

The Kapralova Society Journal

A Journal of Women in Music



Special points of interest:

Critical reception of Kaprálová's music in the United States

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Vítězslava Kaprálová and the Benefits of Advocacy

Judith Mabary

Throughout much of the recorded history of music, advocacy in some form has been a critical factor in both the creation of musical works and their favored positions within the repertoire of the Western classical tradition. For some composers, this advocacy took the form of patronage, as was the case in the relationship between Nikolaus Esterhazy and Franz Josef Haydn and even for Beethoven, the emblem of the independent artist, with his three noble supporters in Vienna, Prince Lobkowitz, Archduke Rudolf, and Prince Kinsky. In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the university became the patron for many composers, with performers themselves often serving as the commissioning entity. Within the university system, and for some outside of it, composers constituted the mentors and teachers of other composers. Such was the case for Vítězslava Kaprálová (1915–1940) and the impressive list of mentors, teachers, and professional acquaintances who, by various means and to the extent they were able, assisted her in the pursuit of a productive career as composer and conductor.

Although relationships with several of those instrumental in preparing Kaprálová for success in terms of technical and artistic growth were established early in her life, she was not without detractors, the earliest of whom was her own father, Václav Kaprál (1889–1947). Having achieved the rank of a noted composer and pianist himself, Kaprál could point to his own list of influences, not least among them the inimitable Leoš Janáček (1854–1928), with whom he had studied in Brno. Yet when his own daughter expressed her plans to study composition and conduct-

ing, Kaprál was less than enthusiastic, even though he had directed her earliest compositional efforts, as he feared she would risk failure if she pursued a career in such male-dominated fields. Perhaps she would be served better by preparing herself to be a teacher of piano than a composer for it. Kaprálová would not be denied her dreams, however; as she began to prove herself capable in the tasks she had set for herself, Kaprál reversed his opinion, in good fatherly fashion, and became one of her greatest supporters.

Kaprálová turned primarily to the conservatory system to continue her educational career. At the age of 15, she joined like-minded students at the Brno Conservatory where she pursued composition with Vilém Petrželka (1889–1967), who, like her father, had studied with Janáček, and conducting with Zdeněk Chalabala (1899–1962), who would be instrumental in bringing Czech and Russian opera to Brno and to the National Theatre in Prague in his own capacity as conductor. While this article is not intended to trace Kaprálová's musical style in terms of her teachers, it is worth noting that neither Petrželka nor Kaprál would advocate for Janáček's method in their own instruction.¹ After completing her initial studies in Brno, Kaprálová continued her education at the conservatory in Prague where she took part in master classes under Vítězslav Novák (1870–1949) for composition—with whom Petrželka, Chalabala, and her father had all studied—and for conducting with the renowned Václav Talich (1883–1961), who occupied the position of principal conductor of the Czech Philharmonic from 1919 until 1941 and

Vítězslava Kaprálová

was largely responsible for transforming it into a world-class ensemble. With the instructional lineage outlined here, the illustrious and consistent pedigree implicit in Kaprálová's education should now be apparent.

If Prague was the mecca of Czech artistic life, Paris occupied a similar position in the larger European arena. It was there that the next chapter of Kaprálová's story as a talented young composer was written. With the aid of a scholarship to study in Paris offered to promising Czech pupils by the French government, she was able to continue her education in conducting at the *École normale de musique* with Charles Munch (1891–1968) and to study composition privately with her own countryman Bohuslav Martinů (1890–1959), who had come to Paris in 1923 with the benefit of a similar scholarship and had studied with Albert Roussel (1869–1937). Before launching his conducting career in the French capital, Munch had enjoyed a successful sojourn as concertmaster with the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra and, following his teaching appointment at the Paris Conservatory, would go on to serve as Music Director of the Boston Symphony Orchestra in 1949.

The extent of Martinů's relationship with Kaprálová, both professionally and personally, has been the subject of much study, and the degree to which he supported her work as a composer and used his influence to assist in providing opportunities to advance her education and career are well recognized. Not only is Martinů's advice heard in several of Kaprálová's works, which contain musical gestures made familiar from her mentor's compositions, but Martinů was also the main instigator in ensuring that Kaprálová's scholarship to study in Paris was renewed. As the war threatened more of the European stage, he even went so far as to make arrangements for her to immigrate to the United States where she could further realize her dream to work as a composer and conductor and, should she receive the scholarship for which she was applying in the summer of 1939, continue her studies at the Juilliard School of Music.

Another promoter of Kaprálová's music, pianist Rudolf Firkušný (1912–1994), joined the group of Czechs in exile in Paris in the late 1930s; in January 1940, when his performance of Kaprálová's *April Preludes*² on a local Society for Contemporary Music concert met with considerable success, he commissioned her to write another work.³ With what lay ahead for the young composer, however, this opportunity would never be realized. Had the future turned out differently, Firkušný, who would immigrate to the United States later in 1940, might have continued his support there. Unfortunately, on May 1, 1940, Kaprálová began showing signs of an illness that would prove fatal. Over the period of approximately six weeks, her health deteriorated at an alarming rate. She was hospitalized in Paris on May 9, evacuated to Montpellier on May 20 by Jiří Mucha,

then her husband of less than a month, hospitalized again on May 24, and succumbed to the official diagnosis of tuberculosis miliaris on June 16.⁴ She was only 25 years old.

The roster of teachers, composers, and performers who had contributed to exposing Kaprálová's talent by aiding in the formation of her style and level of expertise in both large- and small-scale genres and to realizing what appeared would be an enviable career for a woman composer in the early twentieth century was most impressive. The daughter of a composer whose original plans for his little Vitulka extended only to becoming a teacher of piano had positioned herself for recognition as one of the great Czech composers of the last century.

