Volume 21 Issue 2

Summer 2023

The Kapralova Society Journal

A Journal of Women in Music

Hacking the Canon: Cataloguing the Excluded

Holly Mathieson



Special points of interest:

Cataloguing the excluded

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I am thinking about programming. No, not that kind – the other kind. Concert programming. The jigsaw puzzle of creativity and responsibility, ambition and tradition, idealism and pragmatism, which forms a crucial part of planning any live or recorded music event.

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As a conductor, it fills many satisfying hours of my working week – preparing the meat-and-three-veg variety of evening concerts over a season, commissioning new work, devising digital and education projects, planning community work and proposing viable recordings. I enjoy it so much that I even engage in ad hoc consulting to help other organisations with the task, particularly if they want ideas for branching out from the canonic European repertoire or integrating community participation into their work.

Conductors share the task of programming with the creative brains of orchestral and opera administrations – heads of artistic planning teams, wryly observed in a recent conversation with one such individual as the frustrated conductors of orchestral administration. They tend to share our interest in serving up an ever more varied musical diet, but are often tempered by the restraints of departmental budgets, stage dimensions, the allocation of musicians' weekly service hours and the caution or confidence of their respective marketing teams.

Like most conductors and artistic planners, I have spreadsheets full of musicological data dumps that help me plan concerts: names, dates, titles, orchestrations, publishers, durations, recording and video links, genres, errata, useful programming, etc. And, like my col-

leagues, I often find myself obsessively truffling for works by composers who have slid off the radar (or, indeed, were never within the limited bounds of the grid): composers born into times, places or politics that barred them from a public artistic life on account of their gender, ethnicity, ill health or family income; and composers who enjoyed success in their lifetime but whose works, for whatever reason, did not pass the gateposts into the historic canon.

I seek out music I think is very good; I seek out music I think is not very good. I try not to dismiss music that deserves the chance to be reappraised by different audiences with different tastes; and I am particularly sentimental about fundamentally good and interesting music that the composer never had the chance to orchestrate properly, either through lack of opportunity to develop their skills, or lack of a second (or indeed first) performance of the piece in their lifetime.

But still, despite our interest in giving performance time to these works, and despite the righteous clamour for equity in classical music accelerated by Black Lives Matter, #MeToo and #WeShallNot-BeRemoved, the concert programmes and album releases around the globe remain predominantly, and resolutely, exclusive — in the most pejorative sense of the word.

It is very easy to adopt a sort of newworld, hash-tagged optimism about shaking up our repertoire and working more inclusively in classical music, and that energy certainly has a role to play in lubricating the ca. 300-hundred-year axles of professional symphonic tradition. But the best intentions in the world will be short-

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lived, if we ignore the rather dull structural issues that stymy them.

When it comes to programming, we rely heavily on our previous experience and our audience's proven tastes, meaning that from the outset we are already biased toward works that we, and they, already know (or, at a push, short works that sound very like them, written by people whose surnames sound familiar). We also invariably have marketing and planning deadlines chasing our heels, especially in the era of snap COVID-alert level changes and self-isolating artists, increasing the chances we'll fall back on tried-and-true concert formats and repertoire. Digital technology, however, plays a crucial role in helping us claw our way out of this self-referencing programming loop, and program creatively on the run.

From volunteer-run YouTube accounts posting recordings of works by lesser-known composers (I wonder how many planning departments around the world owe prolific YouTuber@KuhlauDilfeng2 a fractional salary?) and IMSLP's volunteer-run, out-of-copyright music sharing platform, which has democratized access to a vast array of music for amateur and professional music-making around the globe (donate here!), to love-the-concept-but-hate-the-economics streaming services like Spotify, and Naxos' seemingly bottomless discography of the obscure and out of fashion, we are increasingly indebted to point-and-click digital resources to flesh out our programming ambitions.

In order for these works to be available online, they must already have been typeset, published, printed, recorded and distributed. That is several mighty hurdles already cleared. But, even from that privileged starting point, they still won't make it to the final concert schedule without the aid of a well-maintained catalogue entry.

Take for instance, Elizabeth Maconchy's Nocturne for orchestra – a brilliant orchestral work, ideal for a standard symphony audience, by one of the UK's most prolific and respected 20th Century composers. I only know of it thanks to YouTube's auto-play function, and the superb Italian YouTube account, TheWelleszCompany. Bless them.

Not surprisingly, I immediately wanted to program the piece, and took to Google to seek out the three most crucial pieces of data needed for embedding it in a draft program: duration (again, thank you YouTube), orchestration, publisher. No work can be programmed without these nuggets of information. A recording or video of the piece is also a huge help in convincing orchestral administrations to take a punt, although our increasing reliance on them keeps more obscure works off the menu. The other columns (composition date, program note, etc.) are all useful tools later in the process, but not essential.

I had no deadlines, so could take my time searching; were I in an orchestral planning team in the era of covid, I could have allocated perhaps 5-10 minutes to the task before having to cut my losses and move on. At the time (around 2017, I think) a Google search returned the You-Tube link that had inspired my hunt; some slightly dated biographical references to Maconchy, without comprehensive worklists; one amateur program note for the piece, without orchestration or publisher details; and links to a cluster of publishing companies, all of which held the rights to a subsection of her works, but none of which seemed to distribute the Nocturne. About three Google search pages in, I found a spurious instrumentation listing in a PDF of a hard-copy catalogue. This was a major orchestral work by one of the UK's most prolific and respected composers, and it was ghosting me.

In the intervening years, the cataloguing and digitalisation of Maconchy's works has improved significantly, so I decided to repeat the search as I wrote this article. As of today (22 July, 2021), the search returns a much fuller list, though still slightly less helpful than you would expect:

- A very well-written, general interest blog about the piece, [https://classicalexburns.com/2019/ 10/30/elizabeth-maconchy-nocturne-fororchestra-amidst-the-nighttime/], but again missing any information useful to a programming team. It lists the composition date as 1950;
- The trusty YouTube link that spawned my initial inquiry into the piece (which, as I write, has 11,868 views. Not bad stats for a barely documented 20th Century work by an Englishwoman). It lists the composition date as 1950/51, suggesting there was a revision a year later;
- The same YouTube link embedded in a page at the British Music Collection https://british musiccollection.org.uk/files/elizabethmaconchy-nocturne-19501951;
- A digital score of the handwritten manuscript, uploaded by one of her publishers, Ricordi, which includes the orchestration page (Hurrah! But can someone please make inscriptions of her orchestral and string ensemble works; they are barely legible);
- A Wikipedia entry about Maconchy, which lists the composition date as 1950–51;
- A Jstor article about Maconchy, behind a paywall (I didn't bother);

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- An entry for the work on Musicalics (without orchestration, and with 1951 as the composition date);
- Maconchy's works list on the Ricordi website, which has an entry for the piece confirming 1950–51 as the composition date, but provides an incomplete instrumentation list: the celeste is missing, an expensive instrument to hire and not usually played by a salaried player, and there is no mention of the 3rd wind players playing cor anglais, Bass clarinet and contra bassoon these omissions have serious budget repercussions if they are only discovered when the score and parts arrive;
- A listing for the work on the *Daniel's Catalogue* listing the composition date(s) as 1951–52, but with the correct duration and orchestration behind a paywall, and listing Lengnick as the publisher (they are the original publisher of the work, but sold their entire catalogue to UMPG Classical in 2015, who now distribute the work under the Ricordi label);
- A link to the score (again with Lengnick as the publisher) on the pay-to-use digital platform, Nkoda.

