

The Kapralova Society Journal

A Journal of Women in Music

The Power of Advocacy in Music: The Case of Vítězslava Kaprálová

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Special points of interest:

Vítězslava Kaprálová
Dora Pejačević

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The Kapralova Society celebrated its twentieth anniversary in 2018—an opportune time to evaluate the work the society had done over the years in re-defining Kaprálová's place in the history of twentieth-century Czech music. As I look back, those twenty years emerge as a wonderful and eventful ride which culminated in a frenzy of activities during the composer's centenary in 2015, more than a hundred of them in all. Among the most important were a two-day international symposium in Basel dedicated to the composer,¹ a five-hour radio program on Kaprálová produced by BBC Radio 3,² and a seven-day Kaprálová Festival in Michigan³. None of them would have been possible without laying the groundwork first, as the scores had to be published to make them available to performers, and a large volume of music had to be recorded in order to be broadcast. Much rigorous research went into these activities over the years as well. Indeed, I would argue that a sure sign of artistic vitality is the presence of international research directed toward a particular composer. How many Czech composers, either historical or contemporary, have been the subject of a foreign-language scholarly publication? Yet there have already been three such studies dedicated to Kaprálová: one in English,⁴ one in French⁵ and the other in German⁶.

Kaprálová's music alone should have been enough to spark the interest of inquisitive minds who like to venture beyond the boundaries of a typically conservative concert repertoire, but there has also been her story. We tend to become fascinated by

the lives of artists who die young, ever curious about their artistic promise cut short. Youth and beauty, charisma and talent, each alone would have been a strong attraction, and Kaprálová had them all. The story of her brief but intense life has intrigued and continues to intrigue fiction writers, playwrights and screenwriters, all of whom want to portray their version of it, to solve the mystery of their elusive Muse.⁷ Nevertheless, Kaprálová's music has survived these exploitative efforts unscathed, and continues to live its own life, as it should.

Music is a highly competitive field, and even more so for women. True, some women composers did receive attention and even recognition during their lives, but their names and music usually disappeared from the collective memory relatively soon following their death. Music history is a very conservative discipline, and women composers have virtually had no place in its annals. "There is a habit of thinking that history will prove the greatness of something. Time will tell. But who is doing the telling? Who is keeping, preserving, writing about, and performing the music? History has been his story," wrote American composer Linda Catlin Smith in 1997,⁸ and her words still ring true twenty-five years later. Gender bias is as much present in music education today as it was back then; as a result, it continues to impact on performance and broadcast, opera and symphony orchestra programming, even the selection process at many new music festivals.⁹ The matter has yet another level, however. Take for example the irrefutable musical giant

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Johann Sebastian Bach whose position is indestructible today; yet there was a time when his music would have languished in obscurity were it not for the revival efforts of Felix Mendelssohn;¹⁰ or the case of Verdi who benefitted from Werfel's literary championing. But why advocate for Kaprálová?

As soon as we begin to explore Kaprálová's musical career,¹¹ we discover a formidable artist whose brief but full-lived creative life was distinguished by many outstanding accomplishments, some of which will be mentioned within the context of her captivating life story that follows. Although she was regarded once as one of the most promising composers of her generation, her music was given less and less attention during the years following her death, with the result that it was all but forgotten by the end of the twentieth century. And yet when it began to infiltrate our awareness again in the twenty-first, there was no doubt that her music had withstood the proverbial 'test of time,' proving its relevance to new generations of musicians and music listeners. It should be noted that Kaprálová's legacy is not just a mere torso of 'what could have been,' for her well-balanced catalogue includes about fifty compositions, among which there are many remarkable works in all categories: piano, chamber, orchestral and vocal music. In fact, her list of works contains as many compositions as that of her composer father who lived thirty-three years longer. Given that Kaprálová was granted only nine creative years in total, the amount and quality of the work she managed to produce in such a short time is truly astonishing.

Kaprálová's creative development began in the 1930s in Brno, the regional capital of Moravia. She grew up in a cultured middle-class family and its circle of friends, among whom were some of the finest musicians and scholars of the new Czechoslovak Republic. She also benefitted from the musical offerings of her native town, which in many respects measured up to those of the country's capital, Prague. Her talent was recognized relatively early and nurtured by her musician parents. Kaprálová's mother Vítězslava (born Uhlířová, 1890–1973) was a qualified voice teacher; her father Václav Kaprál (1889–1947) was a pianist, teacher, choirmaster, music critic and one of the few alumni of Janáček's teaching who emerged as composers (besides Kaprál there were only four: Vilém Petrželka, Osvald Chlubna, Jaroslav Kvapil and Pavel Haas). Kaprál played a particularly important role in his daughter's early musical development, later also becoming her somewhat self-appointed but nevertheless indispensable agent.

While today Kaprál is basically unknown outside the Czech Republic, during his lifetime he was one of the most respected Czech composers of his generation because he was perceived as having been able to "reconcile Novák's technical precision and

appreciation for form with Janáček's innovation and emotionality."¹² He was also an outstanding teacher who never stopped educating himself throughout his life. Although his own private music school, which he founded in 1911 in Brno, grew in reputation and continued to attract generations of aspiring pianists throughout the twenties and thirties, he still found it necessary to perfect his pianistic skills with Alfred Cortot in Paris in 1924 and 1925. He also intensified his aptitude for composition under Vítězslav Novák, who was to become in due time also the teacher of choice for his daughter. Throughout the 1920s, Kaprál devoted much of his time to piano performance: together with his friend Ludvík Kundera, they promoted four-hand repertoire and also performed in concert as a two-piano team. In addition to his performing career, Kaprál worked as a lecturer at Brno's Masaryk University, and beginning in 1936 also as a tenured teacher at the Brno Conservatory, where he taught composition.

Music was therefore a natural part of Kaprálová's life since childhood. She was only nine when she started composing, and only twelve when she wrote her *Valse triste*, already an accomplished piece written in a generic romantic style reminiscent of Chopin. It was her mother's influence, however, that led to Kaprálová's lifelong passion for song. In vocal music Kaprálová combined her deeply-felt identification with the singing voice with her love of poetry; she not only had a penchant for selecting high-quality poems to set to music but also wrote good poetry herself.¹³ Kaprálová's contribution to the genre is indeed significant, and her songs represent one of the late climaxes in the history of Czech art song.

While Kaprálová's parents were generally supportive of their daughter's interest in music, they had rather practical plans for her—she was to take over her father's private music school. Yet, Kaprálová had her own plans. She had already set her mind on a career in composition and conducting, and it was this double major program that she chose for her studies at the Brno Conservatory when she enrolled there at the age of 15. She was to become the first woman in the history of this institution to graduate from the program.

Brno Conservatory

What kind of institution was the Brno Conservatory? Founded in 1919 as a successor to Janáček's organ school, the conservatory had a wide range of programs: it included an elementary music school, six-year and seven-year programs for various instruments, a senior high

school (which included the double major program in composition and conducting that Kaprálová attended), a program for music teachers, and a special five-year program for singers. Until 1928, the institution offered graduate studies in composition and piano interpretation at its own master school. By the time Kaprálová studied there, however, the master classes were no longer offered, so if she wanted to advance her studies at a university level she had to go to Prague and continue at the master school associated with the Prague Conservatory (as she later did).

At the Brno Conservatory Kaprálová studied composition with Vilém Petrželka, harmony with Max Koblížek and Jaroslav Kvapil, orchestral conducting with Zdeněk Chalabala (who later moved to Prague on the invitation of Václav Talich to become conductor at the National Theatre), choir conducting with Vilém Steinman, instrumentation with Osvald Chlubna, music history with Gracian Černušák (an esteemed Brno musicologist who wrote many reviews of Kaprálová's music), aesthetics with Ludvík Kundera (who premiered her Piano Concerto of 1935 and *Carillon Variations* of 1938) and piano performance with Anna Holubová.

Kaprálová wrote quite a few compositions during her studies at the conservatory. One of the earliest, from 1931, was a Piano Suite which already shows a seriousness of purpose and emotional maturity as well as posing considerable technical challenges for the performer; its colourful harmonic language at times evokes an almost orchestral sound. Kaprálová must have been aware of this quality when she decided to orchestrate it four years later under the title *Suite en miniature* and assign it a first opus number. Other noteworthy compositions followed: Two Pieces for Violin and Piano, op. 3 (1932); the song-cycles *Dvě písňe*, op. 4 (Two Songs, 1932); *Jiskry z popele*, op. 5 (*Sparks from Ashes*, 1932–1933); and the remarkable song *Leden* (January, 1933) for higher voice, flute, two violins, violoncello and piano, set to a text by Vítězslav Nezval.

Among the finest compositions Kaprálová composed in Brno, however, were the virtuosic two-movement *Sonata Appassionata*, op. 6 (1933) and the *Piano Concerto in D Minor*, op. 7 (1934–1935), her graduation work. The composition convincingly displays the versatility of Kaprálová's musical talent, with its typical energy and passion, lyricism and intelligent humour, and spontaneity as well as discipline. Its performance at Kaprálová's graduation concert received highly favourable reviews not only in the regional newspapers but also in major dailies, including the German *Prager Tagblatt*, whose reviewer expressed his disappointment over the conservatory's decision to present only the first movement of Kaprálová's Piano Concerto. In

his opinion, it attested to an extraordinary talent: "Es ist zu bedauern, daß die Veranstalter nur den ersten Satz des Werkes aufführen liessen, doch auch diese kleine Probe zeigt eine erstaunlich temperamentvolle musikalische Begabung."¹⁴ Indeed, the concerto's last movement already anticipates the composer's new creative period which was to blossom under the guidance of Vítězslav Novák at the Prague Conservatory.

Prague Conservatory

In the Fall of 1935, Kaprálová was accepted into the master school of the Prague Conservatory, where she continued her double major studies, this time with the best teachers she could find in her own country: composition with Dvořák's pupil Vítězslav Novák, and conducting with Václav Talich, chief conductor of the Czech Philharmonic and music director at the National Theatre in Prague. It is worth mentioning that in the academic year 1935–1936, when Kaprálová began her studies in Prague, Talich's master class was opened to only eight first-year students; Novák's class was even more competitive, with just five students.¹⁵

The master school and the musical scene of the country's capital provided a stimulating environment for Kaprálová, in which her natural talent, coupled with her strong work ethic, continued to thrive. She joined 'Přítomnost' ('The Present'), a new music society chaired by avant-garde composer Alois Hába, and she regularly participated in Silvestr Hippmann's musical 'Tuesdays' of Umělecká beseda (Artistic Forum), exposing herself to new contemporary music, both Czech and international. The two societies later also became important platforms for premiering Kaprálová's works.