Short lives can invite us to become sentimental of what might have been. Such an attitude alone fails to contribute in any measurable manner to the continuance of an artist's music, however. Advocacy requires action to be effective. A brief exploration of nineteenth-century history reveals a number of examples, among them the efforts of Zelter and Mendelssohn to revive interest in the works of J.S. Bach and those of Robert Schumann to bring promising new composers to the public eye in his essays for the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*. Although it becomes more difficult to analyze the lasting effects of advocacy as such efforts approach the present day, its implementation is an essential component to ensuring long-range interest.

In this spirit, it is notable that Kaprálová's story did not conclude with her death. Firkušný continued to play her *April Preludes* in New York with a well-received performance at Carnegie Hall in March 1947. Martinů would remain inspired by his energetic and talented student in his own work, notably in the Fantasy and Toccata (1940) and *Memorial to Lidice* (1943).⁵ Both performers and scholars would become interested in her work and invest considerable energy in bringing her music to a wider sphere of potential supporters, not only in her native country, but particularly in North America where some of her staunchest advocates reside today.

The nature of this advocacy has taken the form of live performances, radio broadcasts, recordings, scholarly writing, and publication of scores. Organizations making such advocacy possible range from profit-seeking businesses, notably publishers of books and scores, to non-profit music societies and, particularly in the United States, university departments and schools of music, whose mission entails, at least in part, the introduction of both canonic and little-known but artistically worthy music to receptive performers and audiences.

The "good-looking Czechoslovakian girl," as

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Kaprállová was described by the reviewer of the 1938 International Society of Contemporary Music Festival, which the 22-year-old composer opened in London by conducting her *Military Sinfonietta*, would advance considerably in critical opinion to be described as “Europe’s great forgotten female composer [...] a trailblazer for women in two of music’s most male-dominated disciplines” by John Allison writing for the online edition of the United Kingdom’s *Daily Telegraph*.⁶ Duly noted is the fact that two reviews do not make a reputation. Nevertheless, these sample assessments are representative of a more pervasive trend toward positive and permanent recognition.

Adjusting the lens further, a survey of performances and broadcasts emanating from Canada and the United States reveals the origins of some of Kaprállová’s most active and diligent advocates. Easy access to relevant information regarding the degree of attention directed to Kaprállová’s music is available because of the tireless efforts of Karla Hartl, clearly the composer’s most conscientious advocate. The founding of the Toronto-based Kapralova Society in 1998 with its mission to make Kaprállová’s music available in print and on record is only one result of Hartl’s efforts. Without Hartl’s philanthropy, much of Kaprállová’s music would not yet be available in published scores nor released on CD. Associated with the Society and a further consequence of Hartl’s diligence and dedication are the *Kapralova Society Journal* and comprehensive website *kapralova.org*, as well as several other projects advancing Kaprállová research. Hartl’s activities are not limited to North America but have spread knowledge and appreciation of Kaprállová’s music to a broader international sphere. One of her most recent accomplishments is in close collaboration with the BBC Radio 3 to produce a five-hour documentary on the composer.

During the 1990s, there was also an increase in interest in Kaprállová’s works among performers in the United States, chief among them Virginia Eskin. A review in the *Philadelphia Daily News* on May 2, 1994, drew attention to Eskin’s performance of what was listed as the piano suite, which was in fact Kaprállová’s four *April Preludes*, describing the work as “powerful” and radiating with a “juicy blend of piquant harmony and potent rhythmic bite.”⁷ Performance records, available on the Kapralova Society website, provide further evidence of Eskin’s advocacy, with the *April Preludes* and *Five Piano Compositions* performed most frequently in the first decade of the twenty-first century. Eskin not only presented Kaprállová’s piano works in live performances, in locations concentrated mainly in the Eastern United States, but also recorded several compositions, along with violinist Stephanie Chase, for the Koch Entertainment Company (with partial funding provided by the Kapralova Society) that were subsequently shared via

radio broadcasts.

For more recent efforts to acquaint audiences with Kaprállová’s art songs, the major credit belongs to Timothy Cheek, associate professor, pianist, and vocal coach at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Cheek is also the author of *Singing in Czech*, an acclaimed and welcome guide to vocal diction. This particular advocate’s efforts are recognized not only via his national and international performances and his 2003 recording with Dana Burešová of Kaprállová songs for voice and piano, but also for his diligence in bringing her works to the attention of students at the University of Michigan and audiences in Ann Arbor. *Navždy* (Forever), op. 12 appears most often, with *Sbohem a šáteček* (Waving Farewell), op. 14 a distant second. Numerous broadcasts of performances have also been featured on UMTV, the university campus’s cable television system, bringing these works to an even broader and more diverse audience.

Musicologist and pianist Erik Entwistle presented Kaprállová’s piano works in a university venue on several occasions in 2009–10 while employed by the Longy School of Music in Cambridge, Massachusetts. University-affiliated advocates also took Kaprállová’s works on the road, performing them for audiences at other universities and schools of music, for participants in conferences and festivals, and for concertgoers in various small-scale venues.