So, a vast improvement since 2017, but still a frustrating number of inconsistencies and question marks for anyone programming the work, especially given this is a major work by a comparatively mainstream composer, her gender notwithstanding. The effort required to gain a full picture of the piece's suitability for a program (musically, financially, logistically) ran the risk of thwarting the incentive to program it. And what does this scattergun approach portend for cataloguing the hidden gems, the symphonies not finished, the manuscripts not discovered, the composers omitted?

In the last ten years there has been a proliferation of individuals and organisations attempting to fill those long-empty gaps on music library shelves through research, advocacy and cataloguing of works by underrepresented composers. Discussions with the database maintainers reveal that, without exception, they do this work entirely on a volunteer basis, and often on their own. Not surprisingly then, they often focus on a specific demographic or genre of interest. The first few of these niche, micro-catalogues to spring up focused on the many thousands of missing works by women in our general history of composition, but in recent years these have been supplemented by catalogues and websites focusing on the equally vast omission of composers of colour. Due to the immense personal commitment to these individual databases, there is a slightly terri-

torial attitude among some of the maintainers, with a reluctance from some to share the fruit of their labour with other cataloguers.

While this mushrooming of resources is, without question, preferable to their absence, the lack of connectivity between them, and inconsistency in entry fields results in both a diffusion of information (which inevitably leads to discrepancy), and a lack of rigour, not least due to the lack of funding and support for their dogged maintainers. We have two dozen hard-working partial resources, rather than several efficient and comprehensive ones.

It would be hypocritical of me to argue for centralization, or even standardization, of these records, having just noted the restrictive boundaries of canonicalization. However, I do think we could make far smarter use of software and system design to ensure that the work of these cataloguers and researchers can be put to greater use by more end-users, and that the variables of catalogue items – discographies, external URLs and publisher details – can be monitored, if not maintained, by automatic updates across a network of databases.

Any successful exercise in system design begins with a clear definition of probable user intent, and while I concede my reasons for referencing a catalogue may not align with the maintainer's reason for creating it, I don't think I am being too presumptuous to assume that if someone goes to the effort of cataloguing unknown composers, at least part of their intent is that more people will become familiar with the music itself. The catalogue design, therefore, ought to include fields that facilitate performance of the works.

There is undoubtedly value in knowing that Zenobia Powell Perry, a composer, pianist and social justice activist of African American and Muscogee heritage born in 1908, composed several orchestral works in the first half of the twentieth century, but that value is amplified exponentially if we can actually locate (easily and quickly), play and record those works.

Mega-resource, Institute for Composer Diversity is one of the newest contributors to cataloguing these works. Nonetheless, in a short space of time they have managed to become the most comprehensive, thanks to Institute Director Rob Deemer's prior work on a database of women composers, cooperative relationships with other database maintainers, and proactive engagement with living composers.

They are also – crucially – the most well-utilised in the professional industry. Alongside the *Daniels Orchestral Catalogue*, the Composer Diversity Database is now a common-use resource for mainstream programmers. It's not surprising, given the unequivocal statement on their

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"about" page regarding their intended end-users: "the audiences and students who will engage with the music, the conductors, performers, and educators who serve to bring that music to those audiences and students, and the composers themselves." To that end, they have designed the UI around the end-user rather than the data, and triangulate their three comprehensive databases with analysis of global programming trends and ideation to support more diverse and inclusive repertoire decisions. A complete and up-to-date entry in the database includes every piece of information needed to program the work.

However, despite working within the framework of a research institute within a university (The State University of New York at Fredonia), at the time of writing all of the work extending and maintaining the three databases is run entirely on a volunteer basis by Rob Deemer and a team of students from the School of Music.

The other major catalogues of underrepresented composers may be smaller in scope, but their administrators work just as tirelessly, without financial or technical support. Several database maintainers I spoke to learnt basic programming (of the web and software variety!) to build their systems, and spoke of the impossible task of upgrading their skills and tech stacks to keep the database active and functional, without finance or support. For many, the restrictions of spare time and access to information meant their database was limited to static biographical details only, a valuable historiographical record but little practical use to concert planners. All agreed the never-ending task of sourcing and maintaining accurate URL links to recordings and publishers was all but impossible as a hobbyist cataloguer.

So, how might the tech community maximize the efficiency and accuracy of these databases and minimize the workload of those hoping to program the works they catalogue? I think perhaps it calls for a *hackathon*.

It is not a new idea. Music Community Lab (NYC) hosts a regular hackathon, Classical:NEXT held a Sibeliusthemed hackathon in 2015, and San Diego Opera has had 2 successful hackathons with significant prize money up for grabs and some phenomenally exciting submissions. Hacking is written into the DNA of the Karajan Institute. Outside the classical music industry, hackathons are a fertile and fun playground for coders to flex their muscles, scratch their creative itches, and give back to communities and industries that don't share in the fiscal resources of the tech giants.

So, how might we engage the tech community to help us maximize the efficiency and accuracy of these databases, and minimize the workload of those trying to program the works they document?

I am a baby coder, so cannot imagine the ways in which a developer might be able to help, but my first instinct would be to incorporate APIs, so that maintainers can automate the sharing of data with each other, rather than having to manually update the same fields across separate databases. It may be preferable to work in vanilla code, as much as possible, to minimize reliance on dependencies and libraries that might require updates or tweaks in the future, which would be beyond the budget of most of these catalogues. And perhaps a quick check of SEO and metadata on each site would also be useful, to ensure they are landing under the noses of their intended users. I am sure more experienced programmers would have more ideas to add to this bucket list. And for those of us lacking in THOSE programming skills, there are many ways we can contribute:

- If you feel an urge to start a database of underrepresented composers, pause for a second to consider whether that effort is not better spent helping expand or maintain an existing one. Or, at the very least, please consider building yours with a view to sharing the data with others who could benefit from it:
- Contact a database administrator from any of the catalogues below and offer to check and replace the URL links, as expired recording and publisher links are one of the most common problems. Remember to check for geo-locking on YouTube links;
- If the catalogue has been useful, especially if you are a professional organization, see if you can donate to support the work of the maintainer or, at the very least, credit their work in some way;
- Please explore the links below they are gold-mines of information and resources, and testament to many thousands of hours of passion and dedication. If you are not in a position to help in a practical way, the best way you can show your appreciation is to use them.

