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Influence, Individuality and Stylistic Evolution in the Music of
Fanny Hensel and Felix Mendelssohn
Hye-Bin Song

*Special points of interest:*

Hensel and Mendelssohn

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A major theme in the literature on Fanny Hensel is the influence of familial relationships. Coinciding with the origins of the feminist movement, the earliest scholarship from the late 19th century to the early 20th century focused more on her respective roles as an obedient daughter and the supportive elder sister of Felix Mendelssohn, as well as on her preparation to become a good wife rather than on her achievements as a composer.

Writing in 2001, musicologist John Michael Cooper observed that the overall quality of research devoted to Hensel in the final years of the 20th century never rivaled that on Mendelssohn.¹ Furthermore, a search of the international library catalogue database *WorldCat* shows that only 1330 Hensel scores, consisting mostly of songs, are available in libraries worldwide. In contrast, the number of Mendelssohn scores is 36,978, and it includes various genres, such as songs, instrumental, and sacred music.²

Although the theme of gender equality plays a more prominent role in more recent scholarship, Hensel’s collaboration with her family members and the issue of Mendelssohn’s influence continue to be major topics. Challenging the idea that Hensel’s work as a composer was dominated by her brother’s influence, Marian Wilson Kimber has suggested that Fanny and her husband shared mutual artistic inspiration, as shown in Fanny’s piano cycle, *Das Jahr*. This piano cycle was created through an array of musical, poetic and visual references, and is thought to be her personal commentary on her 1839–1840 trip to Italy. Wilhelm Hensel was a painter, so he did not necessarily affect his wife’s musical style directly, but the manuscript of *Das Jahr* features extra-musical elements, both art and poetry, in his hand. Nonetheless, Fanny’s marital status may have had some impact on her compositional output.³

Looking more directly at specifically musical influence, Camilla Cai compares the two com-

posers’ piano songs and demonstrates that the direction of influence is at best ambiguous. She explains:

Of all her pieces, it would be here [in the piano songs] that the strongest stylistic cross-currents should still exist between her style and his *Lieder ohne Worte* style. These pieces do indeed use many of the techniques found in Mendelssohn’s work. In light of Hensel’s and Mendelssohn’s continued close musical interaction, two directions of influence are possible. Either Mendelssohn’s works served as models that influenced Hensel’s choice of musical ideas, or Hensel’s works were the models and sources of ideas for his pieces.⁴

The general approach may have changed somewhat over time, but scholarship on Hensel’s music still seems to place much emphasis on her familial ties.

This, however, is not the case with all recent scholarship. Others have begun to look at Hensel’s outside influences as well. Françoise Tillard, for instance, notes that Mendelssohn met Goethe in 1821, and that Hensel was introduced to the poet the following year through their composition teacher Carl Friedrich Zelter.⁵ Goethe was deeply impressed with the siblings, and both would go on to set many of his poems to music. Fanny set more of his texts than those of any other poet. So even in Hensel’s youth, outside influences had begun to play a part. Moreover, R. Larry Todd points out that Hensel was influenced by Beethoven’s late piano music and adopted tonal ambiguity, fugal writing and instrumental techniques from it.⁶ The tonal ambiguity of Hensel’s String Quartet exemplifies that influence.

Building on Todd’s observations, I will argue that outside influences are as important as the mutual influence of the siblings in understanding Hensel’s stylistic development. I will also dis-

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cuss three situations in which Hensel's and Mendelssohn's works show some evidence of mutual influence. By comparing the style of their compositions, I will demonstrate the trajectory of their evolution.

Zwölf Lieder, A Collaboration

Zwölf Lieder, op. 9 (1830) is one of the few works in which Hensel and Mendelssohn collaborated as composers. Of the twelve songs in the cycle, Hensel composed nos. 7, 10, and 12, but despite her input, the songs were published under Felix Mendelssohn's name, thus giving her no credit.⁷

This joint lieder collection demonstrates the similarity of the two composers' early musical styles. In his important historical study of the Mendelssohn family, published in 1881, Sebastian Hensel (Fanny's son) reproduces a letter written by the 17-year-old Hensel, in which she discusses her influence on her brother.

Up to the present moment I possess his unbounded confidence. I have watched the progress of his talent step by step, and may say I have contributed to his development. I have always been his only musical adviser, and he never writes down a thought before submitting it to my judgment.⁸

In one of her earliest letters to Felix, dated 28 October 1821, Fanny also acknowledged her reliance on his active interest in her creative endeavors. She wrote: "Don't forget that you're my right hand and my eyesight, and without you, therefore, I can't proceed with my music."⁹ These letters reveal the mutual influence of the two composers in relation to their musical development.

The compositional styles of Hensel and Mendelssohn in *Zwölf Lieder* are indistinguishable. All of the songs are strophic, and the musical transitions from one song to the next sound gradual and natural, leading listeners to think that one person composed all of them. The thin texture of the last song, Hensel's no. 12, "Die Nonne" (fig. 1), for example, is similar to that of Mendelssohn's no. 6, "Scheidend" (fig. 2).

Fig. 1. Hensel, no. 12, "Die Nonne," mm. 1–14.

Mendelssohn began no. 6 with descending arpeggiations; Hensel began her piece with ascending arpeggiations. Additionally, Mendelssohn inserted suspensions in the vocal line from m. 6, while Hensel's

vocal line in no. 12 is mainly composed of suspensions. Overall, the style of no. 6 and no. 12 changes from thin arpeggiating music to a thicker texture with repetitive chords, suggesting similar conceptual trajectories for the works. For most of the songs, both composers maximize the differences in dynamics by marking the first measure *p* and inserting *ff* at the end of the chordal progressions, so that large changes in dynamics underline these condensed chordal progressions. Their shared use of such stylistic devices worked to disguise the fact that the lieder collection was composed by two separate people.

Fig. 2. Mendelssohn, no. 6, "Scheidend," mm. 1–6.

Mendelssohn wrote to Fanny from Glasgow in August 1829, authorizing her to choose the songs for their joint volume of lieder, either from his or her own compositions.¹⁰ Ultimately, however, the collection was published only under Mendelssohn's name, thus concealing Fanny's involvement. While their collaborative working process might naturally seem like the most obvious reason for the musical similarities, there are other possible reasons why their styles in this work were so similar.

The first reason is that the lieder collection was created at a time when they were both students of Zelter, and both were working at the same time and in the same place, influenced by their teacher. Another reason may relate to the marketability of the work. Both of these reasons are supported by the fact that the songs in this collection are fairly typical of many other songs from the period. One feature that is commonly found in early 19th century songs is the use of condensed harmonic progressions. This is a technique whereby the key modulates from one place to another (for example, from tonic to dominant) in a short time, and was used by both Hensel and Mendelssohn. For example, Mendelssohn's no. 8, "Frühlingsglaube," sounds like a fanfare that has E-flat major and repetitive chords throughout the piece, which later has condensed harmonic progressions in one measure. Similarly, Hensel's no. 10, "Verlust," opens in the key of D minor and has a lyrical vocal line that is duplicated in the right hand of the accompaniment throughout the song. However, the lyrical phrase arrives at a similar condensed chordal progression (tonic to dominant) in the span of two measures, as is also the case in no. 8.

These shared stylistic features demonstrate that both Hensel and Mendelssohn were composing in a fairly typical style at this time. This does not change the fact that the two obviously col-

laborated to create this collection of songs, nor does it downplay the importance of their collaborative working process at this point in their careers, but it does suggest that they were both heavily influenced by outside forces. For *Zwolf Lieder*, one of those outside influences was probably Zelter, their mutual teacher. The general conventions of the song genre as exemplified in the works of Schubert and other contemporaneous composers also suggest a powerful influence, perhaps inspired by the desire for marketability of the publication. Either way, familial influence does not tell the whole story.

Many Influences in Hensel's String Quartet

Along with *Zwolf Lieder*, Mendelssohn's String Quartet No. 1 in E-flat major (1829) and Hensel's String Quartet in E-flat major (1834) offer another useful case study of works that demonstrate the composers' mutual influence. The tempo markings for the movements of the quartets suggest that Hensel was inspired by Mendelssohn's earlier composition. Both quartets include long harmonic progressions and chromatic modulations, and each of them is cast in four movements with similar tempo markings. Hensel's Quartet movements are marked *Adagio ma non troppo*, *Allegretto*, *Romanze* and *Allegro molto vivace*, and Mendelssohn's are marked *Adagio non troppo*, *Allegretto-Canzonetta*, *Andante Espressivo* and *Molto Allegro e vivace*.

Although their quartets share similar structures, the musical styles of the two composers begin to become more distinctly individual in these pieces. Generally speaking, Mendelssohn's work is characterized by simplicity and clarity, whereas Hensel's music is more complex. Mendelssohn's music is homophonic in texture, as may be seen in the score example below (fig. 3).