In terms of institutions, the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, has been Kaprállová’s greatest supporter in the United States, primarily due to the advocacy of Timothy Cheek. Consequently, Kaprállová’s songs have become a frequent occurrence on student recitals. In addition, the University of Michigan supported the 2003 recording of songs by Burešová and Cheek (partial funding was also provided by the Kapralova Society), and in September 2015, sponsored a Kaprállová Festival in celebration of the composer’s centennial year. Works were introduced on several evenings primarily according to genre: Songs, Piano Works, Chamber Music, Orchestral Works, and on the first evening, Childhood Pieces and Other Works. Among the performances were several world and North American premieres. According to the Kapralova Society website, on which the works programmed are listed, the September 20th concert of Childhood Pieces and Other Works included world premieres of early *Songs* (1930–32) and *Song of the Workers of the Lord* (1939) as well as North American premieres of *From My Earliest Compositions* (1924–27), *Hymn of the Volunteer Nurses* (1938), and *Tales of a Small Flute* (1940). Audiences for the September 21st Song Recital witnessed the world premiere

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of *In the Bohemian Land*, composed in 1939. Piano works receiving debuts on September 24th were *Two Bouquets of Flowers* (world premiere) and *Three Piano Pieces*, op. 9 (North American premiere), both composed in 1935. Chamber work performances on September 26 included the world premiere of *Fanfare for My Dad's 50th Birthday* (1939) and North American premieres of *Trio for Oboe, Clarinet, and Bassoon* (1937–38) and Kaprálová's only melodrama *To Karel Čapek* (1939). Introductions of works for larger ensemble took place on September 25 with the premieres of two of the composer's works for voice and orchestra: *Sbohem a šáteček* (1938) in its first North American performance and the world premiere of *Smutný večer* (Sad Evening, from 1936). In a separate performance titled "Grand Night for Singing" at the University of Michigan on September 27, "Vězdicka" (Little Star, from *Two Choruses*, op. 17) received its North American debut.

Published critical reception of Kaprálová's works in the United States during the present century is comparatively sparse but generally complimentary. Quotations from reviews of four performances will illustrate. Columbia University's Miller Theatre in New York was host to a concert presented by American pianist Jenny Lin on February 19, 2002. A subsequent performance by Ms. Lin at the Weill Recital space at Carnegie Hall on October 25 of that year included the *April Preludes* presented in February at the Miller Theatre. Of the former Victor Carr, Jr. writing for *Classics Today* described the *Preludes* as "irresistible," reflecting in part Kaprálová's study with Novák and Martinů.⁸ Anne Midgett added her critical voice in a review for *The New York Times*, describing Kaprálová as a "talented composer" and the *Preludes* as one of the highlights of the recital. In the January/February 2003 release of the *New York Concert Review*, critic Harris Goldsmith offered a more enthusiastic vote of confidence for the work as performed by Ms. Lin at the Weill Recital Hall the previous October. "*April Preludes* [...] launched the evening in auspicious fashion. These Kaprálová pieces again impressed as music of substantial beauty and emotional weight [...]. When confronted with unfamiliar music, this writer is always tempted to look for ways to pigeonhole it with more famous fare (I [...] had to concede that Kaprálová marched to her own drummer). [...] The capacity audience was brilliantly enthusiastic and for very good reason. This was a memorable concert."⁹ Virginia Eskin's interpretation of Kaprálová's Partita for piano and string orchestra (1938–39) was the subject of at least two noteworthy reviews in February 2009. The concert presented by the Chamber Orchestra of Boston at the New England Conservatory with Eskin as guest soloist was titled "Ferocious Beauty," its focus on "strong, pow-

erful women in music." Liane Curtis's evaluation was the most laudatory, claiming that the Partita should place Kaprálová "in the musical firmament near Bartók and Stravinsky."¹⁰ David Weininger, whose review appeared in *The Boston Globe*, described it as "written in a traditional tonal language shot through with striking dissonances, somewhat reminiscent of Hindemith." He closed by noting that this recipient of an East Coast premiere was "eminently worth hearing again."¹¹ The most widely recognized music critic represented in this overview is Allan Kozinn with *The New York Times*, who reviewed Kaprálová's String Quartet, op. 8 following its performance in 2001 by the Hawthorne String Quartet, formed by members of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Kozinn described the work as containing "interesting effects painted around long, lyrical lines." He continued that, even though the composer was only 21 when she completed the work, "she [had] complete command of the quartet's expressive resources."¹² With such evaluations, this "young Czech girl [with...] a conspicuous talent for composition," as Olin Downes had described Kaprálová in a 1947 review for *The New York Times*,¹³ could claim another member, that of music criticism, among the expanding collection of advocates.

A survey of Kaprálová's music discloses the fact that it contains selections appropriate for both amateurs and professionals, as attractive to students in university music departments as to world-renowned soloists. Based on the level of advocacy in recent years, there is little doubt that attention will continue to be drawn to her works in live performances, recordings by professional musicians, publications of her music by reputable firms (evidenced at present by Amos Editio, Czech Radio, and Bärenreiter), and scholarly articles by interested researchers. A promising extension for scholarly inquiry is contained in the 2011 publication *The Kaprálová Companion*, edited by Karla Hartl and Erik Entwistle, which has made a substantial discussion of the composer's life and music accessible in English.¹⁴

Establishing an enviable reputation in the classical tradition continues to be hard won. There is much against which to compete. Although her musical training and the circles she inhabited provided Kaprálová with a solid foundation, she still had to realize through her own efforts musical works worthy of acclaim. Her songs and compositions for piano have received considerable exposure in recent years, primarily in university venues and due to the diligent support of a few performers. Nevertheless, her chamber music and especially her works involving orchestra still require repeated concert programming and additional recordings by major professional ensembles. On a more positive note, Kaprálová's works overall have



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Vítězslava Kaprálová is considered to be one of the foremost women composers of the 20th century, creating an astonishing number of works between the ages of 9 and 25, when she tragically died.



gained considerable purchase in the last few years. Given the continuing focus on providing greater exposure for women composers devoted to the classical tradition, Kaprálová is positioned well to be granted her rightful place in the musical firmament, a “trailblazer” among Czech composers of the last century, one with a musical voice more than adequate to secure a place far exceeding that initially conceded to the “good-looking Czechoslovakian girl” who dared challenge a world view.