Inventory of online databases

(Only the most comprehensive <u>and</u> open-access lists have been included in the list below—eds.)

And We Were Heard: Databases for diverse composers of wind band and orchestral music. https://www.andwewereheard.org/databases

The Black Music History Library: A living collection of books, articles, documentaries, series, podcasts and more

about the Black origins of traditional and popular music dating from the 18th century to present day. Resources are organized chronologically and by genre for ease of browsing. https://blackmusiclibrary.com/Library

Classical Queer: is a space for Queer+ classical musicians to tell their stories in their own words. It includes a database of composers who self-identify as Queer+ and lists what province they live and work in, as well as their discipline and contact information. https://www.classical-queer.com/

Composers Diversity Collective: We exist to eliminate the industry's challenge to find culturally diverse music creators, music supervisors, sound engineers and musicians, to increase our own awareness of each other, and to dispel misconceptions about the stylistic range of any minority composer. https://www.composersdiversity-collective.org.

Donne: Women in music: is a charitable foundation whose mission is to make a positive change in the fight against gender inequality within the music industry. Our main goal is to celebrate, advance, and amplify women in music so that they are seen, heard, and appreciated for their talent so that they can leave a legacy of inspiration for future generations. https://donne-uk.org/

Institute for Composer Diversity: housed at the State University of New York at Fredonia, the Institute for Composer Diversity is dedicated to the celebration, education, and advocacy of music created by composers from historically underrepresented groups through database resources and programming analysis. https://www.composerdiversity.com.

The Kapralova Society: Women in Music Internet Project: The mission of this Canadian non-profit music society based in Toronto is to promote interest in women in music through research, education, and special projects that also include comprehensive databases of women composers and women conductors. http://www.kapralova.org/INTPROJECT.htm

A Modern Reveal: A resource celebrating and promoting the work of historical women composers, to date the organization has published an anthology of Italian Songs and Arias, and an anthology of early Latin music. https://www.amodernreveal.com/

Musicalics: Women composers: A collection of women composers, including names and biographical details. https://musicalics.com/en/female-composers

SOUNZ: Maori composer listings at the Centre for NZ Music: The composer database of every work written by NZ composers is searchable by Maori heritage, to limit findings to Tangata Whenua composers. Includes orchestrations, links to recordings, and direct purchase/hire options. https://sounz.org.nz/search/people?utf8=% E2%9C%93&q=&fuzzy=true&role%5B%5D=M%C4% 81ori+Compo ser&sort=relevance.

About the author:

New Zealand-born Holly Mathieson is the Music Director of Symphony Nova Scotia and Co-Artistic Director, with her husband Jon Hargreaves, of the Nevis Ensemble, a project aiming to take music out of the concert hall and into isolated and marginalized communities. She currently splits her time between Scotland and Canada. When she's not conducting, she writes about the classical music industry, software engineering, and digital technology in her blog, Scordatura; contributes to industry podcasts, panels, and columns; and works as a consultant for inclusive programming and community-embedded project design for music organisations.

A version of this article was originally published on scordatura.io on July 30, 2021. https://www.scordatura.io/post/missing-pieces-hacking-the-canon.



On March 21, 2020, German conductor and pianist Eva Meitner launched her miniature concert series "Cocos" (Corona Concerts), recording a short piece of music on her toy piano and uploading it as a video on her YouTube channel. Since Coco 406, the project has been continued with larger intervals between the videos (1–2 per week). At of September 28, 2022, the project comprised 526 videos, and the list continues to grow.

Cocos' repertoire consists primarily of classical music, but chanson, tango, folk songs, pop and new music have also been included. Many of the Cocos recordings are first recordings and rediscoveries of forgotten works. Well-known works have also been played in between, so that the program remains varied and attractive for large audiences. The Cocos playlists are thematically sorted: Female Composers Etudes Project; Polish Music; French Music; Cocos' Christmas Calendar 2020; and Cocos' Christmas Calendar 2021. Three different toy pianos are used to record the cocos, occasionally combined and played at the same time (left hand piano 1, right hand piano 2). From Coco 150 onward, some of the Cocos are also designed as multiple screen videos: the toy piano is usually combined with a regular piano, but 4-hand works are completely created in this way (see the 3-and 4-hands Cocos Playlist).

Maria Vallès Sostres in the Catalan press: Reviewing the short life of a child prodigy to promote greater equality in a coeducational setting

Elia Sanaleuterio and Sandra Soler

Historical and Musical Context

The twentieth century was a period in which changes and innovations in the world of the arts took place at great speed. Several events, such as World War I (1914–1918), the Russian Revolution (1917) and World War II (1939–1945), greatly altered the consciousness of the general public. In Spain, the country suffered a devastating Civil War (1936–1939) which brought about severe political, economic, and social consequences.

In the musical world, there did not exist a single unified idea about how to compose, or which theories should be followed. There were supporters of different schools of thought, such as those who followed the impressionist movement; others who were considered expressionists; those who followed the principles of the Second Viennese School; and finally, a group of composers who continued to use methods of composition from the previous century. In short, the twentieth century began with extraordinarily rich and varied musical concepts. A redefinition of aesthetic ideals relating to formal art was also evolving during this time, leading to a rise in movements which all had a common nexus: the desire to break away from the past.

One of the greatest changes which took place during the twentieth century was the inclusion and active participation of women in social, political and economic life. As the century wore on, women continued to flourish in other, newer areas. Their presence became common in theatres, cinemas, tea rooms, and even in social clubs, which, at the start of the century, were only accessible to men. During the twenties, and as a consequence of the impact of World War I on the role of women, those from certain sectors of society had the opportunity to travel abroad and were able to access progressive European publications. These women were able to adopt new attitudes and behaviours, distancing themselves from the idea of the traditional woman.

