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JAROSLAV VOLEK (TRANSLATED BY JUDITH FIEHLER)

articles|

Jiří Kopecký

Brutal and Hysterical Romanticism on the Prague Opera Stage at the Turn of the Century

Abstract | Prague art critics identified an important trend of modern (music) drama around 1900 and evaluated new works by Czech authors accordingly. Incipient modernity, described at the time as symbolism and postwagnerism, sensitively responded to the schematic and primitive cruelty of verismo opera, creating stable structures which were as brutal as they were imaginative. The reviews often overlooked defects in modern Czech opera by composers such as Fibich and Ostrčil while underestimating compositions which were not considered part of the modern trend, such as those by Janáček.

Keywords | Otakar Ostrčil, Zdeněk Fibich, Leoš Janáček, Postwagnerian Opera, Verismo, Expressionism

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The end of the 19th century and the last chance “to be modern”

Modernism around 1900 was interpreted as the act of entrusting inspiration to great men who determined the direction of art. The trend was thought to belong to an -ism, an easily classifiable group. A modernist could therefore paradoxically be a reliable epigone and respect predetermined norms. Derision and failure were only to be expected by those who had not matured to what was assumed to be the height of the great geniuses. Anything of a comic nature, operetta, yellow journalism, as well as anything that was enthusiastically accepted by the public as fashionable was considered inferior entertainment. These criteria enabled the reviewer to evaluate a work and predict its viability, despite conflicts with exceptional personalities and the influence of works from foreign lands. This problematic yet functional concept of Modernism fell into disuse at the end of “the long 19th century”.

Karel Bendl (with his opera *Máti Míla*) and Josef Richard Rozkošný (*Stoja*) were among those who believed in the power of operatic verismo. The National Theatre (Národní divadlo) was, by long tradition, a stronghold for French opera and was also a stage which promoted works by Russian composers. Angelo Neumann, the director of Neues deutsches Theatre, cultivated a selective, contemporary repertoire. His efforts were supported by Richard Batka, who was a musical critic, historiographer and later, a librettist as well. The Czech faction of musical Prague was beginning to reveal an unexpected diversity beneath its outward appearance of unity.¹ After adapting fairytale librettos, Antonín Dvořák decided on *Armida*, which had the potential to match the proven operatic success of Karl Goldmark’s *Die Königin von Saba*. Dvořák wanted to compose another opera after completing *Armida*, but ran into a problem: “But in what direction?” he continually

¹ See Ottlová, M. “Jiný svět hudby na přelomu století” [Another world of music at the turn of the century] *Hudební věda*, vol. 37, nos. 1–2 (2000): 77–86.

asked.”² At the time, Josef Suk and Vítězslav Novák had no operas to their credit; Novák did not write his first opera, *Zvíkovský rarášek* [The Zvíkov Imp], until 1914. Josef Bohuslav Foerster had difficulties in presenting his contemplative talent on the stage; Leoš Janáček was recognised as an opera composer, but was not part of the centre of action. In addition, his subjects were quite varied. He would convincingly set his opera *Její pastorkyňa* in the countryside mileu, and *Osud* [Destiny] in a bourgeois salon. *Výlet pana Broučka* [Brouček’s Travels] had a sub-plot of social criticism while *Věc Makropulos* [The Makropulos Case] had a frankly erotic subject. Recent Czech musicological publications have demonstrated that Janáček came to terms with the influence of Smetana, verismo, and Gustave Charpentier’s opera *Louise* and Claude Debussy; the premières of Strauss’s works did not escape his notice.³ The music of Zdeněk Fibich and his student Otakar Ostrčil also paralleled the expressionistic trends of their contemporaries in other parts of Central Europe.