Notes:

Special thanks to Erin Schlabach, Graduate Student in Musicology at the University of Missouri, for her compilation and organization of data relevant to performances of Kaprálová’s music in the United States.

¹ See Jindřiška Bártová’s chapter “Kaprálová in the Context of Czech Music” in *The Kaprálová Companion*, ed. Karla Hartl and Erik Entwistle (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2011), pp. 15–18, for additional comparisons of the styles of Petřelka and Kaprál to that of Janáček.

² Kaprálová had dedicated this set of preludes to Firkušný upon their completion in 1937.

³ Karla Hartl, “Vítězslava Kaprálová: An Annotated Life Chronology,” in *The Kaprálová Companion*, p. 137.

⁴ Ibid., 138–39.

⁵ See Diane Paige’s article “Kaprálová and the Muses: Understanding the Qualified Composer” in *Kaprálová Society Journal*, Vol. 10, no. 2 (Fall 2012), pp. 1–6, for an insightful discussion of the nature and results of the inspiration that existed between Martinů and his student.

⁶ International Egg Rolling,” *Time*, Vol. 31, no. 26 (June 27, 1938), p. 46; John Allison, “The Tragedy of Europe’s Great Forgotten Female Composer,” *The Telegraph* (January 24, 2015) <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/music/classicalmusic/11365848/The-tragedy-of-Europes-great-forgotten-female-composer.html>.

⁷ Tom Di Nardo, “Beauty from the Ashes, Quartet’s Terezin Projects Revive Works by Nazis’ Victims,” *Philadelphia Daily News* (May 2, 1994), p. 43. *April Preludes* were released two years before on Northeastern Records (1992) under the title *Dubnova Preludia Suite*, hence the reference to a “suite.”

⁸ Victor Carr, Jr., “Pianist Jenny Lin’s Eloquent Case for Modern Women Composers,” *Classics Today* (February 22, 2002).

⁹ Harris Goldsmith, “Jenny Lin, piano. Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall. October 25, 2002,” *New York Concert Review* (January/February 2003).

¹⁰ Liane Curtis, “‘Ferocious Beauty’ Offers Powerful Discoveries,” [wophil.blogspot.com](http://www.kapralova.org/REVIEW_09.htm) (presently accessible at: http://www.kapralova.org/REVIEW_09.htm).

¹¹ David Weininger, “In Women’s Program, Pianist Takes Center Stage,” *The Boston Globe* (February 9, 2009).

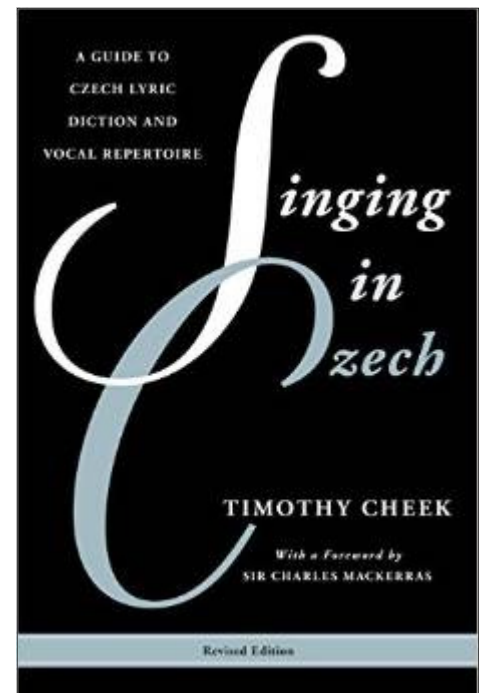
¹² Allan Kozinn, “Soul-Searching and Beauty from Holocaust Composers,” *The New York Times* (May 12, 2001).

¹³ Olin Downes, “Firkušný, Pianist, Plays New Work. Introduces *April Preludes* by Vítězslava Kaprálová, Victim of Nazis in Czechoslovakia,” *The New York Times* (March 15, 1947).

¹⁴ Karla Hartl and Erik Entwistle, eds., *The Kaprálová Companion*, 2011.

About the author:

Judith Mabary is Associate Professor of Musicology at the University of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri. Dr. Mabary’s research interests also include Czech music of the twentieth century. Her most important contribution to Kaprálová research to date are two major chapters in *The Kaprálová Companion*, published by Lexington Books in 2011.



CHEEK, Timothy. *Singing in Czech: A Guide to Czech Lyric Diction and Vocal Repertoire*. Revised Edition. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2014. Paperback: 978-0-8108-8877-7; eBook 978-0-8108-8878-4.

Timothy Cheek’s revised and expanded edition of *Singing in Czech: A Guide to Czech Lyric Diction and Vocal Repertoire*, with its accompanying audio accessible online, builds on the original pioneering work of 2001. It offers updated information, important clarifications, and expanded repertoire in a more accessible, easier to use format to all those who are interested and engaged in the performance of the rich Czech vocal repertoire. *Singing in Czech* is divided into two parts. Using IPA, the first part takes the reader systematically through each sound of the Czech language, enhanced by recordings of native Czech opera singers. Chapters cover the Czech vowels, consonants, rules of assimilation, approaches to singing double consonants, stress and length, Moravian dialect, and an introduction to singing in Slovak. Fine points of formal pronunciation have been clarified in this revised edition. In the second part, Cheek offers a thorough overview of Czech art song, expanded from the first edition. Texts to major song literature and opera excerpts by Smetana, Dvořák, Janáček, Martinů, and Haas, with timings, editions, word-for-word translations, idiomatic translations, and IPA transcriptions follow. In this revision, Cheek has included additional cycles by Dvořák and Martinů, and two new chapters on the composers Kaprálová and Bodorová.