Fig. 3. Mendelssohn, String Quartet, 2nd mov., mm.1-5.¹¹

In this example (fig. 3), the upper two violins play the melody with accompaniment from the two lower instruments. Though both violins have somewhat different melodies, they share the exact same rhythmic gesture, thus contributing to the homophonic texture.

Another feature of Mendelssohn's homophonic style in this work is his use of "antecedent-and-consequent" period structure to organize musical interactions between the instruments. The next example (fig. 4) illustrates his use of this compositional device. In this example, the first violin begins the music with a question and the viola answers the question, while the two other instruments remain in suspended notes. Through this harmonic convention, the interactions between different voices sound less overtly contrapuntal and maintain an overall homophonic texture.

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Fig. 4. Mendelssohn, String Quartet, 1st mov., mm.18-23.

The final characteristic of the homophonic style of Mendelssohn's work lies in the way the primary part is distinguished from the accompanying part. In the third movement, Mendelssohn gives the melody completely to the first violin, allowing the other three instruments to accompany the first violin as shown below (fig. 5).



Fig. 5. Mendelssohn, String Quartet, 3rd. mov., mm. 1-6: Except for the first violin, the rest of the parts play the accompaniment.

Mendelssohn's homophonic style in this piece is grounded in the conventions of classicism and tonality. American pianist and music scholar Charles Rosen has noted that Mendelssohn used "Classical convention to create an un-Classical musical style from the past."¹² By borrowing from past Classical styles, specifically styles before Beethoven, Mendelssohn was able to find his own distinct compositional voice.

In contrast, Hensel's musical style in her String Quartet is more complex and contrapuntal. The first violin and viola trade off the melody-line. The marked spots in the next example from the first movement of Hensel's Quartet (fig. 6) illustrate her use of imitative passages.



Fig. 6. Hensel, String Quartet, 1st mov., mm. 44-48.¹³

The second and third movements of Hensel's composition remain in dialogue style. The following excerpt from the third movement (fig. 7) shows that the upper three strings are in dialogue. The first violin starts the conversation and the second violin and viola join in, making continuous fragmental sonority.

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Fig. 7. Hensel, String Quartet, 3rd mov., mm. 6–9: 1st violin dialogues with 2nd violin and viola in mm. 7–8.¹⁴

Hensel attributed the difference in the two Quartets to her adoption of Beethoven’s late style. In the following excerpt from a letter to Mendelssohn, dated 17 February 1835, Hensel discussed her feelings about her Quartet.

I have reflected how I, actually not an eccentric or overly sentimental person, came to write pieces in a tender style. I believe it derives from the fact that we were young during Beethoven’s last years and absorbed his style to a considerable degree. But that style is exceedingly moving and emotional. You have gone through it from start to finish and progressed beyond it in your composing, and I have remained stuck in it, not possessing the strength, however, that is necessary to sustain that tenderness. Therefore, I also believe that you haven’t hit upon or voiced the crucial issue. It’s not so much a certain way of composing that is lacking as it is a certain approach to life, and as a result of this shortcoming, my lengthy things die in their youth of decrepitude; I lack the ability to sustain ideas properly and give them the needed consistency. Therefore lieder suit me best, in which, if need be, merely a pretty idea without much potential for development can suffice.¹⁵

Until 1835, Hensel’s only chamber music compositions were a piano quartet (1823) and an Adagio for violin and piano (1823). From 1823 to 1835, she composed only vocal and solo piano pieces. As mentioned in her letter to her brother, Hensel struggled in composing instrumental music and was somewhat hindered by her emulation of Beethoven. Todd suggests that Beethoven’s influence on Hensel goes beyond her adoption of his contrapuntal style. He mentions in particular that Hensel adopted the musical gestures from Beethoven’s String Quartet, op. 74 (“Harp”), composed in 1809.¹⁶ Beethoven’s quartet earned its name from the harp-like pizzicato passages in the first movement (fig. 8). Hensel’s work has a similar pizzicato sonority; while the viola plays the melody and the first violin imitates the viola, the remaining instruments play four repetitive notes simultaneously, creating the pizzicato sound (fig. 9). Hensel also borrowed the rhythmic motive of Beethoven’s opening phrase (fig. 10)—half note, dotted quarter note, eighth note (fig. 11).

As these excerpts show, Hensel not only used the same key (E-flat major) of Beethoven’s work, but she also adopted the slow tempo in the introduction. Moreover, the harmony of each phrase is left tonally ambiguous. The first two phrases of Beethoven’s quartet end with a tonic seventh, and Hensel’s phrases in the introduction end with a secondary dominant and a secondary dominant seventh. Leav-

ing the phrase in this uncertainty creates a questioning sonority, a technique whereby the musical phrase does not resolve at the end, thus suggesting the questioning inflection of a human voice at the end of the phrase.



Fig. 8. Beethoven, String Quartet, op. 74 (“Harp”), 1st mov., mm. 37–38.¹⁷



Fig. 9. Hensel, String Quartet, 1st mov., mm. 44–48.



Fig. 10. Beethoven, String Quartet, op. 74 (“Harp”), 1st mov. mm. 1–5.



Fig. 11. Hensel, String Quartet, 1st mov., mm. 1–5.

One point that Todd does not mention is the similarities of Beethoven and Hensel in their treatment of imitative passages. As discussed above, Hensel wrote imitative passages between voices in her string quartet. Beethoven also often included them in his piano sonatas. The various examples above show that the influence of Beethoven was prominent in Hensel's music. She was very aware of this and pointed it out in her letter to Mendelssohn. Thus, the influence of Beethoven seems to have greater significance at this point in Hensel's career than the influence of Mendelssohn. Clearly, outside influences such as this emerge as important factors to be considered beyond family influence.

While the influence of Beethoven seems to be the main cause, gender constrictions might also help to explain why Hensel's and Mendelssohn's styles began to differ. Unlike her brother, Hensel was constricted by prevailing gender norms in her preparation for composing instrumental music. The limitations of playing certain musical instruments are described by Julia Eklund Koza.

Typical instruments for men are violin and flute; the usual female instrument is the piano. No woodwind or percussion instrument is ever mentioned in connection with females. Certain exceptional females play instruments not usually associated with women, but such characters were often from the lower class. . . . If women were perceived to be intuitive and emotional while men were believed to be more rational, and if musical composition was presumed to be a rational, mathematical, and an intellectual activity, then a predominance of male composers could be explained by arguing that women lacked the requisite innate rationality to compose.¹⁸

According to Todd, due to their assumptions about gender differences, Abraham and Lea Mendelssohn did not expose their daughter to the world of music in the same way that they did with their son:

If Abraham Mendelssohn and Lea encouraged Felix to explore musical genres freely—by 1821, he was composing operas, string symphonies, concerti, choral works, chamber music, piano and organ compositions and songs—Fanny's compressed artistic sphere revolved around two domestic musical genres associated with the feminine: short character pieces for piano and songs.¹⁹

Suggesting that she had absorbed these assumptions about gender and musical genres, Hensel confessed in a letter to Mendelssohn (previously quoted) that she was more comfortable and had more confidence composing songs. In the 19th century, instrumental music was considered a masculine genre while vocal music was thought to be an appropriately feminine genre. Most of Hensel's works are songs, since she felt no restrictions composing vocal music. Thus, it is no surprise that when Hensel did write instrumental music, she turned to other composers (such as Beethoven and her brother) for useful models. Discussing her string quartet in the previously quoted letter to her brother, she lamented "My lengthy things die in their youth of decrepitude."

Although the musical styles of the two works are distinctly different, comparing Mendelssohn's String Quartet with Hensel's String Quartet highlights some of the ways that Hensel was inspired and

influenced by her brother. These stylistic differences seem best understood when we consider that both Hensel and Mendelssohn were aware that her emulation of Beethoven was an important outside influence that drove her stylistic evolution. Gender norms and restrictions also affected the development of Hensel's style of instrumental composition, functioning as yet another kind of outside influence apart from the influence of her brother.

Songs for Pianoforte, 1836–1837 and Lieder ohne Worte: Finding an Individual Voice

The final examples for comparison, Hensel's *Songs for Pianoforte* and Mendelssohn's *Lieder ohne Worte*, show the two composers musically interacting, but as Cai explained, the direction of the influence is ambiguous. Both composers wrote works in the piano song genre at the same time. Between 1836 and 1837, Hensel composed eleven short pieces which she called *Songs for Pianoforte*. Mendelssohn composed two collections of *Lieder ohne Worte*, op. 30 and op. 38 in that same period.²⁰

As Cai points out, these piano pieces have many similarities in form that indicate the continued musical interaction between brother and sister. The structure of most of the pieces in the *Songs for Pianoforte* and *Lieder ohne Worte* collection is a three-part ABA' form (seven out of eleven pieces in Hensel's collection, and nine out of twelve in Mendelssohn's op. 30). Both composers' works consist of SATB parts. While steady bass lines dictate the harmony, the tenor and alto parts continuously perform broken chords, while the soprano sings the melody (figs. 12 and 13).