The “non-modern” naturalism of the village and “modern” literature on themes of brutality

Fibich had blazed the path to what the reviewers considered to be modern opera with his works *Hedy*, *Šárka* and *Pád Arkuna* [The Fall of Arcona], following the lead of his librettist Anežka Schulzová. Schulzová was a professional critic and translator, able to translate texts from French, English and Danish into Czech.⁴ Schulzová praised “many a successful moment” in her review of *Maryša* by the Mrštík brothers.⁵ Although she found Gabriela Preissová’s play *Její pastorkyňa* had a “strong core,”⁶ she criticized it for poorly motivated action and insufficient psychological development. She considered *Její pastorkyňa* to be too brutal (“a belligerent, naturalistic bomb”), a work which evoked hostility rather than edifying the reader as, for example, the oeuvre of Leo Tolstoy did. She described the stance of the Mrštík brothers as primitive, “outside of the stream and direction of modern thought,” and criticized *Maryša* thus: “. . . up to now, our domestic drama has almost always been a serene reflection of the still life of moss-covered thatched roofs, whose idyllic peace is not disrupted by the lather of the torrents of time.”⁷ Schulzová was particularly fond of authors from France and northern Europe (Georg Brandes, Gustave Flaubert, Anatole France, Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, August Strindberg, Søren Kierkegaard, Heinrich Ibsen, Gerhard Hauptmann, L. N. Tolstoy), and was particularly interested in women’s issues – complex, fanatical, passionate.⁸ Ferdinand Schulz, Anežka Schulzová’s father, warned against fashionable trends but

² Quotation from Dolanský, L. *Hudební paměti* [Musical recollections] (ed. Zdeněk Nejedlý), Praha: Hudební matice Umělecké Besedy, 1949.

³ Janáček responded to *Elektra* with the brief comment that it was powerful music. He was evidently more drawn to *Rosenkavalier* as its possibilities for constructing arioso entrances interested him (see Štědroň, M. *Leoš Janáček a hudba 20. století. Paralely, sondy, dokumenty* [Leoš Janáček and 20th century music: parallels, opinions, documents], Brno: Nadace Universitas Masarykiana, Edice Scientia, 1998).

⁴ See *Dalibor*, vol. 27, no. 45 (11 November 1905): 155.

⁵ Schulzová, Anežka. “Dramatické umění. Z Národního divadla [Maryša]” [The dramatic art. From Národní divadlo – Maryša], *Zlatá Praha*, vol. 11, no. 27 (18 May 1894): 322–323.

⁶ Schulzová, Anežka. “Z Národního divadla [Její pastorkyňa]” [From Národní divadlo – Her stepmother], *Květy*, vol. 12 (1890): 752–754.

⁷ Schulzová, Anežka. “Dramatické umění. Z Národního divadla [Maryša]” [The dramatic art. From Národní divadlo – Maryša], *Zlatá Praha*, vol. 11, no. 27 (18 May 1894): 322–323.

⁸ For Schulzová, *Námluvy Pelopovy’s* 1892 success in Vienna was a confirmation of the inevitability of artistic progress as it was understood at the time, produced by a combination of nationalism, originality and Modernism: “To stand on one’s own two feet; to march on them, always – forward!” (Schulzová, Anežka. “Pohostinské hry

did not avoid sentimental plots in his literary output. His psychological ideas directly influenced Anežka. His short story *Pokoj pro svobodného pána* [Room for a single bachelor] (1884) is the tragic lover's tale of Anatole Palm and Leontine. It includes a brief reflection on destruction through women's eyes and the moon, Art Nouveau motifs typically associated with the femme fatale.⁹ From this extensive background, Schulzová could effectively recast operatic verismo brutality itself with the use of symbols and interpretations of rich psychodrama. The theme of *Šárka* was provided to Fibich and Schulzová by the announcement of a competition by the National Theatre. *Pád Arkuna* should be viewed as a fresco of Slavic history, although its episodes show a violent increase toward barbarism – the warrior Radka boasts about the head of Pelej lech. In the second act of *Dargun* Radana, kills her husband Rutan in an ecstasy of love.¹⁰ Rutan submits to seduction by his wife, for he knows:

And you are like a flower
 Growing in a blue meadowland;
 All around is the scent of ecstasy
 That stirs the blood and blurs the senses,
 Bewitched, falls into the depths anyone,
 Who lingers longer in its goblet [...]"¹¹

Fibich originally wrote the role of Radana for a dramatic mezzosoprano. One can only guess why it was so extensively revised for soprano. Růžena Maturová's vocal problems are possibly reflected in *Pád Arkuna*. There was a report that Maturová "...directly approached Kovařovic to ask for mezzosoprano roles."¹² The first performance of *Pád Arkuna* suffered from inconsistencies which a number of critics passed over as they celebrated the arrival of a "modern" and important work. The audience thoughtlessly laughed at Margit's words from the second act as an unintended reference to the name of the tenor Bohumil Pták [Bird]: "Listen! The song of the thrush carries through the stillness..."¹³ *Divadelní listy* [Theatrical News] provided a more accurate description: "As usual, our stage machinery was outstanding; the Svantovit cathedral collapsed into debris – but part of the roof ascended to heaven." The statue of Svantovit also did

Národního divadla na výstavě Vídeňské" [A guest performance of a play from the National Theatre on the Viennese stage], *Zlatá Praha*, vol. 9, no. 31 (1892): 371–372). She regarded Hippodamia's character traits as model: "...loving to the point of crime, even murder; capable only of emotion rather than thought ... a wife." (Schulzová, Anežka. "Smrt Hippodamie." *Květy*, the first of two issues for the year (1892): 119–126).

⁹ Schulz, Ferdinand. *V pozdních letech. Novellový trojlístek* [In late years: three novellas], J. Otto, Praha 1889, p. 200.

¹⁰ The murder of Rutan takes place with dialogue offstage in a cave, although the rapidity of the action in the scene and Rutan's comments "Radana ... that to me... from my love ..." bring this twist of the plot directly on stage without problems, which was not appreciated by the public at the time.

¹¹ Fibich, Zdeněk. *Dargun* (piano-vocal score), Praha: F. A. Urbánek a synové U. 1192, p. 61:

„Však jsi jak květ, jenž nad bažinou roste modravou
 a kolem šíří vůni opojnou,
 již tuhne krev a smysle mýjejí,
 že zmámen klesne za ním v hloubku ten,
 kdo děl se v kalich jeho zahleděl..."

¹² Paclt, Jaromír. "Růžena Maturová" [biographical entry], *Národní divadlo a jeho předchůdci* (Slovník umělců divadel Vlasteneckého, Stavovského, Prozatímního a Národního), Academia, Praha 1988, pp. 305–306.

¹³ [Borecký, J. (aka cipher -q)] "Slyš! Drozda zpěv se nese tišinou", *Národní listy*, vol. 42, no. 286 (16 October 1902): 3–4.

not pass muster, for it was “disgustingly ugly.”¹⁴ Unintended ridicule became an enduring part of Ostrčil’s opera *Kunálový oči* [Kunála’s Eyes], as if its pompous pathos and brutality needed to be resolved with hysterical laughter.¹⁵

Prague was aware of an important work by Richard Strauss shortly after its world première in Dresden on 9 December 1905. *Salome* was heard in Prague on 5 May 1906 (Neues deutsches Theatre). Its first performance on a Czech stage was directed by Ostrčil in the National Theatre on 17 January 1923. Richard Strauss himself directed *Salome* on 22 May 1906 during the Maifestspiele; *Elektra* (1909) was heard in the Czech Lands for the first time in 1910 at the National Theatre in Prague and obtained loyal supporters.¹⁶ This response undoubtedly did not surprise Ostrčil, who had heard about an entertainment at a pensioner’s ball, performed by a cast of members of the Dresden court theatre: “‘Salome, musikaisches Perversdrama in einem Akt nach einem Strauss von Wilden Ideen.’ (We give the title in the original language because its witticism is lost in translation.) This parody was set in a restaurant garden with an entrance to an underground space. A bus-boy stands at the open door, singing ‘How beautiful she is today’ (a loose version of Strauss’s text) in a heartbreaking voice. The voice of the cook is heard from underground: ‘I sit in a deep cellar.’ Salome consequently appears. She is displeased with the whirl of dancing and the stereotyped question asked of all of the dancers: ‘Miss, have you danced with many people?’ affects her with horror and dismay. The song of the cook captivates her and the parody continues as in the opera. The cook reappears. Salome flatters him with the words: ‘your lips are like two overstuffed sausages.’ ‘Your bald head is round and smooth like a billiard ball. Please let me dance on your bald spot.’ The cook cuts her off with ‘Stupid goose!’ and disappears back into the kitchen, etc.”¹⁷