Women and the Catalan Press

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, the news media industry began to grow into a medium of mass communication. In Catalonia, the so-called golden age of the press took place between 1890 and 1920. It should be noted that the magazine *L'Avenç* and the newspapers *La Vanguardia* and the *Barcelona Daily Paper*, among other publications, were of a more anarchic type. Music critics in the news media emerged during the first few decades of the twentieth century. One of the first was the musicologist and critic Joaquim Pena Costa¹ (1873–1944), a pioneer ideolog of modern music in Catalonia. During this time, other specialized magazines

would surface and develop, including the prestigious *Revista Musical Catalana*.²

Several magazines served as a means to encourage and promote the female artist.³ With this main objective, the monthly magazine *Feminal*,⁴ a personal project of the writer and musicologist Carme Karr i Alfonsetti, appeared in 1907 in Barcelona as a supplement of the newspaper *Ilustració Catalana*. *Feminal* was published uninterruptedly for ten years, until the beginning of World War I. The last issue of this initial run appeared on December 30, 1917, but the magazine resurfaced once again in 1925. Its purpose, as made clear by the following excerpt from the first edition, was to reclaim the role of women in a society that was becoming increasingly more open:

It seems convenient to feminize [woman] elevating her intellect... in order for her to become the true dream companion of the intellectual and entrepreneurial man... We believe that the time has come to move forward with the intellect of our women. We hope that by cultivating her spirit it will not be necessary to forcefully drink from far off fountains.... From those more progressive countries from which breaths of feminism originate, we are unable to receive it all; we must make a selection in order to allow it to develop in what is now Catalonia, and this selection must be done gradually.⁵

The field of music was not excluded from this line of thought, as *Feminal* covered the careers of several female instrumentalists, singers and composers. Some issues of *Feminal* even included pieces by female composers. Twenty-two percent of the published musical repertoire was composed by women, while the works of male composers accounted for the remaining seventy-eight percent. During the final decades of the nineteenth century, a great number of European women had begun to claim their political rights. In this context, Karr's work promoted the new ideal woman, one who was able to read, listen to, and enjoy good music.

In addition to publishing various types of musical compositions, another objective of *Feminal* was to encourage young women to participate in all fields, whether educational, cultural, or social (including those concerning women's suffrage). The magazine thus sought to foster the belief that the rights of women were equal to those of men, in addition to addressing other issues that might interest its readers: politics, art, sports, cinema, fashion, and so forth. For the Catalans, as well as for the inhabitants of other parts of Spain and wherever else the magazine was available, it

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filled a gap that the conservative magazines avoided.

Musical Coeducation

Thanks to these types of publications, we are aware of the impact of women's work on various fields, including music performance. Reviewing these publications from a didactic perspective for inclusion in current musical training provides a means of raising awareness of the obstacles that women had to face to achieve recognition of their careers, as well as an opportunity to compare the past with the situation and possibilities of the present. In addition, examples of these women's lives are motivating to students as musical references.

Thus, we propose initiating students into newspaper library research by providing them with digital copies or paper facsimiles that they can explore and study. Organized in groups, they can extract information about relevant women musicians and will also become aware of the disproportionate coverage of female and male musicians. In order to achieve truly coeducational classes, it is also necessary to reflect upon the causes of this disproportion. In addition, as María Elena Simón explains, coeducation implies working explicitly on equality. That is to say, it is not simply a question of creating what is known as a mixed-gender school, nor is it a question of limiting ourselves to educating *in* equality: it is necessary to educate *for* equality, hoping to attain it as a civic goal and educational objective of the first order. This is the only way that our coexistence can be made healthy and truly fair.⁶

Given that the problems of sexism and inequality in interpersonal relationships between men and women originate and are formed during childhood and adolescence, experts propose that the solution to these problems lies in coeducation in educational centres. As María del Carmen Rodríguez Menéndez explains:

The school alone cannot solve the inequalities that society itself generates and feeds, but it is an essential task to reduce them. In this sense, the first step that the school must take is to become a truly coeducational institution.⁷

Unfortunately, in present-day schools, there is still a large gap between the normative ideology and coeducational practice; and therefore, some strategies are needed to address this gap.⁸

One of the performers who conquered the Catalan media mentioned in the previous section was the young pianist Maria Vallès. Her training and short career are described in the next section, with the aim of introducing a female reference for musical education with whom girls and adolescents can identify. Because she died when she was only nineteen, the perspective from which we examine her achievements is precisely that of a girl and adolescent. Even so, Maria Vallès had an admirable career as a pianist, which was documented by the media of her time, and has also been the focus of recent scholarly research.

A Young Pianist: María Vallès

María Vallès Sostres was born on October 15, 1917, in Mequinensa (Zaragoza). Like many students of systematic education in conservatories or official music schools, she received musical training from a very young age, first under the tutelage of her father, the pianist Leopoldo Vallès, a native of the same town. In addition to giving piano lessons, her father used to entertain the clients of the El Jardín ('The Garden') café with his piano recitals and also played the piano for the silent films that were shown in the Aragonese town at the time. Years later, the Vallès family moved to Barcelona, where María continued her musical studies as a pupil of the renowned Barcelona pianist and pedagogue Joan Molinari i Galceran.

There she made her debut in concerts reviewed by the press, which gave an account of her style and repertoire. Such reviews, if combined in a didactic sequence that makes the objectives explicit, can be motivating and inspiring for conservatory students, especially girls, from whom such examples are often hidden in education, typically due to ignorance or lack of interest among teachers.

The following article, published in *La Publicitat* on July 10, 1929, discusses in detail the piano interpretation of the young María Vallès, as well as the pieces she performed:

During a private concert which took place last Monday at the Palau de la Musica Catalana, the extremely young pianist, María Vallès, was presented to a group of known musicians and music critics, a revelation which clearly was a true success.

During the session this past Monday, we listened to sonatas from Mozart and Scarlatti, a Nocturne and an étude of Chopin, a variety of musical compositions by Schubert, Grieg, [and] Albéniz. . . . A full program of a concert pianist, which would have been unreasonable for many, was played by María Vallès with the most charming ease and accomplishment, maintaining at all times the attention of those who were listening.

One month later, in July 1929, the *Revista Musical Catalana* reported:

The final musical concert of the current series held at the Palau de la Música Catalana was offered by an extremely young pianist. María Vallès, an eleven-year-old girl, revealed herself to have the strong artistic temperament and the exceptional cultivated skills of the difficult art of piano playing. Her interpretations of Mozart, Scarlatti, Chopin, Schubert, Grieg, and Albéniz revealed a clear and sharp sensibility worthy of the most enthusiastic encouragement.

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In September 1929, at the *Primer Casino* in the Catalan town of Blanes, María Vallès offered another piano concert. She did not leave her audience unmoved. In the September 14, 1929 edition of *Recvll* magazine¹⁰ (no. 327), we read:

Last Tuesday, at the *Primer Casino*'s Ballroom, the young girl María Vallès offered a piano concert. Everyone who had more or less heard of this young eleven-year-old, with truly extraordinary musical talents, did not want to miss such a magnificent opportunity to hear her. They were not alone.