Fig. 12. Hensel, *Songs for Pianoforte*, no. 10, Capriccio, mm. 55–56.²¹

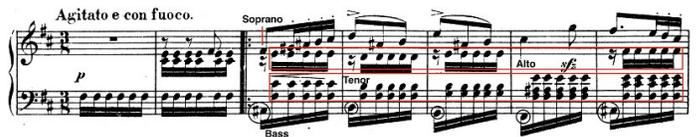


Fig. 13. Mendelssohn, *Lieder ohne Worte*, op. 30, no. 4, mm. 7.²²

According to Cai, not only did Hensel and Mendelssohn share the structure of the pieces, but their choices of texture were similar as well. Conspicuous and busy bass figures (such as repeated notes, arpeggios or broken chords) accompany the melody in both composers' songs. The next examples (figs. 14 and 15) illustrate these conspicuous bass figures.



Fig. 14. Hensel, *Songs for Pianoforte*, no. 3, mm. 1–2.

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Fig. 15. Mendelssohn, *Lieder ohne Worte*, op. 30, no. 5, mm. 1–3.

Despite the similarities, Cai overlooks some differences in the musical style of these pieces. These differences show that by this point, the two composers have developed their own unique compositional voices. In the accompaniments, Hensel uses homophonic texture to bring out the melody in *Songs for Pianoforte*, no. 3 (fig. 14). Mendelssohn's bass line, however, functions contrapuntally to the melody-line in his *Lieder ohne Worte*, op. 30, no. 5 (fig. 15).

Because she was interested in finding similarities of style, perhaps the biggest oversight in Cai's approach is that Hensel's and Mendelssohn's piano songs represent quite different treatments of the genre. Hensel initially composed *Songs for Pianoforte* for the purpose of her own performance, which means that these pieces not only reflect Hensel as a composer, but also as a pianist. Hensel wrote her piano pieces much more pianistically, while Mendelssohn conceived his piano pieces in a more vocal style.

Composing for herself as a pianist led Hensel to explore the use of more diverse textures. Hensel usually varied the pianistic textures with different figurations within her compositions (Mendelssohn was less adventuresome in this respect). The changes in texture often occur when the music approaches the new section in the ABA form. The outcome of these changes results in dramatic musical effects, especially when the music moves to the B section. Not only do these changes render a dramatic effect, but they also distinguish the B section from the A section. The following two examples from *Songs for Pianoforte*, no. 5 (figs. 16 and 17) illustrate this.

Fig. 16. Hensel, *Songs for Pianoforte*, no. 5, m. 1.

The A section of no. 5 (fig. 16) shows the oscillating alto and tenor while the soprano sings the melody, supported by the alto. The bass sits on one note for a long time, supporting the tenor. In contrast, the B section (fig. 17) presents arpeggios in m. 39 and separated textures between left and right hand from m. 40. Compared to m. 1, the four part voices in m. 40 do not seem to engage with each other.

In *Songs for the Pianoforte*, no. 6, Hensel used a different musical technique called *durchbrochene Arbeit* (a mono-motivic development technique) to develop the B section from the A section.²³ Thus the tex-

Fig. 17. Hensel, *Songs for Pianoforte*, no. 5, mm. 39–40.

ture and the rhythmic gestures of the A section and the B section are almost identical, as shown in the following two examples (figs. 18 and 19).

Fig. 18. Hensel, *Songs for Pianoforte*, no. 6, mm. 1–2.Fig. 19. Hensel, *Songs for Pianoforte*, no. 6, mm. 55–56.

Because the B section shares a very similar texture with the A section, we can determine that Hensel composed the B section (fig. 19) harmonically away from the A section (fig. 18). The harmonies from the A section remain stable, whereas the B section's harmonies are unstable, as shown in the score excerpt. The style of no. 6 also clearly shows that Hensel adopted Beethoven's use of imitative passages, as she did in her String Quartet.

Hensel often inserted difficult octave doublings in both the A and B sections of these pieces, providing further evidence of her use of diverse textures. Mendelssohn, however, rarely used this gesture. The first score excerpt from *Songs for the Pianoforte*, no. 1 (fig. 20) is an example of the octave doublings that Hensel often used. The second score excerpt (fig. 21) is a rare example of octave doublings in Mendelssohn's works.

Fig. 20. Hensel, *Songs for Pianoforte*, no. 1, mm. 106–108.

Even though both composers used the same technique, their treatment of these octave doublings was quite different. Hensel treated the octave doublings as a separate melodic accompaniment to the right hand, while Mendelssohn treated his octave doublings as a dependent accompaniment that intertwines with

all other voices. This is another example of Mendelssohn's piano songs being more contrapuntal than those of Hensel.



Fig. 21. Mendelssohn, *Lieder ohne Worte*, op. 38, no. 5, mm. 9–10.

The score excerpts from Mendelssohn's *Lieder ohne Worte*, op. 30, no. 4, no. 5 and op. 38, no. 5 show that there are no dramatic interval shifts from one note to the next in these pieces. Also, the pianistic gestures that Hensel used in her piano songs are not present in Mendelssohn's work. This implies that Mendelssohn's intention in these pieces was to make the piano writing imitate the voices of singers. It would be awkward for a chorus to sing pianistically; each part cannot sing larger interval shifts in a short time. Also, the separate voices of a chorus do not usually sing alone, their parts intertwine with one another.

Although the choice to compose in the same genre at the same time indicates some amount of mutual influence as Cai claims, the musical styles of the two composers have become different at this point in their careers. It also seems that Hensel has now abandoned her Beethoven influences to a large extent, and discovered her own compositional voice.

There are many possible reasons that the two composers found their own individuality by this point in their careers. One reason may well be that they each had different motivations and purposes for their compositions. Hensel's piano songs were conceived as showpieces; Mendelssohn's were piano works imitating songs. Also, gender constrictions, previously discussed in the section on their string quartets, probably played a significant role in the shaping of each composer's individuality. Hensel found her own style specifically in a "feminine genre," the short piano piece, with partial influence from Beethoven. Her *Songs for Pianoforte* is an impressive collection of character pieces representing Hensel's musical emergence from family influence and finally standing on her own as an independent composer.

Conclusion

The familial relationship of Hensel and Mendelssohn is certainly important for understanding the compositional styles and evolution of the two composers. The force of outside influences, however, also explains their stylistic developments and how the two arrived at their own unique styles. Hensel's relationship to Mendelssohn is important and it is probably the main reason that her music has survived at all. But scholarship may have actually overvalued that relationship as a source of influence on the composers, perhaps because of their unique situation of being siblings. The fact that the two composers were siblings and collaborated, however, may not have had a direct impact on their careers and stylistic evolution. Is this situation that different from any other two composers who might have collaborated over time?

Notes:

- ¹ John Michael Cooper, *Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy: A Research and Information Guide* (New York: Routledge, 2001), xix.
- ² OCLC Online Computer Library Center, Inc., *WorldCat* (Dublin, Ohio: Online Computer Library Center, 2013), <http://www.oclc.org/worldcat/>, accessed May 3, 2013.
- ³ Marian Wilson Kimber, "Fanny Hensel's Season of Life: Poetic Epigrams, Vignettes and Meaning in *Das Jahr*," *Journal of Musicological Research* 27, no. 4 (2008): 359–400.
- ⁴ Camilla Cai, "Songs for Pianoforte of 1836–37: Stylistic Interaction with Felix Mendelssohn," *Journal of Musicological Research* 14, no. 1–2 (1994): 55–76.
- ⁵ Françoise Tillard, *Fanny Mendelssohn*, trans. Camille Naish (Portland, Oregon: Amadeus Press, 1996), 102.
- ⁶ R. Larry Todd, *Fanny Hensel: The Other Mendelssohn* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 182.
- ⁷ Felix Mendelssohn, *12 Lieder, op. 9* (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1877), accessed May 1, 2013, [http://imslp.org/wiki/12_Lieder_op.9_\(Mendelssohn,_Felix\)](http://imslp.org/wiki/12_Lieder_op.9_(Mendelssohn,_Felix))
- ⁸ Sebastian Hensel, *The Mendelssohn Family (1729–1847)*, trans. Carl Klingemann (New York: Haskell House Publishers, 1969), 1: 117 (originally published 1881).
- ⁹ Marcia J. Citron, ed. and trans., *The Letters of Fanny Hensel to Felix Mendelssohn* (New York: Pendragon Press, 1987), 2.
- ¹⁰ Todd, *Fanny Hensel*, 143.
- ¹¹ Felix Mendelssohn, *String Quartet No. 1, op. 12* (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1875), accessed May 1, 2013, [http://imslp.org/wiki/String_Quartet_No.1_op.12_\(Mendelssohn,_Felix\)](http://imslp.org/wiki/String_Quartet_No.1_op.12_(Mendelssohn,_Felix))
- ¹² Benedict Taylor, *Mendelssohn, Time and Memory* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 192.
- ¹³ Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel, *Streichquartett, Es-dur*, ed. Gunter Marx (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1988).
- ¹⁴ Mendelssohn Hensel, *Streichquartett, Es-dur*.
- ¹⁵ Citron, *The Letters of Fanny Hensel to Felix Mendelssohn*, 174.
- ¹⁶ Todd, *Fanny Hensel*, 180–84.
- ¹⁷ Ludwig van Beethoven, *String Quartet, op. 74*, ed. Edwin F. Kalmus (New York: Dover Publications, 1970).
- ¹⁸ Julia Eklund Koza, "Music and the Feminine Sphere: Images of Women as Musicians in 'Godey's Lady's Book' 1830–1877," *Musical Quarterly* 75, no. 2 (Summer 1991): 103–129.
- ¹⁹ Todd, *Fanny Hensel*, 41.
- ²⁰ Cai, "Songs for Pianoforte of 1836–37," 55–76.
- ²¹ Fanny Hensel, *Songs for Pianoforte, 1836–1837*, ed. Camilla Cai (Wisconsin: A-R Editions, Inc., 1994).
- ²² Felix Mendelssohn, *Lieder ohne Worte—Songs without Words* (Germany: Bärenreiter-Verlag, 2009), ed. R. Larry Todd.
- ²³ Cai, "Songs for Pianoforte of 1836–37," 55–76.

