same unrestrained manner. Katuška suffers from reproach for the apparent destruction she has brought on the village. The villagers call on Rákoš Rákoczy, who is said to be a famous exorcist, but before he arrives the entire village has been transformed into a colourful dancing group. According to the director, Kristiana Belcredi, just as the music wins in the opera, folklore should win over everydayness in the production.

There are seven main characters from *Rákoš* who appear in *The Beginnings of a Romance*, and both parts contain at least thirty characters played by students from all the different years of the conservatory as well as guests – former students from the Brno conservatory. In addition, the folk ensemble Hradištan appears in *Rákoš*, where their main role is to give form to the bewitched forest spirits. The onstage movement is in collaboration with the choreographer Ladislava Košíková. The understanding of this particular production is closely connected to K. Belcredi's educational vision and to the shift in the artistic perception of the opera genre over the past two decades. First and foremost, opera should be theatre and a spectacle, which is why it is necessary to train opera singers in acting. The voice cannot be viewed as the most important element in an opera performance. Students, therefore, learn to perceive emotions and create their characters by searching for the truth in operatic expression.

LEOŠ JANÁČEK –  
THE BEGINNING OF A ROMANCE,  
RÁKOŠ RÁKOCZY

23/11/2018

Mahen  
Theatre

reprise  
26/11/2018

### Jiří Najvar and his Falstaff

The composer and student of JAMU's Music Faculty, Jiří Najvar, uses the story of Falstaff (2016) in the comic genre of the Italian operatic tradition from the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries. His musical composition is written to his own adaptation of Arrigo Boito's libretto for Verdi's opera of the same name, in a translation by Juda Novotný. The subject for the libretto comes from Shakespeare's play *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, while the inspiration taken from opera buffa is evident in his approach to the musical adaptation of the libretto. The composer has written music for an orchestra made up of instruments which were typical for comedies of the time – piccolo, oboe, clarinet, bass clarinet, two horns, trombone, tuba and timpani, a selection of percussion instruments and a string quintet. A dramatic intermezzo intersects in the third act of the fifty-minute opera, when the women who Falstaff is harassing invent an amusing trap for the womanizer in the form of a procession of ghosts and nocturnal apparitions. The production thus closes with a children's choir of elves and fairies appearing in a bewitched forest, while the final rejoinders remind audiences that they are living in a world which is a comical farce, where everyone acts like a madman.

photo: Marek Olbrzymek



Hana Kuželová (Poluška) and Lubomír Chlup (Tonek Křídélko)

### Daniel Šimek's Opera The Lady Unknown

The composer and student of the JAMU Music Faculty, Daniel Šimek, based his opera *The Lady Unknown* (2017) on a play of the same name by the Russian symbolist Aleksander Blok. The story and Šimek's libretto are made up from three visions which border on reality and dream. The composer has reduced the number of Blok's characters to the five most important, while the libretto compresses its characters and examines how they operate in the world and their individual approaches to their ideal so over the progress of time. The star Unknown has fallen to earth and gives itself the name of Marie, who is a symbol of the unrelenting yearning for the unreachable. The poet tirelessly searches for her, but when he finally finds her, he of course loses her forever.

The musical language attempts to describe the content of the libretto, but unlike Janáček's method of transferring speech melodies to music, here the composer imitates the rhythm of natural speech. The composer stated that he avoided being too experimental with the genre and is trying instead to address its formal requirements and not upset the principles of opera.

Šimek works cautiously at setting the words to music. If the composer considers some of the verse to be so beautiful that it does not require music, then he leaves it as it is. He goes by the current rule of being accommodating to audiences, who say 'the less text the better'. He assumes that in order to express the flow of events, the director will use different components in the production – movement, light or changing visual elements.

## DANIEL ŠIMEK – THE LADY UNKNOWN JIŘÍ NAJVAR – FALSTAFF

18/11/2018

Orlí Street  
Theatre

reprise  
28/11/2018

# JANÁČEK BRNO

## Off program

Our festival does not just include opera performances and concerts. We have also organized several ways in which you can find out more about the life and work of Leoš Janáček, as well as the world that surrounded him.

### STEP BEHIND THE CURTAIN

Opera up close and personal! Take a step behind the curtain into the world of Janáček's operas. The principal conductor, Marko Ivanović, along with the soloists and the orchestra of the Janáček Opera NTB, will guide you into the heart of an opera production. You will find out more about the composer, why he chose a particular subject for an opera, which interesting instruments he used in the orchestra or the character a forest creature might have in music, and there will be many opportunities for you to find out what it is like to be part of an opera. The programme lasts one hour.

#### **The Cunning Little Vixen**

21. 11. 2018, 11am, Bílovice nad Svitavou, Cultural Hall

#### **Katya Kabanova**

24. 11. 2018, 5pm, Rectorate Hall, Brno University of Technology

#### **Jenůfa**

4. 12. 2018, 5pm, Mozart Hall, Reduta Theatre

### INTRODUCTORY TALKS

45 minutes before the start of each opera performance

### COMMEMORATIVE EVENT AT THE GRAVE OF LEOŠ JANÁČEK

25. 11. 2018, 1pm, Brno Central Cemetery  
Czech Academic Chorus, choirmaster Michal Vajda

### THE REPUBLIC'S CHRISTMAS TREE

17 and 18. 11. 2018, Bílovice nad Svitavou, Náměstí Svobody Brno  
A reconstruction of the First Republic event connected to a Christmas tree for Brno in conjunction with the Tourist Information Centre Brno

### EXHIBITIONS BY THE MORAVIAN MUSEUM AS PART OF THE JANÁČEK BRNO 2018 FESTIVAL

#### **Leoš Janáček's Handwriting**

17. 11. – 9. 12. 2018, Janáček Theatre (foyer)

20 large-format photographs of Janáček's handwriting. Visitors will be able to see the composer's uniquely beautiful handwriting and observe the development of his handwriting from a youth to the greatest works which Janáček composed in the last years of his life.