Although there are few Strauss studies in Czech musicological literature, this topic is directly relevant to Czech music history.¹⁸ The press regularly reviewed Strauss’s early fashionable scores and the productions of his operas. The libretto of *Salome* was translated into Czech in 1906. Leoš Janáček assuredly saw the score of *Salome* prior to 1908. Familiarity with the music of Richard Strauss is clearly evident in Janáček’s orchestration.¹⁹ The fact that Richard Strauss was also on Ostrčil’s mind is documented by a recollection from 1926: “I saw a sketch of the symphonic poem *Heldenleben* by Rich. Strauss depicting a heroic protagonist. Others with bestial faces stood

¹⁴ -olen- (cipher) “Pád Arkuna”, *Divadelní listy*, vol. 1, no. 20 (20 November 1900): 435–436.

-olen- (cipher) “Scénická výprava Fibichovy opery *Pád Arkuna*”, *Divadelní listy*, vol. 2, no. 2 (20 December 1900): 33–36.

-olen- (cipher) “Scénická výprava Fibichovy opery *Pád Arkuna*”, *Divadelní listy*, vol. 3, no. 3 (5 January 1901): 53–56.

¹⁵ In the Plzeň production of this opera (Petr Kofroň, conductor and Jiří Pokorný, stage director, premiere on 30 March 2002), the third act was staged as an admirable experiment. It was performed without voices up to Kunála’s final entrance. The opera was not improved as a result, but Ostrčil’s ability to use the human voice as a superstructure over rich symphonic stream was vividly demonstrated. The staging also evoked opposition from the Plzeň subscribers at the moment when Kunála’s eyes were gouged out – the members of the chorus watching the first half of the scene on television gradually left to vomit.

¹⁶ Vladimír Helfert enthusiastically informed the Czech public about the premiere in Dresden (Helfert, Vladimír. “Elektra”, *Dalibor*, vol. 31, no. 21 /27 February 1909/: 160–161).

¹⁷ *Dalibor*, vol. 28, no. 14 (16 March 1906): 112.

¹⁸ Mirko Očadlík, among others, was interested in the creative traits of the music of Richard Strauss (see his essay “Richard Strauss a Praha” [Richard Strauss and Prague], *Miscellanea Musicologica*, vol IX /1959/: 7–25). A better topic having to do with the Strauss generation is that of Gustav Mahler, whose reciprocal relationships with the Czech Lands have been researched by Vladimír Lébl.

¹⁹ The relationship between the Brno musical scene, Leos Janáček and Richard Strauss have been most recently investigated in detail by Veronika Vejvodová. According to John Tyrrell, the significance of the slow cathartic waltz in Janáček’s oeuvre invites a comparison of the opera *Osud* with *Rosenkavalier*.