About the author

Hye-Bin Song studied piano performance with Alexander Korsantia at the New England Conservatory and with Natalya Antonova at the Eastman School of Music, from which she recently graduated with a DMA. Dr. Song has performed solo recitals in a number of prime venues, including Hatch and Kilbourn Hall in Rochester, Williams Hall in Boston, Sheldon Hall in Saint Louis, and Carnegie Hall (Weil Recital Hall). She has composed a number of pieces for piano, including a piano concerto which was premiered by Eastman Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Mark Scatterday in May 2014.

“I haven’t looked back since.” / Interview with Odaline de la Martinez

*Odaline de la Martinez is an enterprising conductor and composer of Cuban American heritage living in the UK. She is founder and music director of the contemporary ensemble Lontano, the London Chamber Symphony and the European Women’s Orchestra. In 1992, she founded her own record label, LORELT, which concentrates on areas neglected by other record companies, including women’s music. Martinez’s 1994 performance of Ethel Smyth’s opera *The Wreckers*, recorded for Conifer Classics, has yet to be surpassed. Her most recent recording of Ethel Smyth’s popular opera, *The Boatswain’s Mate*, has just been released by Retrospect Opera. Martinez is a co-founder of the biennial London Festival of American Music which aims to bring a broader spectrum of the best American contemporary composers to UK audiences. Its sixth season in 2016 will champion both male and female composers in an ideally gender balanced program.*

KSJ: *What attracted you to the career of a conductor, given the numerous obstacles you must have faced, being a woman?*

ODM: I’ve wanted to be a conductor since I can remember. I also recall being told that women didn’t conduct orchestras – interestingly enough not by anyone in my family. So when I went to the Royal Academy of Music (RAM), I studied piano and composition. Having formed the ensemble Lontano while at the RAM, I was the pianist in the ensemble. But always, as much as I enjoyed playing, it felt that playing the piano wasn’t enough. So when I started conducting Lontano in the early 1980s, something inside me felt complete for the first time. It was like my body and my brain were really in sync. Then something marvelous happened: on a Friday, while visiting Andrew Kurowski, then a young BBC producer, about putting together a program with Lontano for Radio 3, I received a phone call from David Byers, the producer of BBC Northern Ireland. Apparently, the senior conductor of the BBC Northern Ireland Symphony had become ill at the last minute and they were desperately looking for someone to replace him. Was I free the whole of the next week? Whether I was or not, I became free. The BBC Music Library in London delivered the scores to me and I spent the whole weekend learning them. I clearly recall studying between rehearsals, during my lunch hours and back in the hotel. As soon as the radio recordings came out, I was invited to work with all the BBC orchestras and then with other orchestras. I haven’t looked back since.

KSJ: *Did you have a model, someone to inspire you?*

ODM: I never had a conducting role model. I’ve always admired Carlos Kleiber and Igor Markevitch. I didn’t know of any women conductors at the time, but later on I discovered Dame Ethel Smyth and found her music, as well as her writings, absolutely amazing.

KSJ: *You are known as a fearless advocate for neglected music, including the music of women composers. You were likely the main force behind the revival of Ethel Smyth’s orchestral music in the early 1990s, and your performance of *The Wreckers* at one of the BBC Proms has yet to be surpassed. How did you discover her music, more than twenty years ago?*

ODM: More than twenty years ago, I was invited to put together an orchestra for the 1st Chard Festival of Women in Music. When looking for female composers, I spoke with Sophie Fuller, a renowned expert on women’s music, and she suggested I look at someone named Ethel Smyth. I ordered a score of Smyth’s Symphonic Serenade from Universal Music Publishers and soon grew to love the work. The publishers had the photocopy of the manuscript and string parts but no wind, brass nor timpani parts. The Chard Festival found a copyist to produce the missing parts and later on I had my own set created too. I was able to use this set for performances in London, San Francisco, Sao Paulo and various other places. I eventually recorded it with the BBC Philharmonic for Chandos Records together with Smyth’s Double Concerto.

Recently, with a generous grant from the Ambache Charitable Trust as well as the Women’s Philharmonic Advocacy and Liane Curtis, I was able to produce the first printed edition of Smyth’s Symphonic Serenade – or rather the actual title she used – Serenade in D Major. The score as well as all the parts are available for purchase from the Lorelt (Lontano Records Ltd) website: www.lorelt.co.uk.

In 1992/93, I approached John Drummond who was then running the BBC Proms. My idea was to offer Drummond the possibility of performing Smyth’s third opera *The Wreckers*. Knowing that he might not be interested, I was advised to take other program ideas with me. Imagine my shock when I began our conversation with the suggestion of performing *The Wreckers* and instead of finding Drummond uninterested we began discussing singers for the opera and possible dates for the performance. When I left his office, I was walking on air. When I performed *The Wreckers* with The BBC Philharmonic and some very wonderful singers at the Royal Albert Hall, Drummond took the opportunity to visit my dressing room before the performance and at the main break. So many people had said that *The Wreckers* was not very good and that I was not up to conducting the work, and he was so delighted that his big gamble had paid off! You should also know that the first complete recording of

Smyth's fourth opera *The Boatswain's Mate* has just been released by Retrospect Opera. Lontano and I recorded it with soprano Nadine Benjamin, and with Edward Lee and Jeremy Huw Williams. It's a wonderful work and so, so different from *The Wreckers*.

KSJ: *Are there any other historical women composers that you are interested in promoting?*

ODM: That is a big question. I love the work of Amy Beach and have had the chance to perform and record her *Gaelic Symphony* for the radio. Some of her chamber music and songs have been performed by Lontano and at the London Festival of America Music, which I run biennially. There's Lili Boulanger – a great, great voice, and Cecile Chaminade, Ruth Crawford Seeger... There are so many!

KSJ: *You were the first woman to conduct a BBC Proms concert at the Royal Albert Hall in 1984. Have things changed for women conductors and composers at the Proms since?*

ODM: That is probably the hardest question to answer. If you look at the statistics, the answer would be "No". Marion Alsop has of course become the first woman to conduct the Last Night of the Proms. But in general, the number of both women conductors and composers featured in the Proms is very small.

KSJ: *You have been guest conducting a number of leading orchestras throughout the UK, including all BBC orchestras, but also some orchestras in the US, Canada, New Zealand and Australia. What do you consider your most memorable appearance?*

ODM: I don't have a most memorable appearance. Every orchestra is different and every performance or recording is different. There are two performances that have affected me greatly, though. The first was my debut at the BBC Proms. To be honest, I had no idea that I was going to be the first woman to conduct a BBC Prom at the Royal Albert Hall. When the information came out, there was so much in the Press and Media that I could hardly believe it. I particularly loved the program though: it had a Spanish flavor with works by Roberto Gerhard, a Spaniard who had settled in England, and a setting of Neruda's poems by Hugh Wood. I remember a friend asking me if I had been very nervous. I was also surprised by my answer, "How could I be nervous when I was given such an opportunity?" The second performance that has affected me most was another BBC Prom. It was a concert commemorating the 500th anniversary of Columbus landing in America, and it was dedicated to the music of Heitor Villa-Lobos, one of my very favorite composers. To me, he represents all that is wonderful in Latin American Music. The program consisted of some of his *Bachianas Brasileiras* and his Choros (including *Bachiana V* for soprano and 8 cellos and *Bachiana 9* for an orchestra of voices). I performed with Lontano and the BBC Singers. The very last piece was the Nonetto. But in typical Villa-Lobos fashion, the Nonetto was not a nonetto, it also included several percussionists and the wonderful BBC Singers. The singers did not sing words, but instead made jungle sounds. Everybody loved performing the work and the



audience went crazy.