#### **The Cunning Little Vixen, Manuscripts, Documents**

exhibition opening 19. 11. 2018 – 5pm, Leoš Janáček Memorial  
19. 11. – 21. 11. 2018

This exhibition will be a unique event, where there will be a rare chance to see Janáček's original manuscripts, all of the important documents related to the opera *The Cunning Little Vixen*, including Janáček's autograph of the opera, the score which was used for the premiere of the opera in 1924, the manuscript version of the libretto, clippings from the *Lidové noviny* newspaper with comments by Janáček, and correspondence with Rudolf Těsnohlídek. Part of the exhibition will also include a presentation of the stage and costume designs for the world premiere by Eduard Milén.

#### **At Home with the Janáčeks**

exhibition opening 22. 11. 2018 – 5pm, Marble Hall, Moravian Museum

22. 11. 2018 – 6. 1. 2019

This exhibition will present a part of the Leoš Janáček archive which was recently entered into the UNESCO's Memory of the World Register including so-called three-dimensional objects connected with Janáček's private life. Visitors to the exhibition will, therefore, be able to view objects from Janáček's everyday life such as his writing equipment, books from the composer's library, household decorative objects, toiletries, etc.



# Festival souvenirs

## OTHER EXHIBITIONS

### Exhibition of folk costume in collaboration with the Moravian Museum

17. 11. – 5. 12. 2018, Janáček Theatre (foyer)

### “When Evening Comes...”

design inspired by Moravian folk culture, exhibition by Vivian Babicová

17. 11. – 5. 12. 2018, Janáček Theatre (foyer)

### Janáček in Brno

17. 11. – 5. 12. 2018, Reduta Theatre (foyer)

An exhibition of historical photographs capturing Leoš Janáček in different places in Brno.

### Bulb, Rose, Tulip

25. 11. 2018, 14.30, Jurkovič Villa

Workshops on folk themes  
in conjunction with the Moravian Gallery

## CONFERENCE ON ART CRITICISM

27. 11. 2018, Reduta Theatre, Mozart Hall

In conjunction with the European Citizens' Initiative and the JAMU Music Department

## INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF MUSICOLOGY

19. 11. – 21. 11. 2018, Masaryk University, Department of Musicology,  
Faculty of Arts

on the theme of Musical Culture in an Independent Czechoslovakia  
(1918–1939) / The Musical Culture of a New Country



For news on the accompanying programme to the festival,  
go to [www.janacek-brno.cz](http://www.janacek-brno.cz)

# JANÁČEK BRNO

## information

### VENUES

#### Janáček Theatre

Rooseveltova ul. 7

#### Mahen Theatre

Malinovského nám. 1

#### Reduta Theatre

Zelný trh 4

#### Orlí Street Theatre

Orlí 19

#### MF JAMU

Komenského nám. 6

#### Villa Tugendhat

Černopolní 45

#### Leoš Janáček Memorial

Smetanova 14

#### Stadium

Kounicova 22

#### Löw-Beer Villa

Drobného 22

#### Brno Exhibition Centre (Pavilion P)

#### Auditorium of Brno University of Technology

Antonínská 1

### FESTIVAL PASS

**MFJB 2018 = a great discount!**

**Festival pass Janáček Brno 2018 –  
a 30% discount when making  
purchases for 3 or more performances.**

Does not include performances with ticket prices  
under 300 CZK or concerts at the Villa Tugendhat.

To choose a seat in the hall, click on "add performance" and you  
will be redirected back to this page where you can choose another  
performance. After choosing at least 3 performances a discount of  
30 % will automatically be calculated.

For more information: tel: +420 542 158 120,  
email: obchodni@ndbrno.cz

### NTB CUSTOMER CENTRE

Dvořákova 11  
tel: +420 542 158 120  
email: obchodni@ndbrno.cz

Online advance sales: [www.janacek-brno.cz](http://www.janacek-brno.cz)  
Tickets can also be purchased at the venue one  
hour before the performance.







foto: Petrík Borecký

**LEOŠ JANÁČEK –**  
**THE EXCURSIONS OF MR BROUČEK**  
**5/12/2018** Janáček  
Theatre



art

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**JANÁČEK BRNO 2018**

**NdB opera**

For the financial support:



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photo: Ivan Pinkava

## Janáček Opera NTB celebrates the year of Czech independence.

Premiere 7. 9. 2018, Brno Exhibition Centre, Pavilion P  
reprises: 9 and 11 of September,  
and 26 and 28 of October 2018

## BEDŘICH SMETANA – LIBUŠE

festival reprise

**27/11/2018** Brno Exhibition Centre,  
Pavilion P