During her studies at the Prague Conservatory Kaprálová composed some of her best-known music, namely the song cycle *Navždy*, op. 12 (*Forever*, 1936–1937) and the art song *Sbohem a šáteček*, op. 14 (*Waving Farewell*, 1937), which she later orchestrated in consultation with Bohuslav Martinů in Paris. Other noteworthy creations of Kaprálová's 'Prague period' include her maliciously witty *Groteskní passacaglia* (*Grotesque Passacaglia*), the splendid *String Quartet*, op. 8 (1935–1936) and her most popular work for piano solo, *Dubnová preludia*, op. 13 (*April Preludes*, 1937), a work she dedicated to Rudolf Firkušný, who brought it to international attention several years later by his masterly performance in Paris. But one composition in particular brought her public recognition: the *Vojenská symfonieta*, op. 11 (*Military Sinfonietta*, 1936–1937), Kaprálová's graduation work, which was premiered by the Czech Philharmonic under the baton of the composer on November 26, 1937 in Prague. It was with the *sinfonietta* that Kaprálová achieved not only

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wider cognizance at home but also abroad when it was performed on the opening night of the 16th International Society for Contemporary Music (ISCM) Festival in London on June 17, 1938. The British première of the sinfonietta, in which Kaprálová conducted the excellent BBC Orchestra,¹⁶ was transmitted across the ocean to the United States, where it was broadcast by CBS¹⁷. According to a reviewer of *Time* magazine, Kaprálová not only fared well in the international competition at the festival, but she also became the star of the opening concert.¹⁸ Among all the reviews mentioning her performance, Kaprálová would probably have cherished most that of her colleague Havergal Brian, who in his festival report for *Musical Opinion* wrote: “The first work played and broadcast at the recent festival, a *Military Sinfonietta* by Miss Vitezslava Kapralova of Czechoslovakia, proved an amazing piece of orchestral writing; it was also of logical and well balanced design.” But it is unlikely that Kaprálová ever read it.¹⁹

Paris

Kaprálová travelled to the ISCM festival in London from Paris, where she had lived since October 1937. She arrived in the French capital on a one-year French Government scholarship to advance her musical education at the Ecole normale de musique, initially hoping to continue her double major studies: conducting with Charles Munch and composition with Nadia Boulanger. However, her knowledge of French was not good enough to study with Boulanger, so she decided to enrol just in the conducting class, because with Munch she could communicate in German. She also accepted an offer of private consultations with Bohuslav Martinů, who was by then established in France and well-respected both in Paris and in his native Czechoslovakia. Kaprálová knew Martinů from Prague—they first met on April 8, 1937, during his short visit to the capital, where he arrived to discuss with Václav Talich the details of the premiere of his new opera *Julietta* at the National Theater.

In Paris, Martinů became first Kaprálová’s mentor, later also her friend, and in the end her soulmate. From the very beginning he was generous with his contacts and time, and besides hours of free consultations,²⁰ he opened quite a few doors for Kaprálová. Soon after she arrived in Paris, Martinů introduced her to a circle of composers who were members of Triton, a Parisian society for contemporary music whose concerts Kaprálová diligently attended. He also entrusted her with the task of conducting his *Concerto* for Harpsichord and Small Orchestra on June 2, 1938 in Paris, just two weeks before her well-received ISCM Festival appearance. In addition, he facilitated the publication of one of her compositions which he

admired greatly, the *Variations sur le carillon de l’église St-Etienne-du-Mont*, op. 16 (1938), by La Sirène éditions musicales in Paris.

In the autumn of 1938, Martinů spent much time and effort to secure another stipend for Kaprálová so that she could return to France. His anxiety over the rapidly worsening political situation and over his separation from Kaprálová found its way into his Double Concerto for Two String Orchestras, Piano and Timpani, whose score he finished on the very day of the Munich Agreement. During the same time, Kaprálová continued to work back home in Moravia on her Partita for Strings and Piano, op. 20 (1938–1939), in which Martinů, as he wrote in his reminiscence published by editor Pražák in 1949, “interfered more than he would have liked but both (*he and Kaprálová*) looked at it as a learning exercise (*for Kaprálová*).”²¹ However, he did not interfere in her *Suita rustica*, op. 19, commissioned by Universal Edition London, which Kaprálová composed in just three weeks during late October and early November of 1938, nor did he interfere in her Concertino for Violin, Clarinet and Orchestra, op. 21 (1939), whose last movement and incomplete orchestration Kaprálová later set aside and did not finish. Thanks to the efforts of Brno musicologists Miloš Štědroň and Leoš Faltus, who completed the orchestration in 2000, there is now a published performing edition of the work.

The Triton concerts and the thought-provoking discussions with Martinů were some of the stimuli of Kaprálová’s new environment that accelerated her creative development. During the two years she lived in Paris, she produced almost as much music as she had during the five years in Brno and her two years in Prague. The highlights of her first Parisian period, from October 1937 to May 1938, include the previously mentioned *Variations sur le carillon*, op. 16 and her delightful (but unfinished) reed trio.

During her second Parisian period, from January 1939 to May 1940, Kaprálová became even more productive. Soon after her return to Paris in January 1939, she composed two pieces of chamber music honouring the memory of Czech writer Karel Čapek, whose passing on Christmas Day of 1938 was mourned by the nation: the *Elegy* for violin and piano, and the melodrama *Karlu Čapkovi (To Karel Čapek)* for reciter, violin and piano on a text by Vítězslav Nezval. On March 15, 1939, German soldiers marched into the streets of Prague. Devastated by the occupation of her homeland, Kaprálová sought solace

in her music. The result was *Concertino for Violin, Clarinet and Orchestra*, op. 21, which reflects much of the composer's mental state during the worst period of her life. She scribbled 'Job 30:26' on the score, a telling reference to a passage from the Book of Job: 'Yet when I hoped for good, evil came; when I looked for light, then came darkness'. With its bold ideas and modern musical language, the concertino was to be Kaprálová's last major work; only two more high points were to follow: the song cycle *Zpíváno do dálky*, op. 22 (*Sung into the Distance*, 1939) and the *Deux ritournelles pour violoncelle et piano*, op. 25 (1940), her last composition.

The German occupation of Czechoslovakia changed Kaprálová's life literally overnight. As returning home was not an option, she now faced the arduous task of earning her own living. She no longer received financial aid from home (as financial transactions were subjected to new, strict rules), nor her stipend. During the final year of her life she spent much of her precious time on small commissions in an effort to support herself. One of them was the lively *Prélude de Noël* (1939), an orchestral miniature that Kaprálová composed for a Christmas program of the Paris PTT Radio. Throughout the spring of 1939, she tried to obtain a scholarship to study at the Juilliard School so that she could relocate to the United States (in the company of Martinů). Nothing came of the plan, however, and by the end of that summer she depended entirely on the assistance of several of her friends and a few benefactors.

Lacking regular income, Kaprálová joined the household of her young artist friends who found themselves in a similar position and decided to pool their resources to get through hard times. One of these friends was her future husband Jiří Mucha. She also joined the efforts of the Czech community in Paris that organized activities for and around the newly-formed Czechoslovak Army. Soon she became heavily involved, from founding a choir and writing reviews for the exile weekly *La Cause Tchécoslovaque* to composing music for the radio, the stage (she collaborated with Martinů on stage music for a theater project directed by Karel Brušák) and even the screen (most possibly a commission facilitated by Kaprálová's friend, film actor and director Hugo Haas).

In the final months of her life, Kaprálová also resumed her studies at the Ecole normale, adding to her already busy schedule. In April 1940, less than two months before her death, she married Jiří Mucha. In early May, she exhibited the first symptoms of her terminal illness. Since Paris was threatened by German invasion, she was evacuated on May 20, 1940 by Mucha to Montpellier, near his military base in Béziers. By then Kaprálová was already seriously ill, and, following several weeks of suffering, she succumbed to her illness on June 16, 1940.²²

Founding of the Kapralova Society

My personal discovery of Kaprálová began in 1997, when I encountered her name in a Martinů monograph. I was truly intrigued by the mention and immediately became curious about her music—how did it sound? Was it similar to that of Bohuslav Martinů, or did she find her own voice? Commercial releases of Kaprálová's music were no longer available by then, so I had to do a bit of research. Luckily for me the Brno Studio of Czech Radio kept several recordings of her music in its archives. I still remember the moment when I first listened to a tape that was mailed to me from Brno and how impressed I was by the sophistication of that music. Soon afterwards I took the tape to a small independent label, Studio Matouš, hoping that its owner and his musician brother would listen to it and hear what I heard—music that is bold and fresh, tough in fibre, both passionate and tender, emanating youthful energy, and abounding with ideas and humour: this was music of a remarkable, well-rounded musical personality. To their credit they did, and together we started raising funds so that they could release a first compact disc entirely dedicated to Kaprálová. The Studio Matouš release was just one of the long series of Kaprálová releases that followed at regular intervals, many of them initiated and financially assisted by the Kapralova Society which I founded soon after, in 1998, in Toronto.

Helping to release recorded music was only one of the efforts of the Kapralova Society. Simultaneously we focused on making this music available in print. The timeline became tighter as time progressed, for some of the autographs were already fading in Brno's Moravian Museum, but we were fortunate to collaborate with several publishers who acted more or less promptly—and today, thanks to them and the Kapralova Society's assistance, and often with its substantial financial support, most of the Kaprálová scores are in print and available to performers.

From the very beginning, the Society also actively supported Kaprálová research with the aim of laying the groundwork for solid scholarship. The *Kapralova Society Journal*,²³ which to date has reached 20 volumes, has played an important role in this process, as did our website, created in 1998. A true milestone, however, was the first English-language book on the composer, published in 2011 in the United States.²⁴ Some of the finest Kaprálová scholars contributed to this collection of biographical and analytical essays, and it was gratifying to see it shortlisted for the Award of the F. X. Šalda Foundation²⁵ which nominated the book in the category of outstanding editorial efforts in music history and criticism. The publication

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immediately generated more interest in the composer, thanks to its accessible language and wide distribution to college libraries, and it even opened the door to research in other languages. In 2015, a first French-language monograph on the composer was published in Paris, followed two years later by a German-language collection of research papers on Kaprálová, printed in Zürich.²⁶ Between 2015 and 2020, the Kapralova Society published a multi-volume anthology of Kaprálová's correspondence, hoping to encourage a more in-depth research on the composer in her homeland.²⁷

Also, very early on we promoted Kaprálová's music through radio programming, in partnership with national and public broadcasters. We collaborated with quite a few over the years, beginning with a fifty-minute documentary on the composer produced by CBC Radio 2 in 2001,²⁸ and ending with a five-hour program for the *Composer of the Week* series, produced by BBC Radio 3.²⁹ Here Kaprálová joined a distinguished group of Czech composers who have been featured by this radio series over the years since 1943, when the program was first aired.³⁰

Yet, as one of the Kaprálová scholars, Professor Judith Mabary, wisely observed, "establishing an enviable reputation in the classical tradition continues to be hard won. There is much against which to compete."³¹ And so, despite the progress we have made, I am fully aware that our advocacy work is not finished, that we must continue drawing attention to Kaprálová's music in live performances, new recordings by professional musicians and in scholarly research, and invest considerable energy in bringing her music to a wider sphere of potential supporters, both in her native country and abroad. The future of Kaprálová's music depends on it.

Notes

This article is a revised and an abbreviated version of the text first published in the *Journal of Czech and Slovak Music*, vol. 27 (2018): 4–32.

¹ The symposium *Vítězslava Kaprálová in ihrer und unserer Zeit – zu Einfluss und Rezeption ihres Schaffens* was organized by the ForumMusikDiversität (Forum for Diversity in Music) in Basel, Switzerland on 27–28 November 2015.

² *Composer of the Week: Vítězslava Kaprálová*, 12–16 October 2015, BBC Radio 3. Episodes: I: 'The young artist'; II: 'Brno'; III: 'Prague'; IV: 'Paris'; V: 'The war years'. Host: Donald Macleod. Guest: Karla Hartl. Producer: Johannah Smith (British Broadcasting Corporation, 2015). Listen to an abbreviated version of the program online: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p035d3gh>, accessed 16 April 2018.