KSJ: *You have a penchant for underperformed but remarkable music – for example, you have promoted the music of Elizabeth Maconchy and just recently toured *Dream Hunter*, an opera by Machonchy's daughter, Nicola LeFanu. What has been the audience's reaction to this music?*

ODM: The performances of LeFanu's opera *Dream Hunter* were very exciting. Lontano and I toured the work in Wales and then brought it to Wiltons Music Hall in London. The audiences were excellent and the response was strong. I love Nicola's music. She really understands the human voice and her ability to handle drama on stage is uncanny. She is one of those few composers that know how to write opera. Her music changes with the mood of the actions on stage and that is a real gift.

Elizabeth Maconchy is an outstanding composer. I've had a chance to perform and record both her chamber, choral and orchestral music. Through my record label Lorelt I was able to release a CD of Maconchy's choral music with the BBC Singers. It was really difficult to choose which works to record because there are so many really good choral pieces! I was also lucky enough to be

Interview with Odaline de la Martinez

able to record with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra some of her most important orchestral works. For example, her orchestral suite *The Land* is absolutely lovely. Based on the poem of the same title by Vita Sackville West, it shows Maconchy's wonderful ear for color. Her Symphony for Double String Orchestra is muscular and challenging. But the BBC Scottish delivered the goods and the recording is something of which I'm very proud. When word got out that we had made a recording of Maconchy's orchestral works, I kept receiving annoying emails from various people in several continents wanting to know the release date. This CD is very popular and several years on it's still much in demand.

KSJ: *Over the years, you have recorded for a range of labels but also founded your own – Lorelt. Which recording project for Lorelt has been most important to you?*

ODM: To me, all the recordings I have made, whether for Lorelt, Chandos, Albany, or many other labels, are very important. I just won't record for the sake of recording. I will only record works I truly believe in. However, if I absolutely have to make a choice, the series of women composers that began with British Women Composers Vol. I and II is probably the most important for me.

KSJ: *You have co-founded your own chamber ensemble, Lontano, which has since become one of the leading exponents of contemporary music in the UK. What are some of the major projects you have done with this group?*

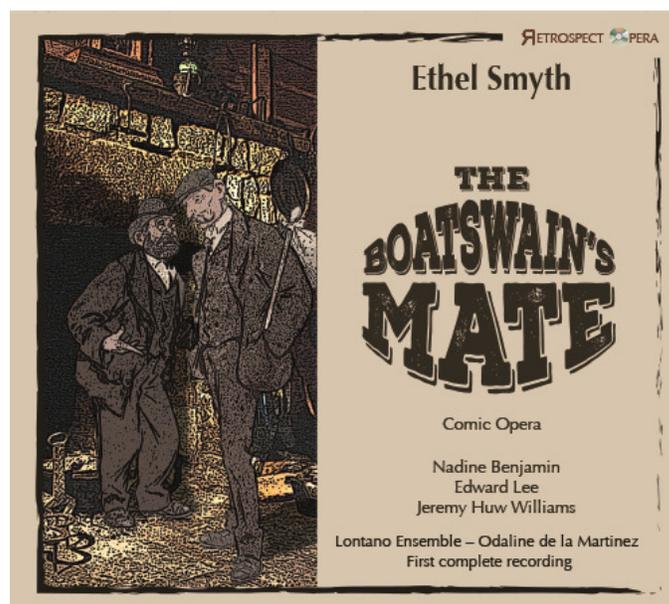
ODM: Lontano is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year. We started in 1976, as students at the Royal Academy of Music with John Carewe. John is a wonderful musician and conductor. I went to John and asked him to teach us how to play *Pierrot Lunaire*. John gave us a three-hour session every week for almost six months on *Pierrot*. And what an exciting time it was for us. We learned so much. We were also lucky because in those days the BBC put on live chamber music concerts to an invited audience. Veronica Slater, one of the BBC producers from the program then called *Music in Our Time*, went to hear Lontano play and before we left the RAM, Lontano was already performing and recording for Radio 3. From our early days we brought composers to London that had not been heard before. For example, we gave the UK premiere of several works of George Crumb, Joseph Schwantner, Joan Tower, Chen Yi. Many of these composers were well known in the States but nobody over here had ever heard of them until we played them. We ran a concert series performing works from the Americas, with lots of Latin American composers. Another series called *Ring of Fire* featured composers from Australia, New Zealand, and the west coast of the Americas. We did the UK professional premiere of Virgil Thomson's opera *Four Saints in Three Acts* and the world premiere of Berthold

Goldschmidt's opera *Beatrice Cenci* in a series dedicated to Emigres. The list goes on and on. We also premiered numerous works by the British composer Brian Ferneyhough. We have also premiered and commissioned many, many British composers and many of them women.

In 1992, convinced that the recording world was a man's game, I began Lontano Records. I saw that there were many pieces that deserved to be recorded and that nobody was interested in doing it. Originally the label was set up to record Lontano, but quickly we were releasing CDs not only of chamber music by other ensembles, but also choral, orchestral and recording by soloists. The main thrust of the label has always been Women Composers, Contemporary Composers and Latin American Classical Music. In 1996, to celebrate Lontano's 20th anniversary, Lorelt became the UK's first independent record label to offer digital downloads. Since then we have acquired wonderful digital world distribution. But to this day you can still go to the Lorelt site and download any track that interests you.

KSJ: *You always seem to be addressing a neglected need, filling in a gap. You have founded, co-founded and co-directed several festivals, with the latest among them being the biennial London Festival of American Music. Why did you feel that such project was necessary, how was it received and how is it going?*

ODM: The London Festival of American Music was and is necessary. Until we started in 2006, the only American composers known in this country were Elliott Carter, John Adams and Steve Reich. Considering the diversity of music



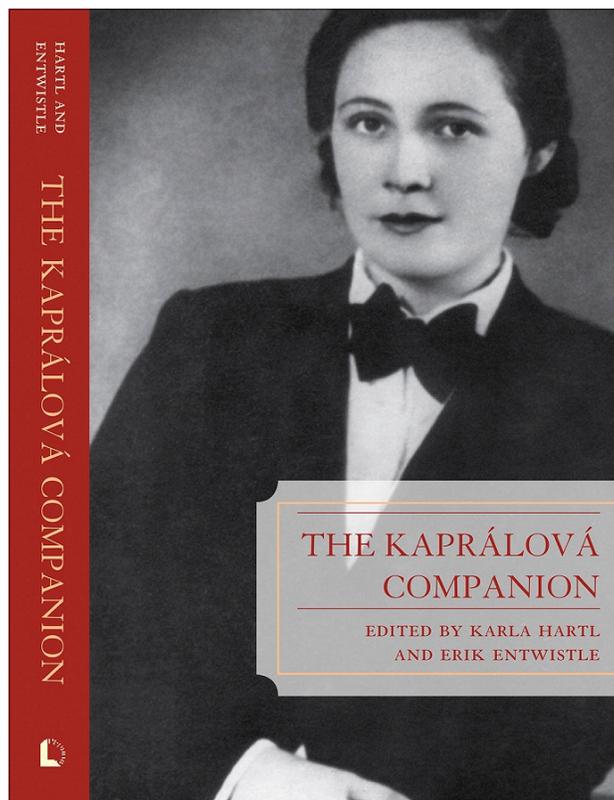
being written in the States today, I felt it my duty and pleasure to bring first class music from all parts of the States. I remember talking to the composer Peter Child (born in Britain but now an American citizen) about this and together we programmed the first London Festival of American Music. It was such a success that I decided to continue the festival as a biennial event. The 6th London Festival of American Music is taking place on November 6–11 this year and the main theme is Female Composers. We are featuring 21 world and UK premieres, from both male and female composers. Fifty percent of the composers are women. And we have a special panel with our visiting American female composers led by Jessica Duchen – a leading journalist of Women in Music.

KSJ: You have many careers – as a conductor, artistic director, record producer – but one is particularly special: your composing career. Once again, you are not taking an easy route, since you are specializing in contemporary opera. Isn't that the toughest genre of all?