From Kitchen to Carnegie Hall: Ethel Stark and the Montreal Women's Symphony Orchestra

Maria Noriega Rachwal

In 1940, two extraordinary women, meeting over tea at Montreal's Ritz-Carlton Hotel, changed the face of classical music forever by agreeing to create the first all women's full symphony orchestra. Socialite Madge Bowen and talented violinist Ethel Stark flaunted convention to assemble a disparate group of women from all walks of life, many of whom had never set foot on the stage, and within seven months were performing their first public concert. With Maestra Ethel Stark at the helm, the women managed to find instruments, organize rehearsals in members' homes and unheated basements, and learn to play "masculine" instruments such as the trombone and the double bass, much to the cynical amusement of the country's male music critics who wrote that there were better things for a woman to do with her lips than play a horn. Undaunted, for nearly thirty years the women of the Montreal Women's Symphony Orchestra – French, English, Jewish, Catholic, Protestant, black, white, socialite and domestic – responded to the fierce passion and relentless work ethic of their leader for the sheer love of making music together. They did all of this at a time when society was heavily stratified based on race, class and language. In the process they became the first Canadian orchestra to perform in New York's prestigious Carnegie Hall to rave reviews. One of its members also became the first Canadian black musician to play in a symphony in Carnegie Hall. Ethel Stark and the MWSO opened doors of equal opportunity for marginalized groups and played an important role in breaking down the gender stereotypes of the classical music world.¹

The fascinating story of the orchestra is now brought to light by the young Canadian author Maria Noriega Rachwal in her book *From Kitchen to Carnegie Hall*, just published by Second Story Press, an independent Canadian publisher based in Toronto. We had a chance to ask Maria a few questions about her book just before it was officially released on October 6.

KJS: How did you become interested in the topic, Maria?

MNR: In 2008, I stumbled on a newspaper article from the 1940s about a women's orchestra in Canada. I was so surprised because I had never heard of it, and yet, it was a major orchestra at the time, with 80 musicians who had a steady concert series, gave workshops for students, and presented premieres of important musical works. The MWSO was the first Canadian orchestra to perform in Carnegie Hall.

KJS: So how did you go about your research?

MNR: I began by looking at the archives—newspapers, ads, flyers, etc. I did a lot of research at Library and Archives Canada, as well as other archives in Montreal, Edmonton, and New York City. In 2012, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation presented some of my initial research on the MWSO, and that catapulted my work to another level. Orchestra members who were still alive called in to the show. Family members wanted to have their voices heard. I received a letter from a granddaughter who very much wanted to tell me "the other" side of the story. I could hardly keep up with all the new information. I knew I had to write a book at some point.

KJS: Who was the audience you were writing for?

MNR: I had initially wanted to write a scholarly work on the importance of the MWSO to music in North America, but the more I spoke with family members and friends of the women, the more I became convinced that the story had potential to reach many other regular people with a love of music. The story is just so inspiring. That's why I decided to refrain from using technical terms and in-depth analysis. Instead, I focused on just telling the story of the orchestra and its members, from their point of view.

KJS: What were some of the highlights of your research – any revelations, unanticipated surprises?

MNR: I had wonderful experiences interviewing subjects, but there are two that stand out. The most touching moment for me was when 87-year-old Violet Grant States (the first black member of a Canadian orchestra) told me her incredible story and added, "Playing in the orchestra was the highlight of my life!" Her walls, her scrapbook, are filled with memorabilia of those glory days. But the most unanticipated surprise, and the most exciting for the book, came when Ethel Stark's nephew presented me with his aunt's unpublished memoirs. Can you believe it? He had heard that I was interested and wanted to help. Ethel Stark (passed away in 2012) had wanted to publish her own memoirs but passed away before she completed them and here was a binder filled with the most exciting information, and the answers to so many questions that I had about her life, and the initial years with the orchestra. As far as highlights of my research go, I was very surprised to discover that flutist Doriot Anthony Dwyer (the

From Kitchen to Carnegie Hall: Interview

first woman to be appointed first principal chair of a major American symphony orchestra) was a part of the orchestra at one point. Isn't that amazing? In fact, there were several American women who crossed the border back and forth to be a part of the MWSO. That really tells us about how far women had to push themselves to create training and performing opportunities. The MWSO would have never succeeded if it were not for the efforts of these American players who acted as teachers and role models for the other novices.

KJS: And what is your next project? A sequel to your book, perhaps, to follow the leads that you left unexplored?

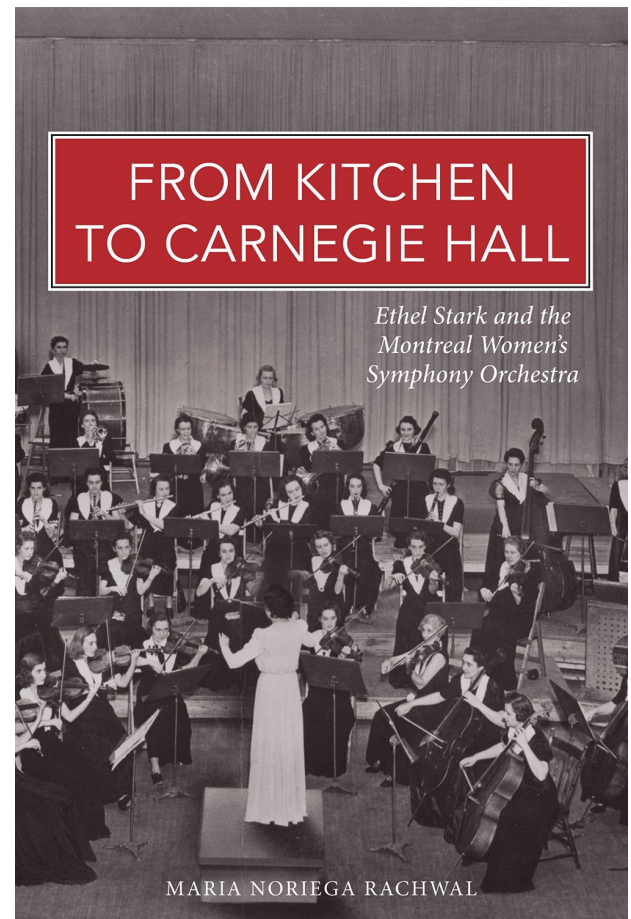
MNR: I hope that this book will uncover even more information about the orchestra and its members, especially their private lives. There are so many questions that are still left unanswered and so many other stories that I'm sure must be told. Documenting the many adventures of these pioneers is part of my next project.