³ The festival, which presented almost all Kaprálová compositions and included six world premières and eight North American premieres, took place on 20–27 September 2015 in Britton Recital Hall at the University of Michigan School of Music and

in Hill Auditorium in downtown Ann Arbor, Michigan.

⁴ Karla Hartl and Erik Entwistle, eds., *The Kaprálová companion* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2011).

⁵ Nicolas Dery, *Vítězslava Kaprálová. Portrait musical et amoureux* (Paris: Le Jardin d'Essai, 2015).

⁶ Christine Fischer, ed., *Vítězslava Kaprálová (1915–1940). Zeitbilder, Lebensbilder, Klangbilder* (Zurich: Chronos Verlag, 2017).

⁷ They included novels by Jiří Mucha and Jindřich Uher, a screenplay by Natalia Borodin, a radio play by Hana Roguljič and a stage play by Kateřina Tučková. For a critical analysis of these works see Karla Hartl, *Kauza Kaprálová* (Prague: Nakladatelství Klíč, 2021), available from <https://www.klic-knihy.cz/kaucha-kapralova>, accessed 12 June 2021.

⁸ Linda Catlin, "Composing identity: What is a woman composer?", October 16, 1997, available online at <http://www.catlinsmith.com/writings/composing-identity-what-is-a-woman-composer/>, accessed 16 April 2021.

⁹ See the new music festival gender data by New Music Report, available online at <https://www.newmusic.report/>, accessed 16 April 2021, and the gender and symphony orchestra programming data by Donne at http://www.drama-musica.com/stories/2019_2020_orchestra_seasons.html, accessed 16 April 2021.

¹⁰ Library of Congress, Felix Mendelssohn: *Reviving the Works of J. S. Bach*, available online at <https://www.loc.gov/item/ihas.200156436/>, accessed 16 April 2021.

¹¹ For a nearly complete Kaprálová bibliography, visit <http://www.kapralova.org/RESEARCH.htm>, accessed 16 April 2021.

¹² Jindřiška Bártová, "Kaprálková in the context of Czech music," in *The Kaprálová companion*, ed. Karla Hartl and Erik Entwistle (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2011), 17.

¹³ Kaprálová's early song-cycle from 1931 and the orchestral song *Smutný večer* (*Sad Evening*, from 1936) are believed to be set to her own texts.

¹⁴ W. H. (Walter Hasenclever), "Konzerte," *Prager Tagblatt*, June 20, 1935, 6.

¹⁵ *Výroční zpráva Pražské konservatoře za školní rok 1935/36* (*The 1935–1936 Annual Report of the Prague Conservatory*), 64.

¹⁶ Today's BBC Symphony Orchestra.

¹⁷ Columbia Broadcasting System.

¹⁸ "International Egg Rolling," *Time* magazine, 27 June 1938. Unsigned review. Available online at <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,759885,00.html>, accessed 16 April 2021.

¹⁹ Havergal Brian, "The nature of modern music. Contemporary music festival," *Musical Opinion* 62 (1938): 858.

²⁰ Kaprálová's parents bartered the lessons for a summer vacation at their family retreat in the village of Tři Studně.

²¹ Přemysl Pražák, ed., *Vítězslava Kaprálová: Studie a vzpomínky* (*Vítězslava Kaprálová: Studies and Memories*) (Prague: HMUB, 1949), 127.

²² The latest research into possible causes of Kaprálová's death suggests that she may have died of typhoid fever. I am indebted to Dr. Philip Mackowiak, professor emeritus of University of Maryland School of Medicine, for making his educated guess as to the etiology of Kaprálová's fatal illness, which is based on Kaprálová's original medical record from Saint-Eloi clinic in Montpellier, France.

²³ *Kapralova Society Journal. A journal of women in music*, available for free download at <http://www.kapralova.org/JOURNAL.htm>, accessed 16 April 2021).

²⁴ See note 4 for details.

²⁵ This is a private foundation associated with the Charles University in Prague.

²⁶ For details of the two publications see notes 5 and 6.

²⁷ The following four volumes of the five-volume anthology of correspondence have been made available to the public: *Vítězslava Kaprálová: Dopisy domů*. (Letters Home.) *Korespondence rodičům z let 1935–1940*, ed. Karla Hartl (Toronto: The Kapralova Society, 2015); *Vítězslava Kaprálová: Dopisy láskám*. (Letters to Loves.) *Rudolfu Kopcovi a Jiřímu Muchovi. Korespondence z let 1938–1940*, ed. Karla Hartl (Toronto: The Kapralova Society, 2016); *Vítězslava Kaprálová: Dopisy přátelům a jiná korespondence 1935–1940* (Letters to Friends), ed. Karla Hartl (Toronto: The Kapralova Society, 2017); Karla Hartl, *Vítězslava Kaprálová: Tematický katalog skladeb a korespondence s nakladateli* (Thematic Catalogue of the Works and Correspondence with Publishers) (Prague: Czech Radio, 2020).

²⁸ *In performance: Vítězslava Kaprálová*, 3 May 2001, CBC Radio 2. Host: Eric Friesen. Guests: Denise Ball, Karla Hartl and Antonín Kubálek. Producer: Denise Ball (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 2001).

²⁹ See note 2 for details.

³⁰ In 2015, the list of Czech composers only included Jan Dismas Zelenka, Jan Ladislav Dussek, Johann Baptist Vaňhal, Bedřich Smetana, Antonín Dvořák, Zdeněk Fibich, Vítězslav Novák, Josef Suk, Leoš Janáček and Bohuslav Martinů.

³¹ Judith Mabary, "Vítězslava Kaprálová and the Benefits of Advocacy," *Kapralova Society Journal* 13, no. 2 (Fall 2015): 1–6.



Kauza Kaprálová v dobové korespondenci a dokumentech (ed. Karla Hartl) je příběh posmrtné repatriace Vítězslavy Kaprálové, jak jej zaznamenala dobová korespondence a dokumenty. Příběh lze sledovat od prvních kroků podniknutých v r. 1945 několika krajany v Montpellier a československým zastupitelstvím v Paříži k záchraně jejích tělesných ostatků až po smuteční slavnost uložení urny se skladatelčiným popelem v r. 1949 v Brně. Korespondence a archiválie poprvé publikované v této knize jsou nejen zajímavou reflexí doby, v níž se příběh udál, ale i zdrojem nových informací o dosud neobjasněné příčině úmrtí této nejvýznamnější české skladatelky. Osobnost a dramatický osud Vítězslavy Kaprálové se v uplynulých třech desetiletích stal středem zájmu nejrozličnějších popularizačních snah, které dlouhodobě formují dnešní skladatelčin portrét a začínají se prosazovat i v samotné historiografii Kaprálové. Na jejich úskalí upozorňuje úvodní stať Karly Hartl.

Toronto-Praha: The Kapralova Society & Nakladatelství Klíč (2021). 104 stran, 7 ilustrací. ISBN 978-80-907421-3-0. Knihu lze zakoupit v e-shopu <https://www.klic-knihy.cz/kauza-kapralova>

*Dora Pejačević***Dora Pejačević (1885–1923), Dean of Croatian women composers**

Croatian composer Dora Pejačević (b. Budapest, Sept. 10, 1885–d. Munich, March 5, 1923) was the daughter of Count Teodor Pejačević, a Croatian ban, and Lilla Vay de Vaya, a Hungarian baroness. Dora started her musical learning as a child in Budapest with Hungarian organist Károly Noseda, attended the Croatian Music Institute in Zagreb, and later advanced her studies privately with Percy Sherwood in Dresden and Walter Courvoisier (composition) and Henri Petri (violin) in Munich. However, she was primarily self-taught.

Her growth as an artist was also enabled through contacts with the leading personalities of her age, the writers Rainer Maria Rilke, Karl Kraus and Anette Kolb, the pianist Alice Ripper, and the painter Clara Rilke Westhoff. She subscribed to Kraus's *Die Fackel* (*The Torch*) and took an interest in social issues of her times. The writings of Ibsen, Wilde, Dostoyevsky, Thomas Mann, Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard, Kraus, Rilke, and Nietzsche all had an impact on the development of her artistic

sensibility.

In Croatia, Dora Pejačević lived in her family mansion in the village of Našice, but frequent journeys took her to European cultural centres of Budapest, Munich, Prague and Vienna, in which she would stay for prolonged periods of time. The last years of her life, from her marriage to Ottomar Lumbe in 1921 to her death in 1923, were mostly spent in Munich.

During her life, her works were performed not only in Croatia, but also abroad in London, Dresden, Budapest, Stockholm, Vienna, and Munich. Among the performers of her music were some of the most prominent musicians of the day, including the pianists Walther Bachmann, Svetislav Stančić and Alice Ripper, the violinists Joan Manén, Václav Huml, and Zlatko Baloković, the conductors Oskar Nedbal and Edwin Lindner, and ensembles Thomán Trio, the Croatian String Quartet, the Zagreb Philharmonic Orchestra, the Wiener Tonkünstlerorchester, and the Dresden Philharmonic.



Fig. 1. The wedding of Dora Pejačević and Ottomar Lumbe. 1921. Photograph © State Archives, Prague.

Pejačević's musical oeuvre comprises 58 compositions in all categories of musical literature. Among them a special mention should be made of four songs for alto and orchestra (*Verwandlung*, op. 37b, *Liebeslied*, op. 39, *Zwei Schmetterlingslieder*, op. 52); *Three Songs*, op. 53, set to words by Nietzsche; Piano Sonata in A-flat Major, op. 57; Piano Quintet in B Minor, op. 40; String Quartet in C Major, op. 58; Symphony in F-sharp Minor, op. 41; Piano Concerto in G Minor, op. 33; and the *Fantasy Concertante* in D Minor for Piano and Orchestra, op. 48.

Pejačević's late Romantic idiom combined with Impressionist harmonies and lavish orchestral colours makes her a true child of the European *fin-de-siècle*, her work running parallel to European modernist trends in literature and *art nouveau* in the visual arts. In her last works Pejačević is already searching for her own expression and musical language, shaped by her own masterful command of the instruments for which she composed. She stands out, together with Josip Hatze and Blagoje Bersa, for the professionalism and high quality of their art, among the Croatian composers of her generation.¹

Published scores

- * Miniatures for violin and piano (collection). Zagreb: CMIC,² 2008.
- * Phantasie Concertante for Piano and Orchestra, op. 48 (orchestral score and piano reduction score). Zagreb: CMIC, 2009.
- * Piano Concerto in G Minor, op. 33. Zagreb: Muzikološki zavod Muzičke akademije, 1982.
- * Piano miniatures (collection). Zagreb: CMIC, 2005.
- * Piano Quartet in D Minor, op. 25 (score and parts). Zagreb: CMIC, 2009.
- * Piano Quintet in B Minor, op. 40 (score and parts). Zagreb: CMIC, 2009.
- * Piano Sonata in A-flat Minor, op. 57. Zagreb: CMIC, 2006.
- * Piano sonata in B-flat Minor, op. 36. Zagreb: Hrvatsko muzikološko društvo, 2004.
- * Piano trio, op. 15. Zagreb: Hrvatska udruga orkestralnih i komornih umjetnika, 1999.
- * Slavic sonata for violin and piano, op. 43. Zagreb: CMIC, 2007.
- * Sonata for violoncello and piano, op. 35. Zagreb: Music Academy, 1977.
- * Sonata for violin and piano, op. 26. Zagreb: Hrvatska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, 1995.
- * Songs and Lieder (collection). Zagreb: CMIC, 2009.
- * String Quartet in C Major, op. 58 (score and parts). Zagreb: CMIC, 2009.
- * Symphony in F sharp Minor, op. 41. Zagreb: CMIC, 2009.