*ODM: I love the human voice and as a composer find opera a fascinating and enticing genre. My first opera *Sister Aimee: An American Legend* was premiered at Tulane University in New Orleans in 1984. It received its UK premiere in 1987, at the Royal College Music, under the baton of another woman conductor, Anne Manson. It also received a further production at Marin County College under Paul Smith in 1995. The opera was about the American evangelist Aimee Semple McPherson – an amazing preacher and personality, whose mission was truncated by a highly publicized scandal.*

*My next opera, *Imoinda*, is about slavery and the beginning of the Afro-Caribbean culture (2005–2008). It is Part I of my Slavery Opera Trilogy, with libretto by Joan Anim-Addo. It was commissioned by the Caribbean Women Writers' Alliance (CWWA) with funds from the Heritage Lottery Fund England. The trilogy looks at slavery through the eyes of two lovers. *Imoinda* takes place in Africa. The lovers meet and fall in love against the will of their king, being sent to slavery as a result. *The Crossing*, Part II of the trilogy, was commissioned by Tulane University and premiered by the choirs of Tulane and Xavier University together with soloists and the Louisiana Philharmonic. *The Crossing* takes place in a slave boat as it crosses the Atlantic. Neither of the lovers knows that the other one is on the boat. *The Crossing* has a large part for choir, to represent all those who made that horrible crossing as well as those who perished along the way. Part III, *Plantation*, (working title) is being written as I speak. It takes place after the lovers land in Cuba and follows the story to its dramatic end. In 2015, *Imoinda* won an award from Opera America which funded the film *Imoinda, Selected Scenes*. That film is being played on the opening night of the 6th London Festival of American Music.*

KSJ: Thank you so much for your time, and best of luck with the upcoming festival edition and all your future projects.



The Kaprálová Companion. Guide to the life and music of Vítězslava Kaprálová. Edited by Karla Hartl and Erik Entwistle. Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2011. ISBN 978-0-7391-6723-6.

"A remarkable book! Since her death at age twenty-five in the midst of WWII, Kaprálová's brilliant musical legacy and story have fallen through the cracks. But now this book brings her music, in all its variety and power, to the fore. This collection, by a range of distinguished scholars, offers insights and investigation into Kaprálová's creative work and life. Nothing short of a revelation!"

Liane Curtis, Brandeis University

"This volume is the first scholarly effort in English attempting to put the puzzle of Kaprálová together in a coherent form. It represents the collective thought of the most serious scholars who have devoted themselves to studying Kaprálová and her work, and sets a high standard for those to follow."

Michael Beckerman, New York University

"Karla Hartl and Erik Entwistle's *The Kaprálová Companion* is a superb, long overdue contribution to the studies of women in music in general and, specifically, to the analysis of the remarkable composer Vítězslava Kaprálová. A thorough, well-written, and insightful guide."

Michelle Latour, University of Nevada–Las Vegas

Slavnostní fanfára

*Sášenke Pucové k jejím narozeninám*Vítězslava Kaprálová
(1915–1940)

Fig. 1. Vítězslava Kaprálová: *Slavnostní fanfára* (Festive fanfare). Digital transcript of the original autograph score © 2016 Kapralova Society. Published courtesy of M^{me} Alexandra Boucher. The one-page autograph score bears a written dedication “Sášenke Pucové k jejím narozeninám” (To Sašenka Pucová, for her birthday) at the top of the page, with the title written under the dedication slightly to the right, just above the first staff. Behind the last measure, Kaprálová wrote “11. února 1940, v Paříži” (Paris, 11th February 1940).

Le 10 mars 2016

Chère Madame,

Répondant à votre lettre du 15 février, je vous donne bien volontiers mon accord pour la publication de *Slavnostni fanfara*.

C'est pour l'anniversaire de mes douze ans que Vítězslava Kaprálová me fit l'honneur et l'amitié de me dédier la fanfare. Nous étions dans une sombre période; Hitler occupait la Tchécoslovaquie. Plusieurs jeunes artistes tchèques (Madame Kaprálová, Ivan Španiel, le peintre Rudolf Kundera, le pianiste Rudolf Firkušný, Jiří Mucha...) avaient pu s'exiler à Paris. Ils y avaient trouvé accueil et soutien auprès de leurs amis et notamment de mes parents, Čestmír Puc et Helenka Pucová, qui résidaient en France depuis plusieurs années. Mon père fut témoin au mariage de Jiří Mucha et de Vítězslava, deux mois après ma fanfare, en avril 1940.

C'est un souvenir poignant; je ne sais pas comment je l'ai vécu, à douze ans. Aujourd'hui, à distance, j'y pense avec une profonde émotion.

Alexandra Boucher

March 10, 2016

Dear Madam,

In response to your letter of February 15, I am pleased to give you my permission to publish *Slavnostní fanfára*.

It was for my twelfth birthday that Vítězslava Kaprálová did me the honor and dedicated the fanfare to me in friendship. It was a very grave time period: Hitler occupied Czechoslovakia. Several young Czech artists (Madame Kaprálová, Ivan Španiel, the painter Rudolf Kundera, the pianist Rudolf Firkušný, Jiří Mucha...) had been exiled in Paris. Here they found friends who welcomed and supported them, among them especially my parents, Helenka Pucová and Čestmír Puc, who by then had lived in France for several years. My father was a witness at the wedding of Jiří Mucha and Vítězslava in April 1940, two months after she gave me the fanfare.

It's a touching reminiscence; I don't know how I felt about it at twelve, but today, in retrospect, I think about it with a deep emotion.

Alexandra Boucher

(Trans. Karla Hartl)



Bengt Forsberg. *Neglected Works for Piano.* dB Productions Sweden DBCD170 (2016). Piano music by women composers Vítězslava Kaprálová, Amy Beach, Doreen Carwithen, Valborg Aulin, Ruth Almén, Grazyna Bacewicz, Germaine Tailleferre, and Ruth Crawford Seeger.

ALMEN: Sonata in B minor , op. 2

AULIN, V: Feuille d'Album; Valse elegiaque

BACEWICZ: Sonatina

BEACH, A: Scottish Legend, op. 54, no. 1

CARWITHEN: Sonatina

CRAWFORD SEEGER: Preludes for Piano: No. 6 'Andante Mystico'

KAPRALOVA: April Preludes, op. 13

TAILLEFERRE: Pastorales

"Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, Ravel and the like are creators of eternal masterpieces, works so great they tend to overshadow everything else. It's easy to forget that around these giants there are many, many wonderful composers, who simply must be discovered. You only need the curiosity and imagination to find them! Only in recent times have women been able to claim their rightful position as artistic equals. Some of the composers on this album have been left to oblivion and many people believe—sadly!—that forgotten composers deserve it—to stay forgotten. When I've told people about this project, some have assumed it would be an act of political correctness. But to me, this is purely a collection of good and interesting music. And, hopefully, to you as well."
Bengt Forsberg

Bengt Forsberg (born 1952) is a Swedish concert pianist most famous for his numerous collaborations with the mezzo-soprano Anne Sofie von Otter. He participated in her project to record songs written in the concentration camp of Terezín. Forsberg has a reputation as a champion of neglected music and composers. He is highly acclaimed as a recital accompanist and regularly plays alongside Mats Lidström and Nils-Erik Sparf.



Muses Trio. The Spirit and the Maiden. Muses Trio Productions (2016). Chamber music by Elena Kats-Chernin, Judith Bingham, Nadia Boulanger, Kate Neal, Vítězslava Kaprálová, Louise Denson, Cécile Elton, and Jennifer Higdon.

Vítězslava Kaprálová. Orchestral Works. Suita Rustica, Partita for Piano and Strings, Concertino for Violin, Clarinet and Orchestra, Piano Concerto in D Minor, Military Sinfonietta. Radioservis CR0791-2 (2016). Lucie Czajkowská, Alice Rajnohová, Pavel Wallinger, Lukáš Daňhel, Brno Philharmonic, Olga Machoňová Pavlů.



Book Reviews

Vítězslava Kaprálová: *Dopisy domů*. *Korespondence rodičům z let 1935-1940.* Vydáno ke stému výročí skladatelčina narození. Edici připravila Karla Hartl, vydala Kapralova Society, Toronto, 2015, 312 stran a 50 ilustrací, ISBN 978-0-9940425-0-7 (hardcover), ISBN 978-0-9940425-1-4 (electronic).

Skladatelé žijí po své smrti tak dlouho, dokud jejich odkaz přitahuje pozornost. Krátký čas života Vítězslavy Kaprálové, pouhých pětadvacet let, se díky jejímu skvělému talentu prodloužil – zapomenuta rozhodně nebyla. O její odkaz cílevědomě pečují i naše milá krajanka žijící v Torontu, sice vzdálena od vlasti jako Kaprálová, ale duchem stále s ní. Pro Kanadu a zahraničí je Karlou Hartl, pro nás Karlou Hartlovou, která s neuvěřitelnou energií rozvinula na světové úrovni pozoruhodné aktivity. Jsou svázány se založením Kapralova Society, jejíž je prezidentkou, a rozpínají se do šíře přes činnost publikační, promotorskou, spojenou s vydáváním a nahrávkami skladeb Kaprálové. Karla Hartl, absolventka Karlovy university a University of Toronto, by zasloužila samostatnou stať jako muzikoložka. Její úsilí směřuje také ke genderovému obhájení skladatelky. Když hudbu nekomponoval muž, je v tom apriorně jakoby cosi podezřelého, co některé intelektuály nutí zvednout obočí a mírně pootočit hlavou. Kdo se setkal s Karlou Hartlovou, ví, že je na to obzvláště citlivá, zvláště pak na křivé slovo či na jeho náznak namířený vůči Kaprálové.