around him, punching and pricking the calf of his leg, but without disturbing his peace they could not do more to him. A man must take control of such matters.” (Václav Zítek, 3 January 1926).²⁰ Strauss was considered a “leader of Modernism,” the “head of the progressive movement” when *Kunálový oči* was composed.²¹ Zdeněk Nejedlý wrote after the first performance of *Kunálový oči*: “Ostrčil has given us an entirely different work...after an opera with a Czech character *Vlasty skon* [Vlasta’s Death], a ‘modern’ work which many honourable Czech musicians would consider rather violent.”²² We know that Ostrčil aided Fibich in preparing the score of *Pád Arkuna*; Nejedlý correctly found similarities in the characters of Ryšja Rakšita and Radana, and did not avoid a reference to Salome. The plot of Salome appears in the first act *en miniature* with Ryšja Rakšita in the leading role, although she demands the eyes instead of a severed head. In Zeyer’s words, Ryšja Rakšita “loved her husband’s son strongly, passionately, sinfully, and accursedly.”²³ The librettist returns to the obsessive imagination of Kunála’s stepmother: “My love awaits you, sinful, cursed, overpowering, strong, and passionate!”²⁴ Ostrčil may have observed the similar terse, overwhelming crescendo of intensity in the concluding dialogue between Salome and Herod.

Karel Kovařovic, head of the opera of the National Theatre at the time showed an interest in *Kunálový oči* even prior to its completion; the première took place on 25 November 1908. Kovařovic quite rightly expected a galvanizing spectacle, not merely an “Indic” opera which was “a hodgepodge of ethnographic and operatic exoticism.”²⁵ *Kunálový oči* was withdrawn from the repertory on January 1909 after its fifth performance. It is notable that the young Nejedlý did not even express an opinion about the third act. He reproached the effect of “brutal realism” when Kunála is blinded in the second act and focused on the first act.²⁶ In later years, Nejedlý stressed that this opera was significant within the Czech repertory as a purely symbolic music drama, and highlighted the Mahlerian orchestral introduction to the third act.²⁷ Ostrčil’s orchestration is strikingly enlarged to take advantage of the capabilities of the National Theatre. There are three players for each woodwind instrument, and the bass line is reinforced with a bass clarinet, contrabassoon and trumpet. Ostrčil brought his own style of symphonic continuity to this extremely sophisticated new work. Ostrčil had been aware of Gustav Mahler since 1901, and his interest in Mahler’s style would culminate in his *Suite in C minor* (1914).²⁸ The third act of *Kunálový oči* demonstrates that its composer had attained a high level of ability in this direction. Ostrčil paradoxically made use of the symphonic style of Mahler to lead him to his own style, thanks to the opera’s Straussian theme and programmatic prelude which “depicts Ryšja Rakšita’s psychological torment.”²⁹

²⁰ Rektorys, A. (ed.) *Korespondence Otakara Ostrčila a Viléma Zítka* [correspondence of Otakar Ostrčil with Vilém Zítek], Praha: Orbis, 1951.

²¹ Foerster, J. B. “O současné hudbě” [On contemporary music], *Dalibor*, vol. 31, no. 1 (10 October 1908): 1.

²² Nejedlý, Zdeněk. “Kunálový oči” [Kunála’s eyes], *Dalibor*, vol. 31, no. 9 (5 December 1908): 69–70.

²³ Zeyer, J. *Obnovené obrazy II, Amparo a jiné povídky* [Restored pictures II: Amparo and other tales], Praha: Unie, 1941.

²⁴ Mašek, K. *Kunálový oči* (libreto, předmluva) [Kunála’s eyes (libretto, preface)], Praha: Nakladatelské družstvo Máje, 1908.

²⁵ Nejedlý, Zdeněk. *Otakar Ostrčil, vzrůst a zrání* [Otakar Ostrčil: development and ripening], Praha: Otto Girgal, 1935.

²⁶ Nejedlý, Zdeněk. “Kunálový oči” [Kunála’s eyes], *Dalibor*, vol. 31, no. 9 (5 December 1908): 69–70.

²⁷ Nejedlý, Zdeněk. *Otakar Ostrčil, vzrůst a zrání* [Otakar Ostrčil: development and ripening], Praha: Otto Girgal, 1935, pp. 141–142.

²⁸ Vladimír Lébl and Otakar Ostrčil, *Křížová cesta* [The way of the cross] (LP sleeve note), Václav Neumann (dir.), Praha: Czech Philharmonic, 1979. SU 1110 2548 ZA

²⁹ Otakar Zich and Otakar Ostrčil, “Kunálový oči” [Kunála’s eyes], *Hudební revue*, vol. 1, no. 10 (December 1908): 465–477.