Profile CD releases on cpo

- Symphony. Phantasie concertante.* Volker Banfield, pno; Deutsche Staatsphilharmonie Rheinland-Pfalz and Ari Rasilainen. cpo 777 418-2 (2011).
- Piano Trio. Cello Sonata.* Andrej Bielov, vno, Christian Poltéra, vcl, Oliver Triendl, pno. cpo 777 419-2 (2011).
- Violin Sonatas.* Andrej Bielov, vno, Oliver Triendl, pno. cpo 777 420-2 (2013).



Fig. 2. Dora Pejačević in 1920. © State Archives, Prague.

Chamber Works. (Includes her string quartet, piano quartet and piano quintet.) Oliver Triendl, pno; Quatuor Sine Nomine. cpo 2CD 777 421-2 (2012).

Lieder. Ingeborg Danz, alto, Cord Garben, pno. cpo 777 422-2 (2012).

Piano Concerto. Overture. Orchestral Songs. Ingeborg Danz, alto; Oliver Triendl, pno; Brandenburgisches Staatsorchester Frankfurt and Howard Griffiths. cpo 777 916-2 (2015).

The Complete Piano Works. Nataša Veljković. cpo 2CD 555 003-2 (2015).

Biography

Kos, Koraljka. *Dora Pejačević.* Zagreb: CMIC, 2008.

Notes

- 1 This text is based on a foreword to the published score of Symphony in F-sharp Minor by Dora Pejačević (editors Davor Merkaš and Ivan Živanović), signed by the acronym MIC (the Croatian Music Information Centre).
- 2 CMIC=Croatian Music Information Centre

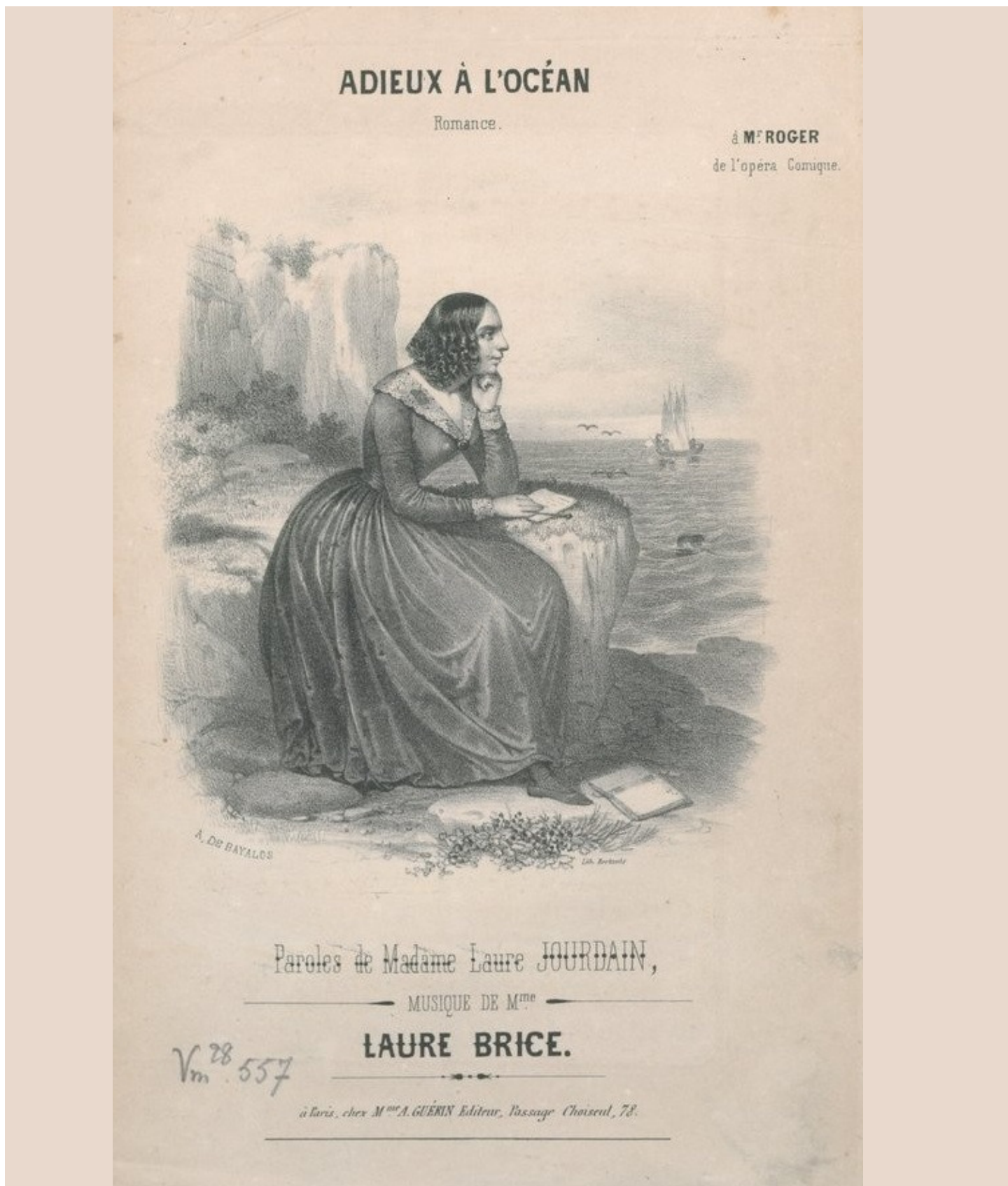


Fig.1. Cover of Laure Brice's romance *Adieux à l'océan*. Paris: Mme A. Guérin, 1842. BnF. Digitized in Gallica.

Women of the 19th Century Salon: Laure Brice

Tom Moore

My investigation began as an effort to discover more information about the singer and composer of romances, Madame Laure Brice (dates of birth and death unknown, most active in about 1840 in Paris). A challenge in doing such research is being able to verify the identities of those mentioned in the contemporary press, given that sources from the period often simply refer to individuals by their surnames and by the local equivalents for Mr., Mrs. and Miss. For women the problem is complicated by the fact that upon marriage they often combined their surname with that of their new husband.

Almost immediately it became clear that in the period between 1830 and 1840 there were at least two Madame Brices active around Paris.¹ Madame Laure Brice, the original stimulus for this article, was, to my knowledge, never included in any nineteenth-century lexicon. She first appears in the press in January 1835, holds musical soirées in her salon, with guests including leading musicians of the day, publishes extensively, is frequently mentioned in the press, and then disappears from the scene in the early 1840s. The other Madame Brice was a professional opera singer, probably considerably older than Mme. Laure Brice; she received a necrology in the *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung*, was mentioned in at least three nineteenth-century lexica, and even is included in the contemporary *Grosses Sängerlexikon*.

The earliest appearance in the press that I have found for Brice the composer is a notice in the *Gazette des théâtres*, from January 1835, for three of her “delicious romances” (only the first of the three romances mentioned seems to have survived, however). Here she is simply identified as “Mme Brice”:

In the period of musical soirées, we believe that it is agreeable to our readers, and especially to our female readers, to announce to them the recent publication of three delicious romances owing to the talent of Madame Brice, so appreciated. The most exquisite and most melodious melody distinguishes these compositions, which do great honor to its author. They are entitled: *Rêver à ce qu'on aime*, *Adieu*, *Tu seras mes amours*, and are to be found chez Mme Brice, 8, rue de l'Université.²

Subsequently, she is always referred to as “Mme. Laure Brice” or, on one occasion, as “Laure Brice”. I have found no information about her age and maiden name, nor any information about her husband. Fortunately, the above note provides the address of her residence as number 8, rue de l'Université. This street is on the south side of the Seine, and it runs parallel to the river from the rue des Saints-Pères to the west, until it terminates at the Tour Eiffel.

Two more romances are mentioned in the 1835 *Le Monde Dramatique*, but neither seems to have survived. The publisher was Bernard Latte, operating between 1831 and 1855, who also issued the works of such Parisians as Auber, Thomas and Hérold³:

Il est de doux pensers, *le Retour*. These are the titles of two romances that are now found on every piano, and which their author, Madame Laure Brice, who is known for several compositions in this genre, has just delivered to the vogue of our salons for this whole winter. We particularly recommend *le Retour* to the attention of our readers. This nocturne is remarkable for the freshness and novelty of the melody, and for the charm of the accompaniment. These two pieces can be found chez Bernard Latte, publisher of music, boulevard des Italiens.⁴

Laure Brice is also mentioned in the January 1836 issue of *Gazette des salons*:

A romance that we had not heard before in any concert gave us the greatest pleasure; it is owing to the talent of Madame Laure Brice (*Tu seras mes amours*); we advise M. de Lagoanère,⁵ who sang it deliciously, that he should sing it often: it is a charming romance. The *Prière de jeune fille* is also a very pretty inspiration of M. de Lagoanère.⁶

Her name appears in the press almost every month in 1837, and she continues to be extensively covered in the press until the middle of 1841. The following are just a few examples of this news coverage:

1837

Madame Laure Brice, whose gracious romances are à la mode, has let us hear a new romance with the name of *Hirondelle douce et frêle*. This romance is exquisitely fresh; it gave us the greatest pleasure, as did the *Chansonnette du pays*, for which a little accompaniment for oboe, played marvelously well by M. Veny,⁷ gave an extra interest. These pretty romances concluded the concert and were welcomed by unanimous applause.⁸

Chez Petit, the music publisher, rue Vivienne, a romance has just appeared, with the title: *Mon Ange mystérieux*, with accompaniment for horn or cornet, dedicated to M. Gallay.⁹ This new production is by Madame Laure Brice.¹⁰

1838

LAURE BRICE. — This artist, to whom the singing world owes a large number of pretty romances, gave, at her residence a few days ago, a musical soirée at which M. Ponchard performed an air from Masaniello and several romances by Madame Brice, among these also *Qui de nous s'en repentira*, published a while ago by Le MÈNESTREL. Mlle Loveday and M. Rignault contributed through their talent to the attractiveness of this artistic reunion, and the mistress of the house performed several of her new songs and chansonnettes with much grace and spirit.¹¹

1839

Mme. Laure Brice, known for her gracious musical compositions, will give a concert on Thursday, the 21st of this month, at the hall of M. Henri Herz, rue de la Victoire, the program of which should vividly stimulate the curiosity of

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music lovers. With Mademoiselle Nau and Madame Widemann of the Opéra one will hear Mesdames Gay-Saintville and Laure Brice, as well as M. Alexis Dupont.¹²

[T]here is a lady who has for many years been enjoying a grand reputation for her talent on the violoncello. This lady (Mme. P.) was heard last Tuesday in the salons of M. Dupont, where she created a great sensation. Mlles Dupont, Ellian Barthélémy, and Bodin worthily contributed to the program of this session. Some productions by M. Vimeux had their share of bravos; then a romance and a chansonette (*Claudine*) by Madame Laure Brice, sung by the author, similarly gave pleasure.¹³