On November 30, 1929, *La Vanguardia* published another article in the section "Music and Theaters," in which María Vallès is mentioned:

Today, Saturday, at 7 o'clock in the evening, the announced piano recital by the prodigious eleven-year-old girl María Vallès, who is awakening great interest, will take place in the halls of the *Real Círculo Artístico*, where she will perform works by Mozart, Scarlatti, Beethoven, Schubert, Chopin, Grieg, and Albéniz.

One year after her initial success at the *Palau de la Música Catalana* and of the many subsequent concerts performed by her, of which the Catalan press provided a record, the young girl continued to mesmerize the public with her talent at the piano. Among her last performances mentioned in the press was that of June 14, 1932, at the *Palau de Pedralbes* in Barcelona. Among those present at the concert were the Regional Minister of the *Generalitat*, Mr. Gasol; the university professor Mr. Amorós; the secretary of the *Escola Normal de la Generalitat*, Mr. Sanz; the aforementioned Carme Karr i Alfonsetti, director of *Feminal*; a teacher at the *Escola de Magisteri Primari*, Ms. Cuscurita; and the representatives of the *Generalitat de Catalunya*, Mr. Puig, Mr. Ferreter and Mr. Sbert.

For the authors of these columns, Maria Vallès revealed a clear and acute sensitivity, worthy of the most enthusiastic encouragement. In light of her brilliant gifts and natural musical instinct, they predicted that when she had completed her musical studies, the young Vallès would undoubtedly achieve resounding success. However, as documented below, a fatal illness suffered at a young age eliminated that possibility.

Conclusion

Finding information about Maria Valles has been a somewhat arduous process, yet at the same time a rather gratifying one. News articles about her concerts, which took place in various concert halls throughout Catalunya from 1929 to 1936, were eventually discovered. The last article about one of her performances appeared in the 24 April 1937 issue of *La Vanguardia*. After many unsuccessful attempts, the final re-

cord of her life was located in the Barcelona Registry Office's Records of deaths:

Maria Valles died on June 14, 1937 at the age of 19 at the Catalunya General Hospital as a result of pneumonia. She is buried at the Poble Nou cemetery in Barcelona, niche 547 of the Department I, island 3 interior, a property of the family of her music professor Joan Molinari, as the said niche is registered under the name of Jospe Maria Costa Molinari and interred in it are deceased persons with the last name of Molinari.

In conclusion, this example of the young Catalan pianist from the early part of the twentieth century reveals the possibilities of the training and musical development of the time. While her appearance in the press provides evidence of the emerging interest in the work of women, reviewing these articles with music students today has additional didactic potential. Given the coeducational approach involved, it not only creates an opportunity to reflect on historical inequalities, but also the importance of recovering references to female musical figures of the past.

Notes

- ¹ Joaquim Pena created the magazine *Joventut* between 1900 and 1906. In 1901 he founded, together with the Catalan musicologist Felip Pedrell, the Wagnerian Association of which he became the first president.
- ²This Catalan publication was launched in January 1904 by the *Orfeó Català*. The publication disappeared in 1936 due to the Spanish Civil War, but it was revived in 1984, thanks to the impetus of the *Consorci del Palau de la Música Catalana*.
- ³ Aelwyn Pugh, Women in Music (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Sandra Soler Campo, Mujeres y música. Obstáculos vencidos y caminos por recorrer. Avances hacia la igualdad y metas por alcanzar en el campo de la composición, interpretación y dirección orquestal (Thesis, Tarragona: Universidad Rovira Virgili, 2017).
- ⁴The cover page of *Feminal* followed a design that was maintained until the end of the publication. The format would always be the same: at the top of the cover, there would be a fringe of floral illustrations which surrounded the title, and above the name *Feminal*. *Ilustració Catalana* was printed as a relief which could be seen in the inside of the cover of the magazine. The decorations, as well as the typeface, had a clearly modernist influence and were designed by Casademunt. Below the title were the date and the number of the issue. During its last year of publication, *Feminal* increased its number of pages in each issue and also changed certain aspects of its format.
- ⁵ Carmen Karr, "La nostra finalitat," *Feminal* 1 (1907): 4. All guotes are translated from the original Catalan.
- ⁶ María Elena Simón, *La igualdad también se aprende:* Cuestión de coeducación (Madrid: Narcea, 2012).
- 7 M. Carmen Rodríguez, "La contribución de la escuela al logro de identidades de género no estereotipadas," *Investigación en*

Reports

- la Escuela 50 (2003): 57-66.
- 8 Red2Red, Guía de Coeducación. Síntesis sobre la Educación para la Igualdad de Oportunidades entre Mujeres y Hombres (Madrid: Instituto de la Mujer, Ministerio de Igualdad, 2008).
- ⁹ Sandra Soler, "Maria Vallès Sostres: Cent anys del naixement d'una nena prodigy," Revista Catalana de Musicología no. 11 (2018): 307–20; Sandra Soler Campo and Elia Saneleuterio. "Maria Vallès (1917– 1937). Una joven y talentosa pianista catalana," in Creadoras mediterráneas de todos los tiempos, ed. Rosa Sanmartín and Stella Manaut (Madrid: Lastura, 2022), 319–28.
- 10 Recvll is a magazine from Blanes published monthly in Catalan. It defines itself as an "open and plural" publication that expresses "the concerns" of the inhabitants of Blanes, and it can be acquired through annual subscriptions or from public libraries. Recull was born thanks to three young men—Lluís Roch, Josep Ruiz and Francesc Balliu-who had just graduated from the Santa María de Blanes school. The first copy was published on 12 June 1920. However, the weekly publication was affected by the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera (1923-1930), during which Recvll suffered military censorship. The articles published were under constant threat of suspension due to the Catalan ideology of the magazine. The 1930s proved to be a decade of great cultural activity for this magazine from Blanes.

About the authors:

Sandra Soler is a Cum Laude Doctor in Music Pedagogy and has degrees in both Musicology and Music Pedagogy. She completed her studies specializing in Kodály music pedagogy in Hungary and also earned a Master of Applied Research in Feminist, Gender and Citizenship Studies. She currently combines her teaching and research work at the University of Barcelona and at the University of Barcelona and at the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, while teaching at a Primary and Secondary School in Barcelona.

Elia Saneleuterio is a faculty member at the Department of Language and Literature Teaching at the University of Valencia where she received her Ph.D. cum laude in 2011, and previously graduated in Spanish Philology and Education. She also earned her master's degree in Specific Didactics Research (Language and Literature Teaching).