KJS: We are already looking forward to it.

Notes:

¹ fromkitchentocarnegiehall.com

Maria Noriega Rachwal is a PhD Candidate at the University of Toronto where she is writing a dissertation on gender and music. She is also an accomplished flute player (M.Mus. in Performance from the University of Calgary) who has performed with the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra, the Lethbridge Symphony Orchestra, and various chamber groups in Alberta. Her work on the Montreal Women's Symphony Orchestra was featured on the CBC Radio documentary, "It Wasn't Tea Time: Ethel Stark and the Montreal Women's Symphony Orchestra."



Rachwal, Maria Noriega. *From Kitchen to Carnegie Hall: Ethel Stark and the Montreal Women's Symphony Orchestra*. Toronto: Second Story Press, 2015. 192 pp. ISBN 978-1-9275-8387-6 (paperback).

Captions for the photographs below, from left to right:
 Fig. 1. Madge Bowen, Lea Luboshutz, Ethel Stark, Mrs. John Pratt. Courtesy of Library and Archives Canada.
 Fig. 2. The MWSO during a rehearsal, 9 January 1942. Courtesy of Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec.
 Fig. 3. Violet Louise Grant. Courtesy of Violet Grant States.



Figs. 1–3

Vítězslava Kaprálová
(1915–1940)

"Fanfárovitě"

The score is for "Fanfárovitě" by Vítězslava Kaprálová. It is a digital transcript of the composer's autograph. The score is for Tpt. 1, 2 and Hn. 1, 2. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The score consists of 11 measures. The dynamics range from *mf* to *fff*. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and triplets. The performance instruction "Timp." is present at the end of the score.

Fig. 1. *Fanfare* (1939). Digital transcript of the composer's autograph (see Fig. 2).

Kaprálová's *Fanfare for My Dad's 50th Birthday*

Karla Hartl



Fig. 2. *Fanfare* (1939). This autograph appears in the letter of Vítězslava Kaprálová to Václav Kaprál, 23. 3. 1939. Published as a facsimile in: Vítězslava Kaprálová, *Dopisy domů. Korespondence rodičům z let 1935–1940*, edited by Karla Hartl (Toronto: Kapralova Society, 2015), 228.

This is a story of one letter and one miniature score—the story of one tenderly loving message from a daughter to a father. And it is in this context that I find the above two staves of music—fourteen measures in all—so touching. The miniature score ends in a scribble that suddenly adds timpani to the group of four brass instruments (2 horns, 2 trumpets). Horns appear on the lower rather than the upper staff and the music is not transposed, but all that does not obscure the fact that the rendering of this lovely little tune is surprisingly optimistic.

I say surprisingly, because Kaprálová wrote this miniature piece of music during the most difficult period of her life, at the time the war was imminent and her relationship with Martinů was undergoing a major crisis. Then—on March 15, 1939—an invasion of Czechoslovakia by Nazi Germany made return to her homeland near impossible. The anxiety and loneliness the young woman must have felt is hard to imagine. Yet, eight days after German soldiers marched into the streets of Prague, on March 23, 1939, Kaprálová wrote this tenderly loving and even cheerful letter to her father, whose important anniversary was just coming up on March 26:

My dearest dad,

All the best for your 50th birthday! I wish you an additional 50 years, which would also fulfill my dearest wish to be together for a long time to come. I thank you for everything you have done for me—and the older I get the more I realize you have done a lot. I would love to give you much in return so that your “mature years” would be filled with happiness and good health. I cherish the memories of us together, from you bathing me as a baby to our “mutual revising” of each other’s compositions. Well, you didn’t expect when you

were warming up your baby’s back with hot handkerchiefs that the baby would grow up to become your competitor, did you. But she is very open-minded and of all the music in the world she likes best—her Dad’s. Why wouldn’t I admire it when it is only Prof. Vitališ Kaprál,¹ among the thousands of people, who is not ashamed of his emotions; indeed, who is proud of them.²—So now you only have to take care of your health because there is nothing more precious to me as the two of you there, in my dear Moravia. I strongly believe that—in the end—everything will lighten up into F Major and A Major, the same way my music for your birthday ends.³ I am kissing both your hands and your head, and may the Lord God give you all you want and all you wish for.