Vichy is a charming place to stay when one speaks of it in Paris; apparently, there one sleeps from midnight to midday, one dances there from midday to midnight. It is also a place of *rendez-vous d'amour* for some of our great ladies who go to the waters with a complaisant prescription, while their credulous or carefree husbands give a discount, create enterprises of every kind, legally ruin some and dupe others. For these, only pleasure, or rather, pleasures, in Vichy and in Baden. —This very evening, the drinkers of water are called together by one of our most gracious composers of romances, Madame Laure Brice. —The evening has arrived! Madame Laure Brice calls us. . . . What did I tell you, friend? Is this evening not truly interesting? The compositions of this lady, both musician and woman of the world, are full of sentiment and of sweet melancholy. In fact, what is there that is more touching than the two romances: *Enfants, dormez sur l'avenir*, and *Hirondelle*. The melodies are simple, the accompaniments not very complicated, and the combination is perfect. Madame Brice makes her productions have an effect; although her voice is neither flexible nor extensive, she sings them with the feeling that inspired her when she wrote them. But time is pressing, let us add another bravo to those of the crowd, and then coachman, giddy-up, on our way. Y. D.¹⁴

Madame Laure Brice, whose salons have been open for two months already to the distinguished artists of Paris, proposes to give a grand musical matiné tomorrow, Sunday, at the beautiful hall of M. Herz. . . . Nothing could be more interesting than the program of this concert; several new romances and chansonettes will be heard, among others, a melody sung marvelously by Mademoiselle d'Hennin, *Prière d'une mère*.¹⁵

1840

A grand concert will be given by Madame Laure Brice, Sunday, January 31, in the hall of M. Herz, rue de la Victoire. There one will hear Mesdames Nau, Widemann, Brice; Messieurs Géraldy, Péronnet, Rignault, Saenger, Gattermann, Triébert, Mademoiselle Mattemann. Several romances from the Album of Madame Brice will be sung. Tickets may be had chez M. Herz and chez Madame Brice, 5, rue des Beaux-Arts.¹⁶

1841

A genre devoted to the expression of lively, delicate and tender feelings should be suitable to the eminently sensitive organization of women, and many have treated it in a remarkable way; after Madame Gail, we have applauded the agreeable productions of Mesdames Duchambge, Loisa Puget, Laure Brice, Molinos, Laffitte, and others

whose names we cannot recall and who rival Messieurs Clapisson, Bérat, Monpou, Masini, Labarre, etc.; then we have seen myriads of imitators appear on our musical horizons, pale stars whose ephemeral *bluettes* only project feeble glows which are soon confused with each other, and vanish. What multiplies ad infinitum mediocre or poor romances is the belief that vague notions of the principal elements of the musical language and a few melodic ideas, which are often no more than reminiscences, are sufficient in order to compose them. This is a grave mistake!¹⁷

The province is inundated with concerts at the moment. Artists come one after another with an unparalleled fury. Nantes has just been the victim of this musical fever. They write us that, after our grand artist Doehler, the young Bernardin, Miss Clara Loveday, Madame Brice, and Mademoiselle Wattman have appeared. The latter, a very young women, has, through her talent and her age, excited the strongest sympathies. Her farewell concert was a veritable celebration, to which various artists and amateurs from the city hastened to participate. One may cite among this number M. Gonnet, who obtains, especially, much success for his spiritual chansonettes. —On the other side of the coin, Madame Laure Brice had to return tickets to about thirty people gathered to enjoy her compositions.¹⁸

Laure Brice's romances continued to be published until at least 1845. At the same time, her melodies were arranged for solo piano by Gomion (op. 43, published in 1839), by Le Carpentier (op. 46 and op. 51, published in 1842), Delaseurie (published in 1860); and also for violin and piano by Depas and Leduc (published in 1863). Her public presence, however, ceased after 1841, and I have found no obituary concerning her, so that musical lexicography must remain without either a date of birth or death for Laure Brice.

Published Works

Abbreviations used in this catalogue: Accompt.=accompaniment; Arr.=arrangement; BnF=(deposited in) Bibliothèque nationale de France; Bib de la France= *Bibliographie de la France*; Ded.=dedicated; [n.d.]=not dated.

Piano solo

Une fleurette : grande valse pour piano. Paris: Mme A. Guérin, c1840. BnF. Listed in *Bib de la France*, Aug. 22, 1840, 486.

Souvenirs de Vichy : valse pour piano. Paris: A. Tabereau, 1840.

Ded.: "à Mme Judicis de Mirandol, née de Crésieux".¹⁹ BnF. *Bib de la France*, April 25, 1840, 212.

Valse pour piano. Paris: A. Tabereau, [n.d.]. BnF.

Songs

(mainly for voice and piano, unless specified otherwise)

Adieux à l'océan. Romance. Voice and guitar. Words by Mme Laure Jourdain.²⁰ Paris: Mme A. Guérin, 1842. Ded.: "à Mr. Roger de l'opéra Comique". BnF. *Bib de la France*, Sept. 3, 1842, 507.

Laure Brice

Digitized in Gallica <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k11592164>

Ave Maria. Voice and organ. Paris: Régnier-Canaux, 1856. BnF.

Berceau de ma fille. Romance. Words by Mme Almiré

Gemdounière. Paris: Mme Espinasse, [n.d.]. *Bib de la France*, July 28, 1838, 360.

“Chansonnette du pays.” Words by Mxxx. Paris: A. Tabereau, [n.d.]. BnF. *Bib de la France*, Sept. 1, 1838, 420.

Chant des Montagnes. Romance. Voice and oboe/flute. Words by? Publisher? Listed in *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris* 5 (June 3, 1838): 232.

“Chant du crépuscule”. Chanson. Words by Victor Hugo. Paris: A. Tabereau, [n.d.]. BnF. *Bib de la France*, Sept. 1, 1838, 420.

Chante encore. Romance. Words by Eugène Brice. British Library. Digitized at Google Books:

<https://books.google.com/books?id=zCzayuB81e0C&pg=PP1#v=onepage&q&f=false>

Claudine. Chansonnette. Words by Georges Brice. Paris: Mme Guérin, [n.d.]. University of Michigan, BnF.

Depart du corsaire. Words by Mr. Lasègue. Paris: A. Tabereau, [n.d.]. BnF. *Bib de la France*, Sept. 1, 1838, 420.

Enfant de la grève. Romance. Voice and guitar. Words by Mme Laure Jourdain. Accompt de guitare par Jh Vimeux. Paris: Mme A. Guérin, 1841. BnF. *Bib de la France*, June 5, 1841, 283.

Enfants dormez sur l’avenir. Romance. Words by Victor Doinet.²¹ Paris: Mme Espinasse, [n.d.]. BnF.

Espère. Romance. Voice and guitar. Accompt de guitare par Jh. Vimeux. Words by Mme Laure Jourdain. Paris: Mme A. Guérin, 1841. BnF. *Bib de la France*, June 5, 1841, 283.

Faut-il t’aimer? Romance. Words by Georges Brice. Paris: Guérin, [n.d.]. BnF.

Fête des champs. Souvenirs du Mont d’or. Romance for voice and oboe.²² Words by Eugène Brice. Paris: Challiot, 1842. BnF. *Bib de la France*, April 23, 1842, 243.

Fleur du coeur. Romance. Words by Francis M***. Paris: Guérin, 1843. BnF. *Bib de la France*, June 29, 1844, 339.

(Une) *Fleurette*. Chansonnette. Words by Mr. Lasègue. Paris: Mme A. Guérin. BnF. *Bib de la France*, Feb. 29, 1840, 108, 118.

Hirondelle douce et frêle. Words by Mr. Lasègue. Ded.: “à Mlle Dolores Nan. Paris: Mme Espinasse, c.1837. In: *Fauvette Musicale* 2, no. 10. British Library. Digitized in Google Books: <https://books.google.com/books?id=IkbLuRQbKEC&pg=PP1#v=onepage&q&f=false>

Il est de doux penser et *Le Retour*. 2 romances. Paris: Bernard Latte, 1835. Mentioned in *Le Monde dramatique* (1835): 160.

Je suis discret. Romance. Words by Mr Lasègue. Paris: Bureau de l’artiste, [n.d.]. BnF.

Jeanne, la coquette. Chansonnette. Words by Georges Brice. Paris: Colombier, c.1838. BnF.

“Jeune créole.” Words by Crevel de Charlemagne. Paris: A. Tabereau, [n.d.]. BnF. *Bib de la France*, Sept. 1, 1838, 420.

Jeune gondolière. Romance. Voice and guitar. Words by Ch. Merme. Accompt de guitare par Jh Vimeux. Paris: Mme A. Guérin, 1841. BnF. *Bib de la France*, June 5, 1841, 283.

“Marie.” Romance. Words by Mr. Lasègue. Paris: A. Tabereau, [n.d.]. BnF. *Bib de la France*, Sept. 1, 1838, 420.

Mésange. Words by Victor Dollet. Paris: A. Tabereau, 1841. BnF.

Bib de la France, Jan. 15, 1842, 52.

Moissonneur. Romance. Words by Eugène Brice. Paris: Colombier, [n.d.]. BnF. *Bib de la France*, April 25, 1840, 211.

Mon Ange mystérieux. Romance for voice and horn / cornet. Ded. M. Gallay. Paris: Petit, 1837. Mentioned in *Le Ménestrel*, July 2, 1837, 4.

Pardonne-moi. Romance. Words by Georges Brice. Paris: A. Tabereau, [n.d.]. BnF. *Bib de la France*, Sept. 1, 1838, 420.

(Une) *Préférence*. Chansonnette. Voice and guitar. Accompt de guitare par Jh Vimeux. Words by Georges Brice. Paris: Mme A. Guérin, 1841. BnF. *Bib de la France*, June 5, 1841, 283.

Prière de (d’une) mère. Mélodie. Words by Mr. Camille Doucet. Paris: Canaux, [n.d.]. *Bib de la France*, March 21, 1840, 153.

Qui de nous s’en repentira. Romance. Publ. in *Le Ménestrel*, [n.d.]. Mentioned in *Le Ménestrel*, Jan. 21, 1838, 4.

Retour du pâtre. Romance. Voice and guitar. Accompt de guitare par Jh Vimeux. Words by Eugène Brice. Paris: Colombier, 1839. BnF. *Bib de la France*, Jan. 11, 1840, 34.

Rêver à ce qu’on aime. Romance. Words by Mr. Lasègue. Paris: A. Petit, [n.d.]. BnF.

Rêverie. Words by Victor Doinet. Paris: A. Tabereau. BnF.

Seule à toi, mes bonheurs! Words by Mme Laure Jourdain. Paris: J. Meissonnier, 1845. BnF.

Collections of songs:

Album. Voice and piano. Paroles de Laure Jourdain, Louise Colet, Georges Brice, Ch. Merme, Eugène Brice, Victor Doinet et Thérésia Bardoux. Paris: A. Guérin, 1841. BnF. It contains several Brice’s romances and chansonnettes, one ballade and one nocturne: Fleurs que j’aime, Espère, Une préférence, Un nom de femme, Jeune gondolière, Plus de soeur!, Gentille paysanne, Jardinière de couvent, and Réveil du jour. Numbers 1, 3, and 4 also issued separately by Guérin.