The Kapralova Society 2022 Year in Review (abbreviated)

With the gradual return of live audience performances after two years of global pandemic, the year 2022 was a success that surpassed all expectations: more than eighty performances, broadcasts and events took place last year, with the legendary musicians Emanuel Ax and Yo-Yo Ma among the many performers of Kaprálová's music. The year started in style with the Musée de l'homme exhibition Portraits de France that continued in Paris from the previous year. The exhibition featured 58 refugee and immigrant women and men (out of 318 considered individuals) who were selected for their contribution to the "great national story of the Republic of France" over the past three centuries. Kaprálová was the only Czech that made the final cut. Much was also happening on the recording front: the year saw as many as five new CD releases, including a new complete collection of Kaprálová's solo piano music. Furthermore, Czech Radio made available second, revised editions of Kaprálová's only string quartet and the melodrama Karlu Čapkovi, while Schott published a multivolume, graded anthology of piano music by women composers, with Kaprálová's April Prelude no. 2 included in the third volume. All four of the April Preludes are now included in the piano examination syllabus of Toronto's Royal Conservatory of Music, which is not a small achievement, given that the Royal Conservatory examinations are not only conducted across Canada and the U.S., but also in Korea and other parts of Asia, so the repertoire included in the syllabus becomes widely known among teachers and students in those countries.

Performances

April Preludes, Ritournelle for cello and piano, Sonata Appassionata, and Suita Rustica were the most frequently performed compositions by Kaprálová in 2022. Antonio Oyarzabal, Samantha Ege, and Sam Haywood were among the biggest promoters of the composer's music, giving it a number of performances in the course of the year. Several country premieres also took place last year: the Austrian premiere of Kaprálová's reed trio in Musikverein Vienna, performed by Lorenz Maderthaner, Dmytro Kyryliv, and Koda Miyzazaki; the British premiere of Suita Rustica, given by the BBC National Orchestra of Wales conducted by Elena Schwarz; the Canadian premiere of Ritournelle for cello and piano by Canadians Brian Manker and Angela Park; the Peruvian premiere of April Preludes by British pianist Sam Haywood; the Irish premiere of Sonata Appassionata by British pianist Samantha Ege; and the Finnish premiere of Sad Evening (a version for voice and piano) by Finnish duo Emma Hartikainen and Tanja Niiranen. Other highlights of the year included performances of Suita Rustica by the Halle Orchestra and Jonathan Bloxhnam in Cardiff, a superb rendition of Kaprálová's Legend by Israeli violinist Itamar Zorman, accompanied on piano by Ieva Jokubaviciute during their "Women's Voices from Eastern Europe" recital at Duke, and a wonderfully lyrical rendition of Ritournelle by the legends of classical music performance-Emanuel Ax and Yo-Yo Ma-during the Boston Symphony's Tanglewood concert series last summer.

Broadcasts

There were 16 radio broadcasts of Kaprálová's music in 2022. Participating broadcasters were from Argentina, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Spain, United Kingdom, and the United States, and included 6 national broadcasters: BBC Radio, Radio Nacional (Argentina), Radio Nacional de Espana, Czech Radio, Radio France, and WDR. Among several radio programs on Kaprálová produced last year by WDR 3, Classic Praha, and Czech Radio 3, the latter offered once again the best quality: the 47-minute documentary "Vítězslava Kaprálová, osobnost Francie," on the composer's years in France, and the 58-minute radio feature, a part of the documentary series "Vizitka," reflecting on Kaprálová's life and music.

Reports

Recordings

Last year saw as many as five releases (and re-releases) of Kaprálová's music. In February, First Hand Records made available the first volume of Sarah Cahill's women's voices recording project, "The Future is Female," which included two of Kaprálová's April Preludes. Also in February, Chandos Records released "Pohádka-Tales from Prague to Budapest," an album of violoncello and piano music that featured Kaprálová's song For Ever in a skilfull arrangement for cello and piano, performed by Laura van der Heijden and Jams Coleman. In March, Naxos released (or rather repackaged) a 10-volume set of piano music entitled "Three Centuries of Female Composers" (disc 8/10 was the Diapason d'or disc of Giorgio Koukl, first released in 2017 with our Society's support). In May, Claves Records released "Opus 1 feminin," the brainchild of Kathrin Schmidlin (Five Piano Pieces). Finally, in June, EuroArts released an album of complete piano music by Vítězslava Kaprálová, performed by Leonie Rettig Karatas. The disc, entitled "La Vita. Leonie Karatas plays Vítězslava Kaprálová," offers new readings of Kaprálová's piano works in highly accomplished performances. This recording was also financially assisted by the Society.

Publications

Last year, Czech Radio Publishing House published revised editions of Kaprálová's melodrama *Karlu Čapkovi* (1939) and her String Quartet, op. 8. The new edition of the quartet includes important revisions by Marta Blalock, a violinist and string quartet player, whose analytical dissertation was dedicated to the work. While the first edition may still be available from some distributors and retailers, performers are strongly advised to request the second, revised edition. Also in 2022, Schott published a 3-volume graded anthology of piano music by women, edited by Melanie Spanswick. The third volume included Kaprálová's *April Prelude* no. 2.

Reviews

The following performances, publications, and recordings received favourable reviews in 2022: The Halle Orchestra's performance of Suita Rustica in Wales Arts Review (Nigel Jarrett), Cymru (Peter Collins), and Ilkley Gazette (Geoffrey Mogridge). The Women in Music Anthology was reviewed in the IAWM Journal (Judith Mabary); the Czech Radio's and Klíč Books' publications Vitezslava Kaprálová: Tematický katalog skladeb a korespondence s nakladateli and Kauza Kaprálová v dobové korespondenci a dokumentech were both reviewed in Muzikologické forum (Karel Steinmetz) and Hudební věda (Barbora Vacková). The Chandos recording was reviewed in Ludwig van Toronto (Norman Lebrecht), BBC Music Magazine, and MusicWeb International (Leslie Wright), and became Presto Editor's Choice for February 2022. The Claves disc was reviewed in La Liberté, Schweizer Musikzeitung (Sybille Ehrismann), MusicWeb International (Rob Challinor), and Fono Forum (Dorothee Riemer). The EuroArts recording was reviewed by Brigitte Magazine, Piano, MusicWeb International (Jonathan Wolf), and the Kapralova Society Journal (George Henderson). The First Hand Records disc was reviewed in *BBC Music Magazine* (Rebecca Franks); and Clavier's 2018 release of Kaprálová's melodrama *Karlu Čapkovi* was reviewed in *Klassik* (Christiane Franke). Finally, the Naxos' 2021 release of Kaprálová's orchestral music was still garnering rave review in 2022, printed in *Fanfare* (Peter J. Rabinowitz), *Contemporary Classical* (Thea Derks), *MusicWeb International* (Stephen Greenbank), and *Harmonie* (Věroslav Němec).