Love, Vitulka.⁴

The letter is the first in a long series of loving letters Kaprálová wrote to her parents in the last two years of her life. She had sent them tender letters on occasion before, of course, but since this very moment the letters epitomized constant pouring of love for them, as if the war put all her relationships in perspective and there were suddenly very few that withstood the test. Her love for Martinů aside, Kaprálová’s relationship with her parents emerges as the strongest of all. Without any doubt, this was the case for all of its three actors. On June 5, 1946, in his letter to his estranged wife Viktorie, Václav Kaprál wrote this declaration of love for his now deceased daughter: “I took it as my sole responsibility to take care of all matters that concern Vitulka, whatever the cost, because Vitulka was, has been, and always will be the main reason for living my remaining days, the meaning of the life that I still have. That is why I

want to be solely responsible for everything, needless to say that I dwell neither on comfort nor money, as they have no value for me. And should hunger and illness hit me in old age, so be it; I will accept them gladly because I had this great happiness in my life once, because I had Vitulka. It is she of whom I think constantly, in both sadness and happiness...”⁵

Transcribed from its autograph by Dejan Badnjar (Fig. 1) and transposed for brass instruments by Andrew Gilliam, the little fanfare-like tune, which we shall call *Fanfare for My Dad's 50th Birthday*, received its first public performance at the Kaprálová Centenary Festival at the Britton Recital Hall, University of Michigan School of Music, in Ann Arbor, on September 26, 2015.⁶ The miniature score has been made available for free download on our website kapralova.org.

Notes:

¹ Kaprálová playfully changes her father's first name into a masculine form of her own first name.

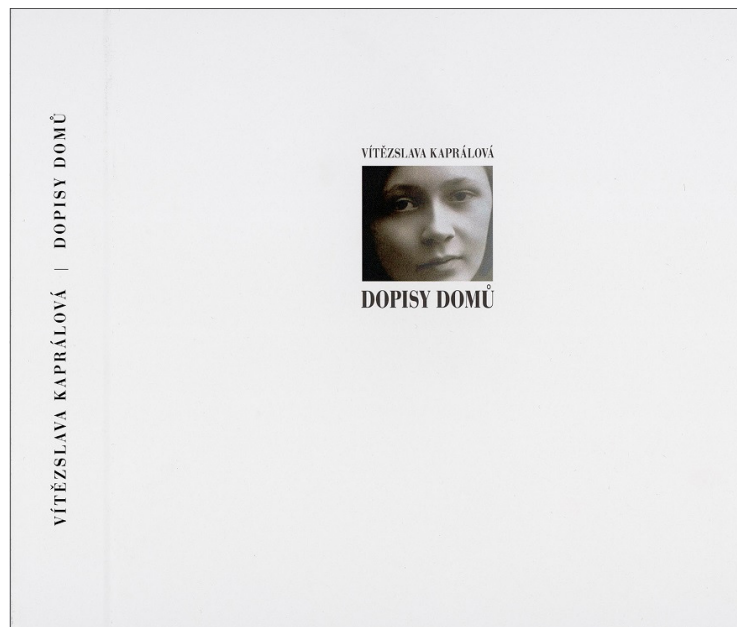
² Kaprálová refers to Kaprál's lyrical style.

³ Kaprálová refers to the two staves of music at the beginning of her letter.

⁴ English translation © 2015 Karla Hartl. The full Czech original reads: “Nejdražší tatínku, přeji Ti všechno nejlepší do Tvé nové 50^{ky}, což je mé nejvroucnější přání, abych Tě zde ještě tak dlouho měla. Děkuji Ti za všechno, co jsi pro mě dosud udělal, a čím jsem starší, tím víc vidím, že toho nebylo málo. Chtěla bych Ti tak ráda všechno to oplatit, aby Tvůj vstup z „mladického věku do mužnosti“ byl prozářen štěstím, radostí a spokojeností a ovšem také zdravím. Vzpomínám na všechny ty naše společné chvíle – od koupání ve vaničce až po „vzájemné opravování skladatelské“, to jsme tehdy netušili, vid', když jsi mně dával horké kapesníky na záda, aby mně nebylo zima, že Ti vyrůstá konkurent. Ale je velmi tolerantní a ze vši muziky na světě se mu nejvíc líbí – tatínkova. Však jak bych ji také neměla obdivovat, vždyť kdo se dnes tak odvážně a směle dovede přihlásit ke svému citu? Jenom p. prof. Vitališ Kaprál mezi tisíce. —Jen se mně tedy hezky drž ve zdraví, vždyť kdo na světě může pro mě znamenat víc než vy dvě tam na drahé Moravě. A pevně věřím, že se všechno rozjasní zase do F-dur a A-dur, jak končí má zdravotní na začátku!! Líbám Ti obě ruce i Tvoji drahou hlavičku a ať Ti Pámbu dá všechno, co si přeješ. Tvoje Vitulka.” Vítězslava Kaprálová to Václav Kaprál, 23. 3. 1939. Muzeum Polička (sign. XVI/a 431), published in Vítězslava Kaprálová, *Dopisy domů*, edited by Karla Hartl (Toronto: Kapralova Society, 2015), 228–29.

⁵ English translation © 2015 Karla Hartl. The quote in Czech reads: “Vzal jsem si za svou povinnost postarat se o všechny věci týkající se Vitulky, ať mne stojí cokoliv, poněvadž Vitulka mi byla a je a bude vždy hlavním smyslem zbytku mého života, a proto běžu vše na sebe, nehledě k tomu, že nelpím ani na pohodlí ani na penězích. To všechno nemá pro mne cenu. A i když ve stáří budu třeba chci pat hlady a budu souzen nemocemi, rád to podstoupím, neboť jsem měl to velké štěstí, že jsem měl Vitulku. A na ni myslím stále, ať se rmoutím nebo raduji...” Václav Kaprál to Viktorie Kaprálová, 5. 6. 1946. Private archive. This excerpt was published in Vítězslava Kaprálová, *Dopisy domů*, edited by Karla Hartl (Toronto: Kapralova Society, 2015), 5.