Harmonion. Recueil de 60 choeurs à deux, trois et quatre égales voix sans accompagnement à l’usage des écoles de musique, des pensionnats, des institutions religieuses, etc., et choisis (selected), arrangés (arranged) ou composés (or composed by) par A. Romagnési. Paris: Romagnési, 1842. Contains “Le Silence de la Nuit” (no. 48, p. 160) by Laure Brice. Digitized at Gallica: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k318357b/f7.image>

Les Roses. 6 romances favorites pour le piano, op. 10. Paris: Mme A. Guérin, 1842. Includes “Hirondelle douce et frêle” and “Enfants dormez sur l’avenir” by Laure Brice (nos. 2 and 5).

Arrangements by other composers:

Chansonnette du pays. Arr. by Adolphe Le Carpentier as no. 1 of his two *Petites Récréations*, op. 46. Paris: Hachette, 1907. BnF.

Enfant de la grève. Fantaisie gracieuse pour violon et piano concertants. Arr. for violin and piano by Ernest Depas and Alphonse Leduc. Paris: Leduc, 1863. BnF.

Enfant de la grève et Espère, petite fantaisie sur 2 romances de Mme L. Brice. Arr. for piano by Adolphe Le Carpentier. Op. 51. Paris: Mme Guérin, 1842.

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“Enfant de la grève” (by Laure Brice). In: *Deux Fantaisies gracieuses pour piano*, no. 1. Arr. for piano by Arthur Delaseurie. Paris: Leduc, 1860. BnF. *Bib de la France*, 1862, 111.

Jeune créole, fantaisie pour piano, sur une romance de Mme L. Brice. Arr. for piano by L. Gomion. Op. 43. Paris: A. Tabereau, 1839. BnF.

Notes

¹ Both of these figures share their orbits with several other figures also bearing the surname Brice. For Madame Laure Brice, these figures are men who provide lyrics for songs – Eugène Brice and Georges Brice. For the opera singer, Madame Brice, these figures are her husband, the tenor Hyacinthe Brice, and two children, Rose Brice and Anna Brice. Moreover, there were evidently not one but two Madame Brices active singing opera and both married to Mr. Hyacinthe Brice. These were separately identified in the sources from the period as Madame Bossan-Brice (b. before 1800–d. after 1846) and Madame Desquintaine-Brice (1805–1835). Only the latter has been included in musical lexica.

² *Gazette des théâtres : journal des comédiens*, January 29, 1835, 8.

³ Daniel-François-Esprit Auber (1782–1871), Ambroise Thomas (1811–1896), and Louis-Joseph-Ferdinand Hérold (1791–1833) were composers of light-headed opéras comiques.

⁴ *Le Monde dramatique : revue des spectacles anciens et modernes* (1835): 160.

⁵ Le Chevalier de Lagoanère, 1785–1841, singer and composer of romances from Spain. Mentioned in the *Annuaire de la Société Montyon et Franklin* 3 (1835): 8. (According to the *Fétis Biographie universelle*, he was a violinist, b. southern France c1785, d. Vigan, Jan. 1841.)

⁶ *Gazette des salons : journal des modes et de musique, artistique, littéraire et théâtral*, January 1, 1836, 270.

⁷ Louis Auguste Vény, 1801–1879 (or 1875, or 1878 – sources differ).

⁸ *Gazette des salons*, April 19, 1837, 662.

⁹ Jacques-François Gallay, 1695–1864, hornist and composer.

¹⁰ *Le Ménestrel*, July 2, 1837, 4.

¹¹ *Le Ménestrel*, January 21, 1838, 4.

¹² *Le Courrier*, March 21, 1839

¹³ *Le Ménestrel*, May 12, 1839, 4.

¹⁴ *Le Furet des salons : journal du monde élégant, de l'industrie et des théâtres*, September 1, 1839.

¹⁵ *Le Courrier*, December 22, 1839.

¹⁶ *La Sylphide : journal de modes, de littérature, de théâtres et de musique*, December 6, 1840, 112. This is a new address for Laure Brice. It is about two and half blocks to the east (450 meters).

¹⁷ A paper presented at the Salle du Conservatoire de Musique on May 16, 1841 and published in the *Annales de la Société libre des beaux-arts*, 1841, 36–59; also see Jacques-Auguste Delaire, *Histoire de la Romance, Considérée comme oeuvre littéraire et musicale* (Paris: Ducasso, 1845): 20–21. Digitized at Gallica: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k54429565/f21.item>

¹⁸ *Le Ménestrel*, July 11, 1841.

¹⁹ Madame Judicis de Mirandol, the wife of the writer Louis Judicis de Mirandol, 1816–1893.

²⁰ Laure Jourdain (b.? -d.?) provided poetry for herself and many composers of romances, including Lefébure-Wely, Masini, and Latour.

²¹ Victor Doinet, b. 1819, a prolific writer of lyrics for romances.

²² Recommended in *Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris* 10 (April 16, 1843): 137. (“Nous leur recommandons également une très gracieuse romance de Mme Laure Brice, intitulée qui a un accompagnement de hautbois d’un très bon effet.”)

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
NAXOS
CLASSICAL

Vítězslava KAPRÁLOVÁ
(1915–1940)

Waving Farewell

Prélude de Noël
Military Sinfonietta
Sad Evening
Suite en miniature
Piano Concerto

Nicholas Phan, Tenor
Amy I-Lin Cheng, Piano
University of Michigan
Symphony Orchestra
Kenneth Kiesler



On the centenary of Vítězslava Kaprálová's death, 2015, over a hundred events – on four continents in eleven countries – were dedicated to the composer, including a five-hour series from BBC Radio 3 on their *Composer of the Week* program. The largest Kaprálová event in 2015 was the Kaprálová Festival at the University of Michigan, in Ann Arbor, Michigan. The Kaprálová Festival remains the largest Kaprálová event ever produced, with almost all of her works performed in a seven-day period, and this is the ultimate source of the present album's recordings. This album includes the world premiere recording of the orchestral song *Smutný večer*, probably originally conceived to be performed with the composer's most well-known song, *Sbobem a šáteček*. Almost all of the composer's works have now been published, and, with the contribution of this album, also recorded. Her unique works have now entered the international repertoire, and her fascinating persona continues to entrance us.

The miniature *Prélude de Noël* was written in Paris for a radio broadcast to Nazi-occupied Czechoslovakia six months before the composer's death on 16 June 1940. The broadcast was on Christmas Eve of 1939, and Kaprálová wrote to her parents in Brno that she had composed the piece in one night, when her future husband Jiří Mucha arrived home to tell her that by next morning, he needed from her a small orchestral work for Christmas, which she would be conducting on the radio. Despite the deadline, Kaprálová was pleased with the outcome and the work's reception. Indeed, the work is a tiny gem, with hints of Czech folk song and Czech Christmas carols, as spontaneous and fresh as the moment it was written.

The *Military Sinfonietta*, op. 11 in many respects served as the composer's calling card. With this formidable work, Kaprálová proved her ability, at the age of 22, to excel in composing in a large orchestral form,

building upon the success she achieved with her piano concerto. Written in 1936–37, and dedicated to Czechoslovakia's second president, Edvard Beneš, the *Military Sinfonietta* was the work that first brought the composer international exposure. The premiere took place on 26 November 1937, at a gala concert at the illustrious Lucerna Hall in Prague under the patronage of the president himself. Organized by the National Women's Council, the all-Czech concert featured Kaprálová conducting her work with the Czech Philharmonic. A string of favourable Czech newspaper reviews followed, and within a month she was chosen to represent her country at the 1938 ISCM Festival in London. The *Military Sinfonietta* was programmed to open the festival, with Kaprálová conducting the BBC Orchestra. At the festival, Kaprálová's music shared the limelight with the music of Bartók, Britten, Copland, Hindemith, Webern, and others. This opening night concert was broadcast throughout Europe and also through CBS in the US. Besides the work's vigour, passion, colourful orchestration, and fine craftsmanship, the *sinfonietta* serves as an important testament to the anxieties of the time.

When Kaprálová was selected to conduct the BBC Orchestra with her *Military Sinfonietta* at the ISCM Festival in London in 1938, she was asked to submit her curriculum vitae for the Festival brochure. With the CV she attached a list of her works, which mentioned a collection of orchestral songs. Although no titles of the songs were given, certainly they must have included the two songs on this recording. Kaprálová wrote 33 songs, many of which represent a climax of Czech art song, and easily stand alongside the greatest achievements of songwriting anywhere. Given her success with orchestration, it is no wonder that she has created two gems in this genre. *Sad Evening* (was discovered by Karla Hartl in 2006, and received its world premiere at the University of Michigan Kaprálová Festival in 2015. Although a complete sketch of the work exists, the final 13 bars of orchestration in the composer's manuscript were missing, and were reconstructed by Timothy Cheek. A talented poet, Kaprálová probably wrote the text herself. Dating from about 1936, the song exhibits all the hallmarks of Kaprálová's style. The composer captures the decadent, sad, vague, dream-like, yearning, and anxious qualities of the poem with a palette rich in orchestral colours and a beautifully declaimed vocal line that follows the natural inflection and emotions of the words. After a unique atmospheric opening section, the middle of the song expands to a more tonal, Romantic section, and the song returns to a wistful, sad, and tonally vague section reminiscent of the beginning. The song is built mostly on the motif of the musical interval of a second, heard in the opening clarinet trill, which we soon associate with weeping. The opening horns represent the sound of weeping from long ago, a solo violin depicts lonely tears, and we hear at the end of the song that the cymbal and celesta are part of 'the crystal of silence'. The voice rises passionately to a G on the word 'wishes', and even higher to an A sharp on the word 'desire'. A striking chord appears with the first entrance of the strings at the line 'Memory wanders across my forehead like an otherworldly conjurer'. The same chord ends the song, but this time clashing with the A sharp/B flat 'desire' note while the singer fades away on the word 'pale'. Thus desire wistfully mixes with memory and a light, pale sleep.

The song *Waving Farewell*, op. 14 is set to a poem by the great Czech poet Vítězslav Nezval (1900–1958), a beautiful poem studied by virtually all Czech schoolchildren. Interestingly, Nezval wrote the poem as a farewell to France, while Kaprálová dedicated her song 'to Prague, the most beautiful of all cities' as a farewell to Czechoslovakia as she embarked on her studies in Paris with Bohuslav Martinů in 1937. Ludvík Kundera, writing in 1949, considered it one of the best Czech songs of the times. Analysis shows Kaprálová's motivic mastery as she bases the entire work on a major second (as in *Sad Evening*), from the first word, 'Sbohem' ('Farewell') – filling the entire song, then, with farewells. Originally a song for voice and piano, Kaprálová orchestrated

the piece in 1938 during her studies in Paris with Martinů, and the great conductor Rafael Kubelík premiered this version in Brno in 1940.