Svou soustředěnou aktivitou a akcentováním skutečných hodnot obrátila postavu žačky Vítězslava Nováka a Bohuslava Martinů, aby nebyla prezentována jako trpný neživý objekt, nýbrž jako významná skladatelka a citlivá lidská bytost. V roce 2015, k centenáriu Vítězslavy Kaprálové (1915-1940), se jí podařilo něco zcela jedinečného. Po řadě let vyplněných cílevědomou badatelskou prací soustředila v noblesním tvaru k vydání soubor skladatelčiných dopisů, její korespondenci určenou rodičům – *Dopisy domů*. Jsou tématicky sjednoceny adresáty a prodchnuty osobitou něhou, přičemž odhalují intimní vztahy Vítězslavy nejen k domovu, ale i postoje k jejímu okolí a dramatické době.

Podepisovala se Vitulka, zdrobnělinou, která prozrazuje něžnost a snahu uchovat si dětskou nevinnost, s níž se láskyplně obrací k rodičům. Takto je podepsána většina ze 196 zveřejněných dopisů domů. Psala je mezi 4. říjnem 1935, kdy přichází na studia do Prahy, a 11. květnem 1940. Ten den sděluje z Paříže v posledním dopisu z jejich souboru, že – *nejdražší mamulenko a drahý tatulku* – „už Vám nepíše Vaše Vitulka, ale Vitka Muchová, počínaje 23. dubnem o půl jedenácté ráno“. Bohužel již 16. června téhož roku se Vitce Muchové její krátký život uzavřel. Den předtím zavlál na Eiffelově věži prapor s hákovým křížem – Paříž padla.

Seřazeny vedle sebe v chronologické řadě jsou dopisy jedinečnou ilustrací běhu jejího života a plynulou autorskou dokumentací části její tvorby. Některé z nich byly v minulosti částečně otištěny, částečně jen parafrázovány. Hartlová je opatřila precizním komentářem a poprvé umožnila vidět skladatelku v autentických dokladech bez osobních příměsí a optiky druhých lidí. Samozřejmě že tu může vytanout na mysl jméno Jiří Mucha a jeho kniha *Podivné lásky*, která se v mnohém opírá o tento materiál – a Hartlová svědomitě na tyto koincidence upozorňuje. Ne vždy se obraz historické postavy věrně kryje v literatuře s někdejší její realitou. Interpretů života a díla Kaprálové v té či oné míře jsou dnes již desítky. Poprvé ji jako skladatelku představil sborník uspořádaný Přemyslem Pražákem (*Vítězslava Kaprálová - Studie a vzpomínky*,

Praha 1949). Pak přišla jiná Vitulka viděná očima Jiřího Macka (*Vítězslava Kaprálová*, Praha 1958), další ve vzpomínkách Miloše Šafránka a jeho knihách o Martinů, v beletristicky laděném pohledu Jindřicha Uhra (*Ona a Martinů*, Praha 1995). Jinak ji viděla rodina (paní Alena a Ing. Josef Kaprálovi), jiný její obraz naznačila ve svých pracích prof. Dr. Jindra Bártová nebo PhDr. Kateřina Maýrová. Nemůže tomu být jinak, vždyť i sama osobnost, o kterou jde, byla nabitá rozpory, trvalým a bolestným zápasem o sebe samu. O čemž ovšem nejcenější svědectví vydávají publikované dopisy, které jako celek ledacos korigují z intuitivního vidění druhých. Nejnápadnější z takových korektur je doložení mimořádně vřelého vztahu dcery a jejích rodičů, kteří sami prošli zkouškou pevnosti svého vztahu, aniž by to zřejmě dali nějak výrazněji pocítit navenek.

Karla Hartlová s jemností a zasvěceností rozšifrovává ve svých komentářích pozadí každého listu – nejen kryptografických dobových odkazů. I ty jsou ovšem více než zajímavé. Ne každý by dnes přečetl „Byl zde také můj velký přítel“ s plným pochopením, které udává editorka ve vysvětlující poznámce: „Eduard Beneš přijel 6. října [1939] do Paříže“. Podobně: „Pracuje [Jiří Mucha] u strýce v továrně a měl jenom tři dny dovolenou na svatbu“ – k tomu Hartlová: „Kaprálková zašifrovává fakt, že Mucha v té době sloužil v československé zahraniční armádě pod velením [Vitulčina strýce] Bohumila Kaprála.“ Nebo: „Z Cařihradu vbrzku obdržím zprávu o Svatebním pochodu Václavově“ – k tomu ukazuje Hartlová, že jde o narážku „na otcův *Svatební pochod* z r. 1923, který [její otec] Václav Kaprál kdysi věnoval novomanželům Magdě a Bohumilu Kaprálovým; Kaprálová podává šifrovanou zprávu o očekávaném příjezdu strýce Bohumila“.

Vítězslava Kaprálová: Dopisy domů je práce znamenitá a záslužná, kde je na každé slovo spolehnouti. Takové literatury není mnoho. Přečíst ji znamená projít nefalšovaným životem člověka, který měl v sobě tolik dramatickosti, že nepotřebuje beletrizaci či příkrášlování. Duch komentářů „Dopisů domů“ je v tomto smyslu právě opačný, striktně věcný, opřený o faktografické vědomosti – Karla Hartlová zápasí o pravdu na každém řádku svých zasvěcených exegezí, které se stávají ve svém úhrnu spolu s texty Kaprálové strhujícím odrazem jednoho skutečného života. Což dává knize punc jedinečnosti a naprosté věrohodnosti.

Jaroslav Mihule

Vítězslava Kaprálová představuje osobnost, jejíž krátký život a pozoruhodná kompoziční tvorba stále znovu vzbuzují pozornost autorů, kteří se k ní obracejí buď se zájmem odborným nebo se zájmem vycházejícím z požadavků beletrie. Nejnovější kniha věnovaná Kaprálové vyšla ke stému výročí skladatelčina narození, ne však u nás, nýbrž v dalekém kanadském Torontu a není určována ani hlediskem čistě odborným ani beletristickým. Nese název *Dopisy domů* a je prvním souborným vydáním skladatelčiny korespondence rodičům z posledních pěti let jejího života.

Editorkou knihy je Karla Hartl, předsedkyně a spiritus movens kanadské společnosti Kapralova Society. Za práci na knize i konečný výsledek zaslouží hluboký obdiv a uznání, a to z více důvodů. V prvé řadě proto, že se jí podařilo shromáždit všechny dopisy, jež psala Kaprálová v době studií v Praze a později ve Francii svým rodičům. Tyto dopisy existují totiž až na jedinou výjimku pouze v soukromých archivech! Dalším důvodem k

vyslovení uznání je vlastní činnost editorská, zahrnující dešifraci a případně i nutnou úpravu textu a především doplnění výkladovými poznámkami. Ty jsou pozoruhodně kompletní, což vyžadovalo práci leckdy až detektivní při zjišťování dat a programů koncertů, ověřování údajů v tisku nebo zjišťování dobových názvů ulic a institucí apod. Editorka nevynechala žádný detail, takže se například čtenář dozví, že dva ptáčci, které Kaprálová vyhrála v ruletě a které podrobně popisuje s tím, že neví, jak se jmenují, byli „snad z čeledi astrildovitých“ (str. 217).