⁶ The musicians were Kathleen Patrick and Morgan Wynne (horns) and Chris O'Brien and Andrew Gilliam (trumpets).



KAPRÁLOVÁ, Vítězslava. *Dopisy domů. Korespondence rodičům z let 1935–1940*. Uspořádala, předmluvu napsala, poznámkami opatřila a k vydání připravila Karla Hartl. Toronto: The Kapralova Society, 2015. 312 stran, 50 ilustrací. ISBN 978-0-9940425-0-7 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-9940425-1-4 (electronic).

První souborné vydání z velké části dosud neznámé a nepublikované korespondence *Dopisy domů* dokumentuje posledních pět let života jedné z nejzajímavějších postav české hudební moderny třicátých let minulého století – skladatelky Vítězslavy Kaprálové (1915–1940). Prostřednictvím vtipného a bezprostředního komentáře jejich autorky v ní nahlédneme do zákulisí hudebního života Prahy a Paříže druhé poloviny třicátých let a v její osobité výpovědi i do pozadí některých událostí tragické doby, v níž česká kultura přišla o část celé jedné hudební generace. Publikace vychází ke stému výročí skladatelčina narození.

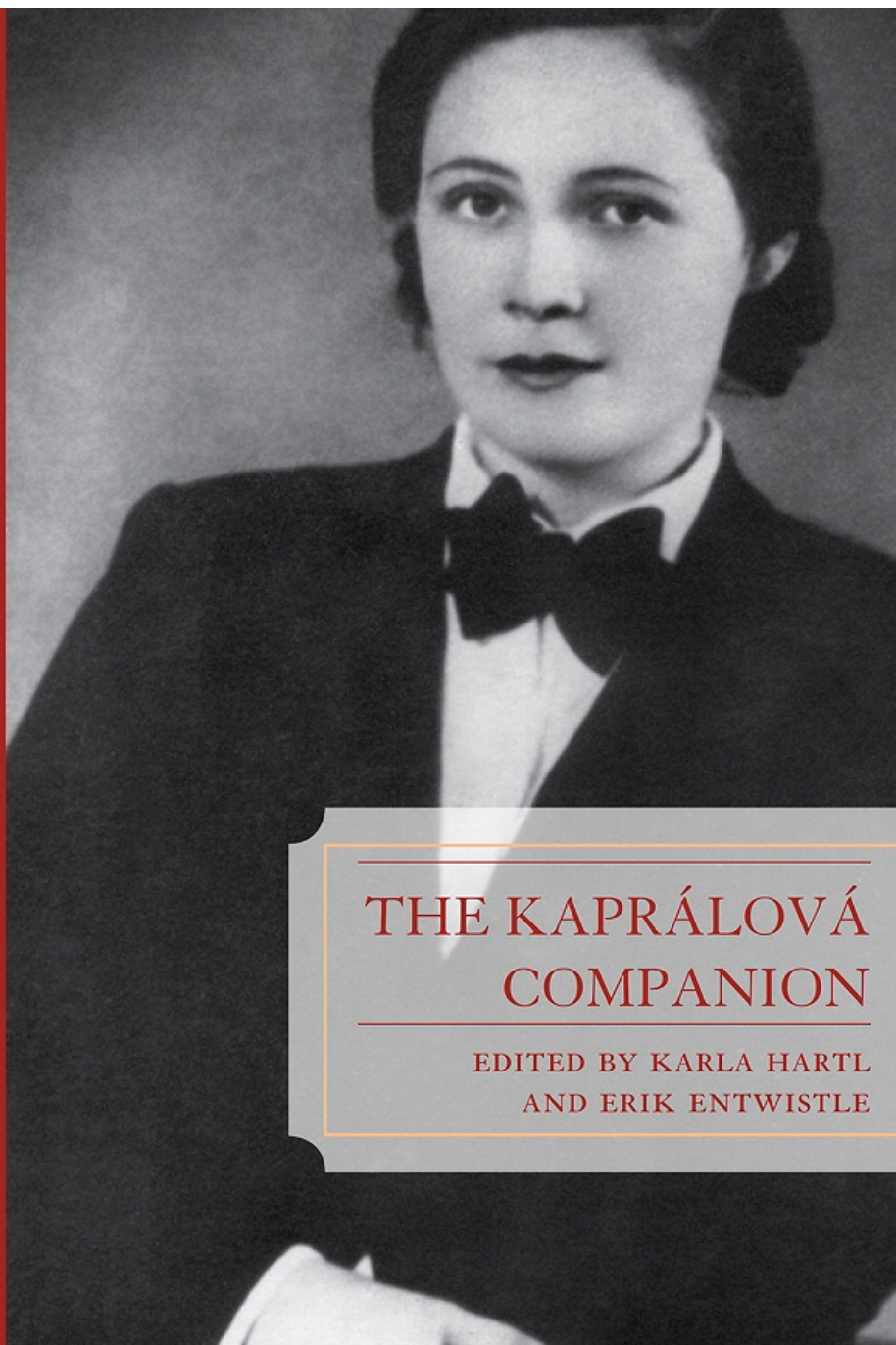
The first edition of largely unknown and unpublished correspondence *Dopisy domů* (Letters home) documents the last five years of the life of one of the most interesting personalities of Czech musical modernism—the composer Vítězslava Kaprálová (1915–1940). Through Kaprálová's direct, witty commentary we will catch a glimpse of the backstage of musical scenes in Prague and Paris during the 1930s; and through her personal testimony also of the tragic period in which Czech culture lost part of a musical generation. The book (in Czech) has been published on the occasion of the composer's birth centenary.

Bližší informace / more information:

kapralova.org/DOPISY.htm

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