Although the *Suite en miniature*, op. 1 bears the composer's earliest opus number, this piece was actually Kaprálová's second orchestral work, orchestrated for chamber orchestra in 1935, just after her Piano Concerto in D Minor, op. 7. The early opus number harkens back to a four-movement piano suite that Kaprálová had written in 1931, when she was 16, a year after she had entered the Brno Conservatory as the school's first female student to major in composition and conducting. The suite had rich, colourful sonorities that must have led Kaprálová to orchestrate them four years later. The *Suite en miniature*, however, is not a mere orchestration of an early piano work. Kaprálová had already revealed her extraordinary abilities for orchestration in her piano concerto, and her talent for creating beautiful orchestral timbres is apparent here, too, along with interesting subtle changes in the original composition itself. In revisiting her first substantive work, Kaprálová renamed the suite's four movements as *Praeludium*, *Pastorale*, *Berceuse* and *Mennetto*. The orchestral suite was premiered on a Brno radio broadcast on 7 February 1936, by conductor Theodor Schaefer with the Brno Radiojournal Ensemble.

The first movement of Kaprálová's *Piano Concerto in D Minor*, op. 7 was premiered with the Brno Conservatory Orchestra as part of the composer's graduation concert in both composition and conducting on 17 June 1935. This marked the 20-year-old composer's conducting debut, and the pianist was one of Kaprálová's teachers, Professor Ludvík Kundera (father of writer Milan Kundera). The two then performed the complete work with the Brno Radio Orchestra in 1936. In confronting the challenge of orchestration within a large-scale work, the choice of a piano concerto was a wise one. Kaprálová was fully accomplished in writing for the piano, her main instrument, in solo works as well as in chamber works and songs. In fact, she had just written her monumental work for piano, the *Sonata Appassionata*, op. 6, and so was fully equipped to confront large-scale virtuosic piano writing. She produced a remarkable work that has proven to be quite a crowd pleaser for modern audiences. The *Piano Concerto in D Minor* abounds in passion, youthful energy, brilliant colours, exuberance, and joy, as well as colourful orchestration that is completely integrated with the virtuosic piano writing. The first movement, in D minor, is marked *Allegro entusiastico*. The style is late-Romantic, but exhibits Kaprálová's own unique voice – highly lyrical and passionate, with beautiful, sometimes haunting harmonies; largely motivic, with a form that unfolds organically; and virtuosic piano writing that is well-integrated with impressive, colourful orchestral writing. It is no wonder that critics were eager to hear more after this movement was premiered at the composer's graduation concert. The second movement, *Largo*, is in B flat minor, and features an intricate and melancholy canon centred on the strings and the piano. But what had seemed like the beginning of a full-fledged, sombre, weighted Slavic slow movement, turns out to be an uninterrupted short introduction, or transition, to the third movement, which quickly sheds its weight and moves to the high spirit and joy of the concluding *Allegro*. The third movement is a rondo in roughly the form A–B–A'–C–Coda/A. The main theme is exuberant and dance-like, and the transitions into both the B and C sections end in short, jazzy piano writing, a real sign of the times. The extended coda begins very rhythmically until there is a final crescendo to end the work exuberantly in D major.

Timothy Cheek

*In Review****The Songs of Johanna Kinkel: Genesis, Reception, Context*, by Anja Bunzel. The Boydell Press, 2020.**

Much of the impressive scholarly work of musicologist Anja Bunzel has been directed to private and semi-private social gatherings in the nineteenth century and the musical repertoire presented there. Her book *The Songs of Johanna Kinkel: Genesis, Reception, Context*, published by Boydell Press in 2020, represents one focal point of that interest. Bunzel received her PhD from Maynooth University in 2016 and continued work there as a postdoctoral research fellow from 2017-2018. She presently holds a research position in the Musicology Department at the Institute of Art History, Czech Academy of Sciences in Prague.

The purpose of her latest book is to examine the songs written by Johanna Kinkel (1810-1858) and, in the author's own words, "the context within which those Lieder were composed, performed, reviewed, and received."¹ The hope is that such an investigation will increase awareness and encourage performance of her works. Sources consulted for this volume include published and manuscript scores, print media of the time, and personal correspondence in order to reconstruct the world in which Kinkel lived, worked, and created in the cities of Bonn, Berlin, and London.

The book is divided into six chapters and an afterword followed by an appendix of Kinkel's compositions, sorted according to published, unpublished, and those for which manuscripts could not be traced. The first two chapters present a concise biography emphasizing the composer's private life and approach to music followed by a contextualization of her creative efforts—directed primarily to Lieder—within the nineteenth-century culture of nationalism, the prevalence of the private and semi-private salon, and the increased publication of small-scale works appropriate for a domestic setting. Of significance to Kinkel's appeal in the salon setting is that an invitation or a recommendation was typically required for participation. Her access to such venues in the culture-rich Berlin was helped by recommendations from no less than Felix Mendelssohn and Georg Brentano.

Born Johanna Mockel in Bonn in 1810 to a conservative Catholic family, the future composer received instruction in the expected domestic skills for a woman of this time. She also studied piano and participated in the Bonn choral society (*Gesangverein*), of which she became director in the late 1820s. In 1832, she married Johann Paul Mathieux, a Catholic man who believed strongly in leading a frugal life, which entailed Johanna giving up her musical engagements. Unhappy under these constraints, she sought a divorce to which both husband

and wife had to agree. She left Bonn for Berlin, where her musical opportunities were greater. In 1839, when Mathieux finally consented to the divorce, she returned to Bonn where she met her second husband, Gottfried Kinkel, the same year. Like a ship to a beacon in a storm, they seemed drawn to each other amid Johanna's divorce proceedings and Gottfried's own romantic entanglement. They were finally free to marry in 1843, their life together one of artistic creativity and increasing involvement in political activities. Together they established the literary group *Maikäferbund*, of which Johanna was the only female member, with its accompanying journal *Maikäfer*, both of which served as inspiration and outlet for the couple's artistic endeavors as well as venues for some of the group's members to express politically controversial views.

During the years 1848–1851, the Kinkels became more heavily involved in revolutionary activities advocating a democratic government. As a case in point—and according to the timeline provided by Bunzel in Chapter 2—in December 1848 Johanna published her own "Demokratenlied," a song in support of a democratic republic to words by Gottfried, in the *Bonner Zeitung*, of which her husband had become editor in August. As revolutionary activities escalated, Gottfried's freedom became more precarious. In March 1849 he was suspended from his position at Bonn University. In June he joined the revolutionary conflict, was injured in July, and subsequently held at Rastatt, the first of several prisons. In her 2015 article on Kinkel's political art songs, Bunzel quoted historian Stanley Zucker as claiming that Kinkel was "the most prominent political prisoner in Germany" and that "support for the Kinkels had become a national cause."² In November 1850, Gottfried, with Johanna's financial assistance and the help of fellow accomplices, escaped from Spandau prison to London; in January of the following year, Johanna and their four children joined him there. Although their political activities were not yet at an end, this overview based on Bunzel's two opening chapters provides sufficient context for many of Gottfried's poems and Johanna's songs.

In the next three chapters of the book, Bunzel examines Kinkel's Lieder by subject category (love songs, political songs, and songs in praise of nature), the majority of which were completed during the period Kinkel lived in Bonn and Berlin. (After the couple escaped to London, Johanna's efforts were directed primarily to domestic du-

ties and teaching.) Within these three major categories, two types of works are evident: those directed to commercial success with simple melodies and accompaniment to appeal to an amateur market and those where Johanna's pianistic abilities were given freer rein.

In Chapter 3, the love songs are divided according to approximate date of composition, which lends itself to explaining them in autobiographical terms. "For Kinkel, music served as a means of self-expression, a way of socializing and relaxation, and an inspiration mediator between herself and her second husband."³ From a more encompassing perspective, the author claims that Kinkel's love songs "arose out of a psychological motivation"⁴ and reflect events and emotions in her own life: the early songs her unhappy relationship and a longing for love; her setting of texts focused on the Rhineland to her attachment to home; and, throughout her Lieder composition, her personal "fears, doubts, and sorrows."⁵

The political songs are organized by type: Rhineland settings, socio-political criticism, political optimism, etc. The undercurrent of nationalism so prevalent in this period permeates many of the song texts, most of which were either by Heinrich Heine or Gottfried Kinkel. Most of Johanna's Lieder settings are strophic or modified strophic, where it is often the accompaniment instead of the melody that changes. An exception lies in her duets, where a through-composed setting is more logical.

The songs in praise of nature represent the Romantic aesthetic of returning to a simpler world, which arose in response to an increasingly urban existence. These texts predictably emphasize longing, contemplation, nostalgia, and release from everyday stressors. Some also incorporate nationalist tendencies, e.g., emphasizing a heroic past or a romanticized view of history and of foreign lands.

The last numbered chapter, emphasizing Kinkel's compositional aesthetics, is a welcome inclusion. The epilogue is especially beneficial in supplying a concise critique of Kinkel's style in context. Bunzel concludes, and rightly so, that "perhaps Kinkel was a woman of her own time in so far as she did not publish her large-scale stage works but focused on popular genres, always with one eye to marketability and her image as a nineteenth-century female composer and performer."⁶

There is no question that this volume is an important addition to the published scholarly literature on Johanna Kinkel, particularly as it places her in the context of nineteenth-century aesthetics, social expectations as they pertain to gender, and the political environment of nation building and im-

proving human rights. Bunzel has set for herself a formidable task to examine individually Kinkel's more than seventy Lieder, including their texts and translations, and placing them in historical and personal context. The results are admirable and also bring to light some points that would well warrant a second edition.

While there is always a danger of becoming overly repetitive when analyzing such a large body of repertoire, a more balanced discussion of both text and music for each song (or group of songs) could result in a better understanding of the alignment of Kinkel's music with the meaning of the poetry. The author's attempt to interpret some of the texts as autobiographical might also be expanded; perhaps a chapter devoted to these connections could also provide clarity into the larger span of repertoire designed for friends and acquaintances in the salon setting. A second edition and more expansive volume could also permit more introductory information and explanation of methodology to situate the reader along the way, for instance in the section of Chapter 6 titled "Recourses to previous compositional techniques," which begins immediately with an overview of various settings of Goethe's "An den Mond."

These suggestions should not be interpreted as diminishing the importance of Bunzel's work. Her efforts are to be highly commended as the beginning of what is hoped will be a continuing body of scholarship on Johanna Kinkel, an artist at once typical of the nineteenth-century woman and her restricted opportunities yet atypical in her involvement with arts administration and revolutionary politics.

Judith Mabary

Notes:

1. Anja Bunzel, *The Songs of Johanna Kinkel: Genesis, Reception, Context* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK: The Boydell Press, 2020), 1.
2. Stanley Zucker, "German Women and the Revolution of 1848: Kathinka Zitz-Halein and the Humania Association," *Central European History* 13, no. 3 (9-1-1980), 251, quoted in Anja Bunzel, "Johanna Kinkel's Political Art Songs as a Contribution to the Socio-Cultural Identity of the German Democratic Movement during the Late 1840s," *Focus on German Studies* 22 (2015), 8.
3. Bunzel, *The Songs of Johanna Kinkel*, 45.
4. *Ibid.*, 87.
5. *Ibid.*, 88.
6. *Ibid.*, 243.