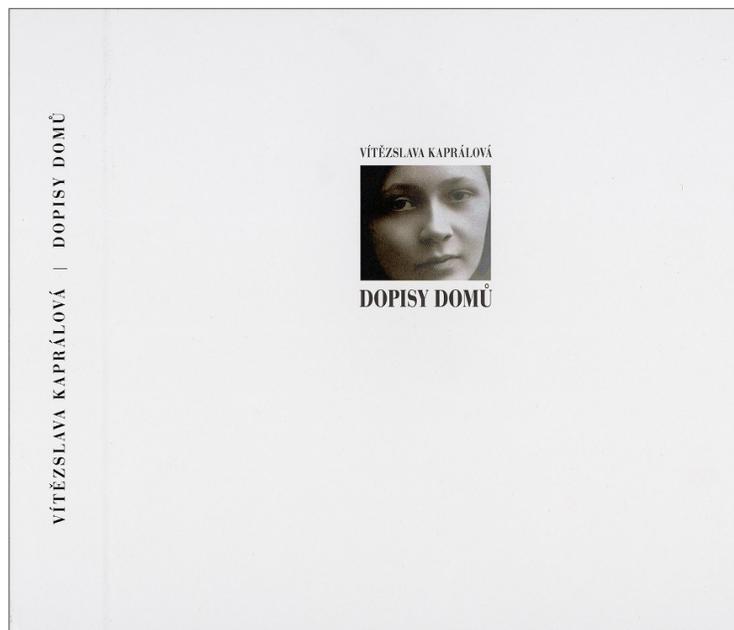
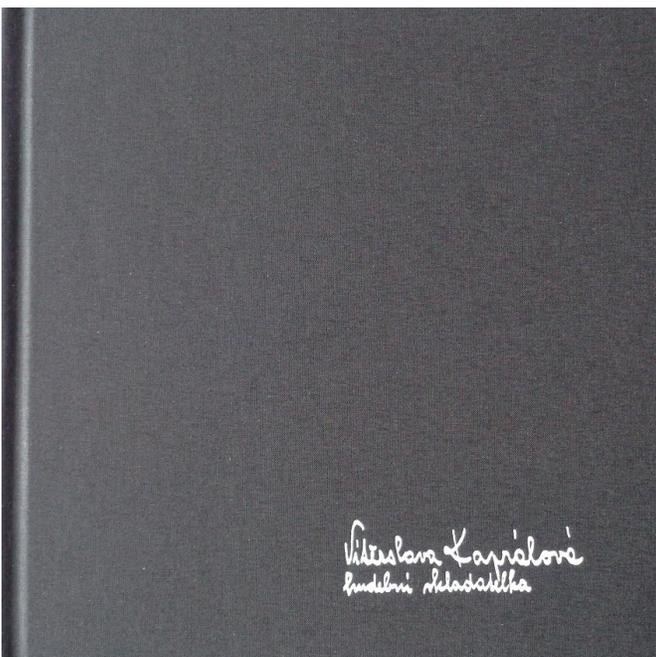
Kaprálová psala své dopisy s téměř železnou pravidelností, poněvadž její rodiče jakékoliv zdržení těžce nesli a ona jim nechtěla způsobovat starosti. Kniha tedy obsahuje 196 dopisů. Jsou většinou obsáhlé, takže máme díky nim možnost seznámit se s Vitulčinými aktivitami mnohdy téměř hodinu po hodině a poznat způsob jejího myšlení, její názory na společnost, na lidi, s nimiž se poznala. Byla mezi nimi řada známých osobností včetně prezidenta Beneše, jehož Kaprálová popisuje s velkými sympatiemi smíšenými s trochou šelmovství poté, co si „kápli do noty“ při oficiálním jednání o přestávce koncertu. Z hudební sféry či kulturní oblasti bylo těchto osobností ještě mnohem více a vesměs se jednalo o špičkové představitele toho kterého oboru; Karla Hartl je všechny v předmluvě ke své knize vyjmenovala a dospěla přitom k číslu 66!

Vitulčiny dopisy rodičům jsou velmi významným dokumentem, v němž se zračí skladatelčin vývoj osobní i tvůrčí a zraní její osobnosti. Například jeden z dopisů představuje Vitulku uvědomující si kulturní bohatství své vlasti, v dalším si čtenář uvědomí hloubku jejího filozofického myšlení v souvislosti s tím, jak se Vitulka snaží uklidňovat matku a odvést ji od trýznivých metafyzických úvah a zase v dalším dopise řeší pisatelka ambivalentní vztah se svým otcem, který jí na jedné straně byl starostlivým pomocníkem a ochráncem, ale na druhé straně striktním vymahatelem „pořádku“ podle svých představ. Oproti

těmto lidsky velmi hlubokým dopisům se čtenář v jiných případech i trochu pobaví odhalením faktu, že Vitulka nebyla ochotna si ověřovat správné způsoby psaní zejména jmen a názvů, takže se její dopisy hemží chybami: tak zásadně píše Honneger místo Honegger, Hindemit místo Hindemith, u Martinů Riccerkari a Julliette (místo Ricercari, Juliette) a plete se dokonce v názvu své vlastní skladby, když píše Variace na zvony kostela St. Etien du Mont (namísto St. Étienne).

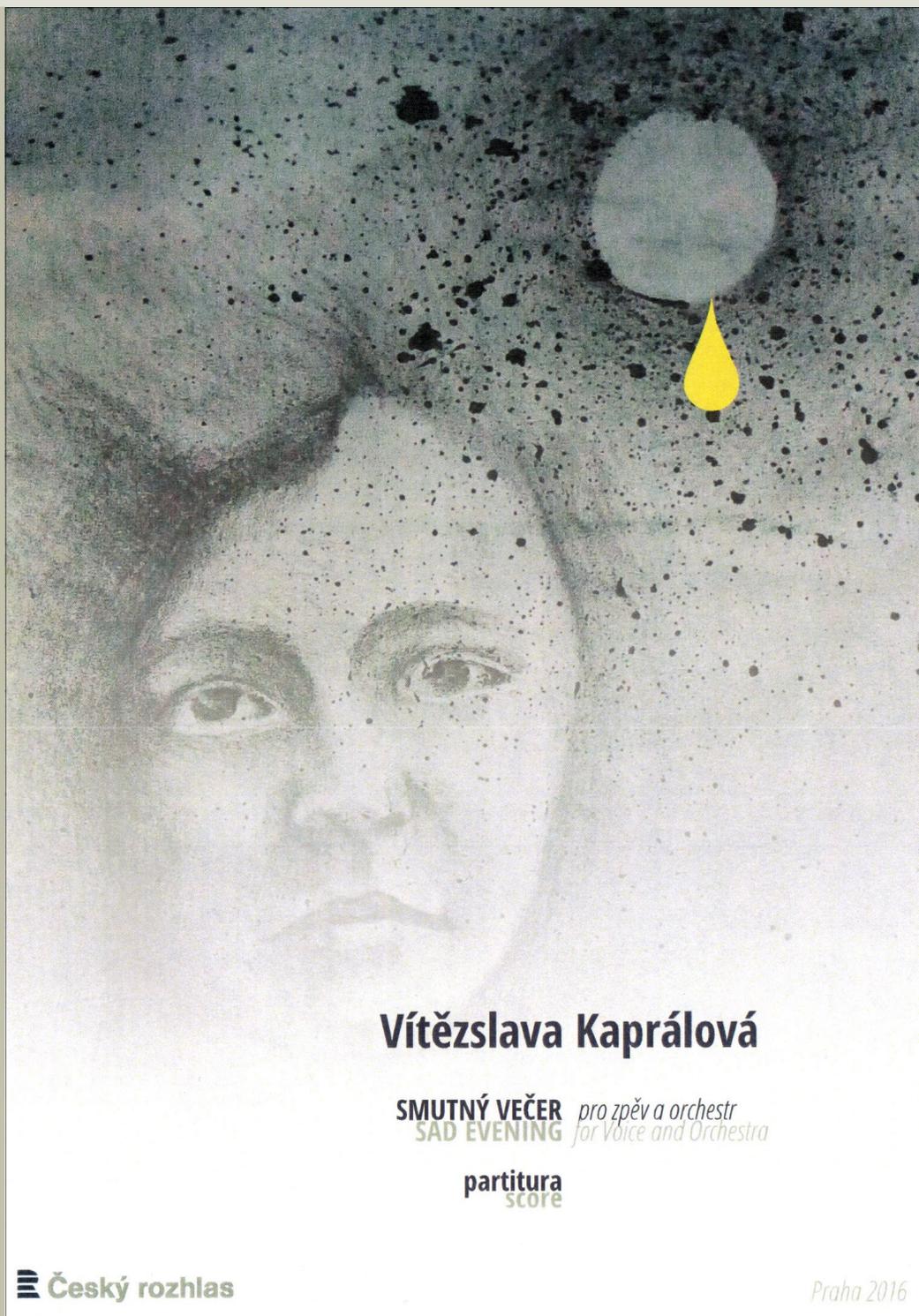
Vztahu Vítězslavy Kaprálové k mužům byla už věnována nejedna publikace (jmenujme alespoň Muchovy *Podivné lásky* a Uhrovu knihu *Ona a Martinů*). I tuto záležitost reflektuje mnohý z dopisů. A právě delikátnost těchto vztahů, které by se mohly při nešetřném přístupu stát soustem pro bulvár, přiměla Karlu Hartl k výsostně etickému rozhodnutí vydat tuto knihu pouze v omezeném množství 35 (slovy: třiceti pěti!) výtisků a věnovat ji povětšinou jen odborným knihovnám. Budiž jí za to vysloven hluboký obdiv a neskonale díky! Kniha vycházející v elegantním černobílém provedení (grafická úprava Lukáš Hytha) a příkladná po odborné i jazykové stránce je ozdobou a jednoznačným obohacením literatury o skladatelce Vítězslavě Kaprálové.

Jindra Bártová



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 Modernism—the composer Vítězslava Kaprálová (1915–1940). The book (in Czech) was published by The Kapralova Society in 2015 on the occasion of the composer's birth centenary.

The Kapralova Society takes pride in its commitment to supporting specialized research essential to advancing Kaprálová scholarship.



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editor@kapralova.org

Mailing address:

34 Beacham Crescent
Scarborough, Ontario
M1T 1N1 Canada

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