Women in Music

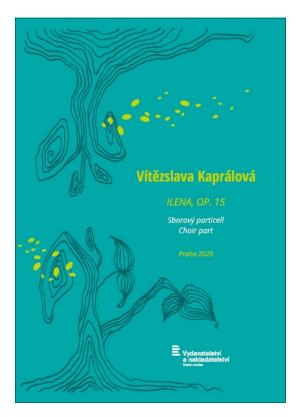
The Journal

In 2022, we published the anniversary, twentieth volume of the Kapralova Society Journal. The winter issue opened with Karla Hartl's feature "The Power of Advocacy in Music: The Case of Vítězslava Kaprálová" and published Tom Moore's article on the life and music of Laure Brice, his latest addition to our journal series Women of the 19th Century Salon. The issue was rounded off with the usual In Review section, with contributions by Judith Mabary and George Henderson. The summer issue included a feature by Diana Ambache, "Les Parisiennes: French Women Composers of the Long Nineteenth Century," Anja Bunzel's essay "Roubalová 100, Wanklová 100, Tomášková 150? Exploring Women's Contributions to Nineteenth-Century Musical Culture in the Czech Lands," and Jessica Edgar's "Alone, Together: the Dis/embodied Soprano Voice in Oxbridge Chapel Choirs," as well as interviews with Patrick Reynolds (The Adore Project) and Kyra Steckeweh (her Agnes Tyrrell edition and the Dora Pejačevič film documentary). The In Review section included books and CD reviews by Serena Wang, Judith Mabary, and Samantha Ege.

Karla Hartl



New publications

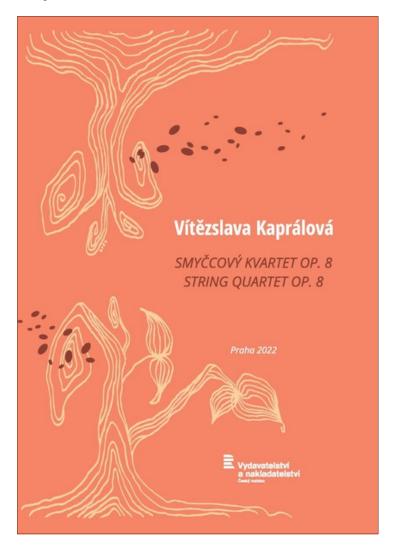


In 1932, during her studies at the Brno Conservatory, Kaprálová became familiar with "Lesná panna," a balad by Slovak writer Ľudmila Podjavorinská. She was so fascinated by Podjavorinská's story that even then she had contemplated setting the poem to music. Lesná panna is a tale about a maiden who—born as an unwanted daughter instead of an expected male heir-turns against the human race and joins the forest spirits to live as one them. Kaprálová's interest in the ballad did not diminish with time; at one point she even considered to graduate with it from the Prague Conservatory. She graduated with the *Military* Sinfonietta instead but revisited her orchestral ballad-cantata project in December 1937 from Paris, where she moved at the end of October on a French government scholarship to advance her studies at the Ecole Normale de musique. Ilena epitomized for Kaprálová a piece of home in a foreign environment, so the work on it progressed quickly at first: the piano sketch of the cantata's first movement was completed on December 10, the second on January 4, 1938; and a week later, Kaprálová finished the third, but then the project came abruptly to halt, as the composer's initial confidence in the work's value dissipated and resulted in a creative crisis. While composing the cantata, Kaprálová simultaneously worked on a reed trio and piano variations—both compositions of a completely new sound—which made her realize that *Ilena* was a brainchild of her musical past that she had already put behind and in which she now found impossible to continue. Only with the strong encouragement of Bohuslav Martinů, who liked the composition, she was able to finish, in early September 1938, the cantata's choruses and piano reduction score, but not the orchestration (it was completed by Martin Kostaš in 2007). Kaprálová's cantata has a rather unusual structure: the homophonic first movement is contrasted with the second movement solely dedicated to chorus; the third movement is conceived as a melodrama; and the fourth movement represents a final synthesis in which the composer utilizes the whole apparatus at her disposal. From today's perspective, *Ilena* occupies a unique place in Kaprálová's oeuvre as her largest composition, especially notable for its beautiful choruses.

In setting Podjavorinská's text to music, Kaprálová modified the length of vowels in some words (e.g., luna-luna, rada-rada, mat-mat, skladaskládá, strháva-strhává, biedna-biedná, Ilena-Iléna, naklonenánaklonena, kolá-kola), while producing a few czechisms in the process (e.g., blysne-blýskne, ňadrám-ňadrům). In addition, she intervened in the content of the poem proper. For example, in the second stanza of the ballad's Part I she inserted a line to be sung by the choir: "že má dcéru a nie syna!"; she also added a line to the third stanza to be sung by the soloist (B): "máš si dcéru, nie ja syna"; and, in the seventh stanza, she deleted the repetitive rowdy party scene [smiech, vysk, huriavk dookola, / kmotri spití kolo stola]. In the second stanza in Part II she replaced *Yuk-tuk-tuk* with the fuller and more ominous sound of "Klop-klop," and in the fourth stanza she omitted the first two lines [Ide, ide, istá cele / spara v hlave a mráz v tele] that she originally included in the score but later deleted them. She also deleted the entire fifth stanza [from *Šíp ju kmáše* to *pod'*]. In Part III, solely performed by the reciter in her cantata, Kaprálová altered the spelling of a few words and, in the third stanza, replaced the word puklo with "prasklo." In part IV Kaprálová reversed the word order in the first line of the third stanza from v truhlu plátno skladá to "plátno v truhlu skladá" and in the second line of the sixth stanza from aká mi ty budeš žena!? to "aká ty mi budeš žena?" In the latter stanza she also made one significant edition: she left out the last two lines that described Ilena as an icy virgin unresponsive to love [moje srdce láskou zmiera – / a ty mramor – dnes jak včera!]. In the ninth stanza Kaprálová omitted the last two lines [čos' do húštia čiernou nocou / tajomnou ho vábi mocou...], and in the twelfth stanza she changed the word order of the last line from *Pod' do nášho, milú*, kola to "Pod' milý do nášho kola." She then edited and combined the seventeenth and eighteenth stanzas into one short stanza constructed from the first two lines of the eighteenth stanza and the last two lines of the seventeenth stanza (in the latter she also modified the word neodolá from present tense to past tense "neodolal"). The result is: "Ovila ho ramenami, / ulaskala pocelami / panna zpola, prizrak zpola / Ach, že vari neodolal...!" Kaprálová then omitted the closing two-line stanza [Letí chýr o lesnej žene – / A niet zvesti o Ilene.] of the poem so that she could conclude her cantata with the more potent image of a dead lad that is depicted in the ballad's penultimate stanza. All these calculated modifications produced a much tighter narrative, accelerated its speed, and brought out the raw drama of the original.