Waving Farewell. Naxos 8.574144 (2021). University of Michigan Orchestra, Kenneth Kiesler; Nicholas Phan; Amy I-Lin Chen

This first commercial recording of Vítězslava Kaprálová's orchestral works outside the Czech Republic, made in 2015 during the University of Michigan's Kaprálová Festival, opens with a brilliant short *Prélude de Noël*, her last completed orchestral work, broadcast, under her baton, to occupied Czechoslovakia from Paris on Christmas Eve 1939. The *Prélude* appears as a triptych in which a peaceful night-before-Christmas domestic interior is framed by scenes of revelling carollers travelling excitedly through rushing snow, orchestrated in a detailed yet folksy style similar to that of the *Suita Rustica* (one of the 3 major orchestral works by Kaprálová not included in this disc).

Kaprálová's *Military Sinfonietta* was the piece that put her on the international stage, at the 1938 ISCM festival in London. This 1937 work was a celebration of Czechoslovakia's rearmament and the 1936 mobilisation plan to counter the growing threat from Nazi Germany, and it shows that Kaprálová's talent easily extended beyond personal expression. It is, though including some abrupt and dissonant modernist elements, an accessible and memorable composition; its militarism is dynamic, modern, and free from bombast. Kaprálová's harmonic and melodic exposition here is tightly and brilliantly contrapuntal, a reminder that her composition teacher Vítězslav Novák was a proponent of Richard Strauss's technique, her mastery of which facilitated the swift transitions of mood and timing in her work, the bespoke fusion of Late Romanticism, Czechoslovak folk elements, and French, Russian and African-American innovations one can hear in Kaprálová's music representative of inter-war Czech attitudes.

The orchestral song *Smutný večer* (*Sad Evening*), discovered by Karla Hartl in 2006, is a standout, and dovetails perfectly with the album's title track, the better-known *Sbohem a šáteček* (*Waving Farewell*). The wandering tonality of the introductory chords, once met by a plucked bass, reminds me of a late Billy Holiday arrangement. A shift through whole-tone intervals brings us to a fruitfully tonal aria-like passage; the tonal ground is always shifting to match and colour the meaning of Kaprálová's poem, as it also does in the brightly coloured, expressionistic *Sbohem a šáteček*. Tenor Nicholas Phan brings a welcome intimacy to his presentation of both songs.

Suite en Miniature is a 1935 orchestral reworking of Kaprálová's Opus 1 piano suite (1931) towards some rather different effects, first profound, then tuneful and elegant, with emerging passion, with an ethos which reminds me of Prokofiev's 1944 *Cinderella* suite, minus the sarcasm. These are strong pieces, and the first, "Praeludium," is the "slow movement for string orchestra" in Kaprálová's oeuvre. The retitled "Pastorale" achieves its new character through orchestration wherein horn notes echo amongst intertwining woodwinds; the orchestration expands across the four pieces with the final "Menuetto" adding percussion to a grander version of what, in its original piano incarnation, had borne an uncanny and instructive resemblance to *In The Dark*, the final piano work composed (also in 1931) by American modern jazz pioneer Bix Beiderbecke, taking us instead us towards something of the passion of the Piano Concerto.

Others have compared Kaprálová's Piano Concerto in D Minor, op 7 (1935), played here with both understanding and perfect technique by Amy I-Lin Chen, with its better-known contemporaries, but, except insofar as Kaprálová was "aware of the competition" it is hard to detect any similarities – the only obvious link-of-influence, is, in the final movement, with Stravinsky's *Petrushka*, which we are reminded began life as a concert piece for piano and orchestra. As is often the case with Kaprálová, a valid comparison seems to me to be developments that occurred after her death; her idiom in the Concerto's first movement anticipating the development of film music, that most living form of late-romanticism. The introduction is an example of her ability to condense a musical emotion so that it can be felt immediately, without any softening up process; the orchestral ethos is one of swelling, rhapsodic grandeur, emotion piled on emotion, and if we apply the usual "conflict" reading of the concerto, the piano is swept up in this emotion, doubts it in tonally vague undermining of its harmonies, mocks its conventions (most brilliantly when a *moto perpetuo* motif grabs our attention – and is quickly snatched away again), gets distracted by more modern ideas, but, like the listener, is willingly swept away again on the orchestral swell of passion. The second movement begins with a characteristic low, slow and sad climbing melody, which is then capped with soft, almost jazzy piano turns, and soon joined by the threatening rumble of a gathering storm on the tympani. This short middle movement segues into the finale abruptly and semi-programmatically – a thunderclap breaks the storm clouds, and instantly a folksy piano rhythm dances, like the raindrops of a summer shower, in the rays of the sun – surely one of the most effective transitions in the orchestral repertoire. The finale then returns us to the romantic ethos, contrasting this with the folk dance, and introducing, in short solo inserts, the most unambiguously jazzy piano phrases in Kaprálová's oeuvre.

Comparing the present recording with the much-loved Czech versions of these works has strongly confirmed that Glenn Gould's 1966 dictum, "The North American ... sound strives for an analytical detail which eludes the Central European displacement"¹ is still current; one hears much here that one has never really heard before; and yet, in its defence, the Central European displacement of sound can, sometimes, convey the *gestalt* of a work with an immediacy which eludes the North American. Howsoever that may be, the University of Michigan Orchestra, conducted by Kenneth Kiesler, plays with the exuberance these exceptionally vital works deserve, and the soloists excel: the sleeve notes, by Timothy Cheek, are also satisfyingly complete.

George Henderson

1. Glenn Gould, "The Prospects of Recording," *High Fidelity*, April 1966.

frauenkomponiert 2021 / festival report by Karla Hartl

In the spring of 2018, I travelled to Basel for my first (and the festival's third) edition of the *frauenkomponiert* festival. I still remember the four days filled with organ music and chamber music concerts, some of them most memorable. One event, however, the orchestral concert featuring Agnes Tyrrell's Overture and Amy Beach's *Gaelic* Symphony, performed in the company of works by two contemporary composers, Alma Deutscher and Heidi Baader-Nobs, really stands out in my memory. Conducted by Jessica Horsley and her orchestra *L'anima giusta*, both based in Basel, it was a true climax of this trailblazer festival, which was at that time, and still is today, one of the very few in the world promoting both chamber and orchestral music composed by women. I remember mentioning the Basel concert, the festival, and its appreciative audience in my interview for Czech Radio 3 later that year. We were discussing contemporary festivals and their lack of risk taking and sense of adventure when it comes to the untrodden territory of women's music. In that interview, I praised the Basel festival highly for venturing into this still largely unknown repertoire and for promoting not only the contemporary women composers but also the historical ones—all those forgotten women whose art can provide a much needed context for women's music of today. Indeed, in Basel, the women composers are not only doing well but they thrive.

And how the festival has grown in just six years! From a one-day event in 2015 to a three-day programming in March and ten additional festival days in June 2021! Despite the pandemic, the festival was able to present some of its concerts to a live audience; and, also owing to the pandemic, to music lovers everywhere, for some of the performances were streamed live via the festival's YouTube channel.

So let's sample this year's festival edition:

The June 6 orchestral concert, entitled *Pioneers of the Century*, featured four trailblazer women composers of the last century, Polish Grazyna Bacewicz, British Ruth Gipps and Dorothy Howell, and American Florence Price, as well as the contemporary Swiss composer Cécile Marti. Four of the five works featured in the program were Swiss premieres.

To the great delight of the performers—conductor Jessica Horsley and the Basel Sinfonietta—the event was catered to a live audience; it was also live streamed to the world via YouTube. The BBC Concert Orchestra was originally scheduled to play, but owing to the pandemic, was unable to participate in the festival, so the Basel Sinfonietta stepped in and saved the day quite admirably. The concert opened fittingly with Grazyna Bacewicz's energetic *Uvertura* (Overture), composed in 1943. Next came the centerpiece of the evening, Symphony No. 2, op. 30, in one movement, by Ruth Gipps, which was performed to perfection. Interestingly, the symphony has a connection to Basel—not only was the composer's mother from Basel, but at one point in the symphony, during *Tempo di Marcia*, the audience can also hear in the piccolos a musical reference to their

town's annual carnival *Basler Fasnacht*, before the symphony breaks its martial pace with a beautiful, pensive *Adagio*. The symphony was followed by a contemporary composition *Wave Trip*, from 2011, in which Cécile Marti experiments with the spectrum of sound, bringing the first half of the concert to a close. The second part of the program began with the delightful *Koong Shee Ballet*, from 1921. This work by Dorothy Howell, inspired by an old Chinese tale of forbidden love, was given an imaginative reading by the orchestra. The enterprising program ended strongly with *Ethiopia's Shadow in America*, a programmatic poem in three parts from 1932 by African American composer Florence Price. Written to commemorate the plight of those who fell victim to the slave trade in America, and their struggle to survive in a foreign land, the work was long considered lost until it resurfaced in 2009. It received its first hearing six years later in the United States; the Basel Sinfonietta's brilliant performance was the Swiss premiere of this deeply moving work. No surprise that this outstanding program was received with typical warmth and enthusiasm by the Basel audience.

The June 25 Chamber Music Concert, performed by the members of the "L'anima giusta" orchestra, presented two twentieth-century composers: Claude Arrieu and Thea Musgrave, and one historical composer—Louise Dumont Farrenc (1804–1875). The concert opened with Arrieu's five-movement Wind Quintet (flute, oboe, clarinet, horn, and bassoon), a joyful and playful piece that proved to be an instant audience pleaser. The program continued with a much more demanding work: *Space Play Concerto*, from 1974, for nine instruments, by Scottish composer Thea Musgrave. In this piece, players are to share the function of conductor, as each in turn leads the rest of the group. The piece was originally composed for the London Sinfonietta, so that each of that ensemble's brilliant players could have a chance to freely express their independent musical personalities—and *L'anima giusta* players did not hesitate to follow their example. The program ended with a historical piece—Nonet for string quartet & wind quintet in E-flat Major, op. 38, by Louise Farrenc. This brilliant nineteenth-century composition had a personal significance for the composer, who was the only female professor of the Paris Conservatoire at the time she composed it. As the story goes, after its hugely successful premiere, Farrenc confronted the director of the Conservatoire, Daniel Auber, about how much less she was being paid than her male colleagues. He immediately agreed to raise her salary to parity.

The *frauenkomponiert* Festival, with its unique programming, still occupies a solitary place among the many European festivals. Yet, it has been highly successful, and continues to be as relevant as it was at the time of its inauguration.

VÍTĚZSLAVA KAPRÁLOVÁ



TEMATICKÝ KATALOG

Vítězslava Kaprálová: Tematický katalog skladeb a korespondence s nakladateli. (Thematic Catalogue of the Works and Correspondence with Publishers.) Prague: Czech Radio, 2020. 1st edition—R317. ISBN 978-0-9940425-5-2. 384 pages, 163 incipits. The publication is divided into four main sections: The Introduction focuses on Kaprálová's legacy in the context of Czech music, the status of her autographs, the first lists of works, both published and unpublished, and her publishers. Thematic Catalogue of the Works is preceded by a brief introduction to the structure of the catalogue and a list of abbreviations used. The catalogue proper is further divided into five subsections: Main Catalogue; Compositions from Childhood and Juvenilia; Torsos; Lost and Unrealized Compositions; and Dubious Works. The catalogue is annotated and the section concludes with endnotes. The Correspondence with Publishers section presents the composer's correspondence with HMUB, Melantrich and Universal Edition (London). The last section of the book includes the editor's notes, bibliography, lists of published scores, recordings and other lists, and two indexes. While the publication is in Czech, the numerous incipits and scoring use Italian musical terms, thus making it relevant also to non-Czech readers.

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