Text: Karla Hartl

New publications



Kaprálová began composing her only string quartet in Tři Studně in Summer 1935, shortly before joining Vítězslav Novák's class at the Master School of the Prague Conservatory. After the first months of her studies with Novák, during which she had to acquire greater mastery of contrapuntal technique as part of her mandatory school curriculum, Kaprálová returned to her quartet: she completed the second movement in February 1936 and composed the third the following month, so that on March 25, 1936, she could note in her diary that the composition had been finished. The result is remarkable, considering that it was the composer's first work for string quartet ensemble. The quartet consists of three movements: in the opening movement, in sonata form, Kaprálová worked with motivic ideas she would later quote and further develop in her Elegie for violin and

piano; the second movement develops a long meditative theme at times briefly interrupted with short rhythmic motifs; for the third movement, Kaprálová chose the form that she had already employed with great skill in her piano sonata and to which she would return again in the futurevariations. There are six variations (plus coda) in the score, but two of them-the second and the fifth—were later crossed out in the autograph. It is questionable, however, whether Kaprálová authorized the cuts, for the duration of 22 minutes, noted by her at the end of the autograph, corresponds with the original, unabridged version of the score.1 Furthermore, the Peška Quartet performed the third movement with all variations intact as late as in 1939, just a year before the composer's death.

Premiere. 5 October 1936, Stadion hall, Brno. Moravské kvarteto (Moravian Quartet).

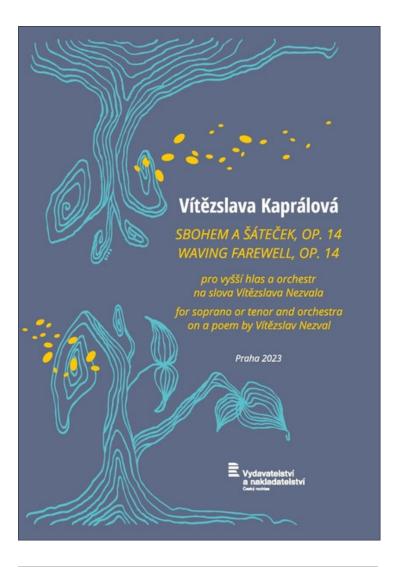
Editions: Vítězslava Kaprálová: Smyčcový kvartet č. 1 / String Quartet No. 1. Score and parts. 1st edition. Czech Radio, ed. no. R 168, Prague 2009. Engraving Lenka Králová. Editor Olga Ježková, revisions by Ivan Štraus. Managing Editor František Bílek. Vítězslava Kaprálová: Smyčcový kvartet, op. 8 / String Quartet, op. 8. Score and parts. Second, revised edition. Czech Radio, ed. no. R 168, Prague 2022. Engraving Lenka Hradilková. Editor Lucie Slivoňová, revisions by Marta Blalock. Managing Editor Robert Škarda.

Notes:

1 The three performances of the quartet available on record to date—by the Janáček Quartet (Studio Matouš, 1998), the Kaprálová Quartet (ArcoDiva, 2006), and the Škampa Quartet (Radioservis, 2012)—offer the following comparison: the third movement in the recordings of the first two ensembles lasts 5'01" and 5'09" respectively, while it is almost 2 min. longer (6'55") in the recording of the Škampa Quartet. The latter ensemble was the only of the three that respected the original, uncut autograph; as a result, the duration of their rendition of the entire work comes near to the duration noted by Kaprálová in her autograph score.

Text: Karla Hartl

New publications



Sbohem a šáteček (Waving Farewell) is not only the greatest song of Vítězslava Kaprálová but also one of the most important Czech art songs of the twentieth century. Kaprálová composed the song during the last days of her graduate studies at the Prague Conservatory (she mentioned it in her diary on June 3, 1937). She did not select the text randomly: Nezval's poem also conveved her feelings about saving a goodbye to her studies, to "the most beautiful city of Prague" (as the dedication on the score reads), and to her beloved teacher at the Conservatory's Master School, Vítězslav Novák, whose judgment she valued immensely. She showed him the song during their penultimate class (on September 9, according to her diary), and was delighted when he praised the song as having an operatic quality. "He could not have said anything more gratifying," she noted in the diary. The

motif of a descending second on the word "sbohem" (goodbye) permeates the music and emerges again and again as the basic structural element as well as the message of this spectacular, dramatic song.

Kaprálová revised Nezval's poem in two places: in the second line of the second stanza she reversed the word order of "ten smutek" (that sadness) to "smutek ten," and she also changed the penultimate line of the last stanza from "If we want to meet again, let's not say goodbye" to the somewhat peculiar "If we want to meet again, let's not move." It was with this wording that the voice and piano version of the song was published by Hudební matice in 1947; the return to Nezval's original brought the new edition.

The orchestration of the song *Waving Farewell*, on which Kaprálová worked later in Paris at the request of Václav Kaprál, proved to be a challenging task about which she had to consult her Parisian mentor, Bohuslav Martinů. In her letter home, dated 28 February 1938, she complained to her father: "We just got up in disgust from our work on *Waving Farewell*. What a terrible experience this has been! I have never found a more difficult task than this instrumentation; M. wants me to let you know that we just can't send it right away. You will have to wait." Sadly, Kaprálová did not live long enough to hear the premiere of the orchestral version of her wonderful song.

Premiere: 31 October 1940. Stadion in Brno. Marie Řezníčková (S), Moravian Land Theater Orchestra, conducted by Rafael Kubelík.

1st edition: Vítězslava Kaprálová: Sbohem a šáteček pro vyšší hlas a orchestr na slova Vítězslava Nezvala / Waving Farewell for soprano or tenor and orchestra, on a poem by Vítězslav Nezval. 1937–1938. Czech Radio, ed. no. R 494. Prague, 2023. Engraving: Petr Koronthály. Managing Director Robert Škarda. Editor Lucie Slivoňová. Foreword and English translation Karla Hartl.

Text: Karla Hartl

https://www.radioteka.cz/detail/cronoty-854643-vitezslava-kapralova-sbohem-a-satecek-op-14-pro-vyssi-hlas-a-orchestr



THE WOMEN **IN MUSIC ANTHOLOGY**

Eugene Gates & Karla Hartl

The Kapralova Society Journal

Mailing address: 34 Beacham Crescent Scarborough, Ontario M1T 1N1 Canada

Editors: Karla Hartl and Eugene Gates www.kapralova.org/JOURNAL.htm society@kapralova.org