The decline of composition for the opera stage

The principal focus of achievement in art after 1900 shifted to the field of interpretation. K. Kovařovic excelled in the National Theatre in this respect. Mahler's independent behaviour in Vienna may have been a good example for him. As the generation of operatic masters of the 19th century faded, the burning question of cultivating their heritage emerged. The publishing house Mojmir Urbánek, made it possible to organise the first Czech musical festivals which were influenced by the 'Bayreuther Festspiele'. The production demands for opera were so great that only a few select composers such as Strauss and Puccini could successfully create new works, and even then only for the leading opera stages.

Alternatives for composers who wished to write for the theatre were quite limited:

1. Resignation from the field of opera but continuing with programmatic music and forms in which one could use text and the human voice (Josef Suk).³⁰
2. Isolated attempts to keep in step with the time, the progressive idea of "new and unrestrained art" (Zdeněk Fibich and the young Otakar Ostrčil); although the public as well as composers were discouraged from this stream due to poor attendance of performances, too demanding and almost unattainable requirements for acceptable presentation of new opera, and lastly the clear influence of a different and foreign style.
3. A more practical solution which did not resist its own time, and did not seek the appearance of "artistic immortality;"³¹ for example, the pantomimes and operettas of Oskar Nedbal.
4. A tenacious continuation of tradition along with an effort to bring it up to date; a critical view of new contemporary works (Antonín Dvořák, Josef Bohuslav Foerster, Leoš Janáček); composers had enough space to project their individuality through clear sources of inspiration and a constant resolution; harsh critical opinions and a continual lack of interest could be positive if they were actual reactions to the music rather than mere verbal attacks such as Novák's.
5. Maturation through dissent and rehabilitation of the comic genre (which was a typical approach for Bohuslav Martinů).³² After World War I, certain works by 19th century composers faded from the opera repertory and were replaced by more recent works.

³⁰ Josef Suk understood that opera was the property of the privileged line Smetana – Fibich – Foerster – Ostrčil. He was nevertheless able to approach the theatre as a result of his collaboration with J. Zeyer. Their collaboration on the play *Pod jabloní* [Under the apple tree] (premiere on 28 December 1902) was received with the same euphoric mood as the success of *Radúz a Mahulena* had achieved (premiere on 6 April 1898). It was agreed that the new work with a chorus and soloists would be "a small approach to an opera" (Zeyer, cited according to Šourek, Otakar. (ed.) *Josef Suk: Pod jabloní* (preface to the piano score), Praha: Hudební Matice Umělecké Besedy, 1945, p. 5).

³¹ Vladimír Lébl described the era at the turn of the 20th century as a cemetery for young talents (see Lébl, Vladimír, *Cesty moderní opery*, Praha: SHV, 1961).

³² Bohuslav Martinů frequently worked in the theatre in the evening while studying in Prague. Although he did not take operatic clichés seriously, he became thoroughly acquainted with nineteenth-century tradition. He was astonished by Strauss's *Elektra* and Debussy's music, and even respected that lost tradition (see Kopecký, J. "Experimente mit der Tradition: *Sestra Paskalina* und *Juliette*", *Österreichische Musikzeitschrift*, 11–12 (2009): 30–33.

Markéta Koutná

Iša Krejčí – Serenade for Orchestra

Abstract | The following article provides a musical analysis of *Serenade for Orchestra*, written by Iša Krejčí between 1947 and 1950. Iša Krejčí (1904–1968) played an important role in Czech music culture and his work is closely connected with Olomouc. In light of the fact that Iša Krejčí is often described as a Neoclassical composer, the article also includes a brief study of the most important principles of his musical style.

Keywords | Iša Krejčí, *Serenade for Orchestra*, Music Analysis, Neoclassicism

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Introduction

After the radio première of the opera *An Uproar in Efes*, broadcast on 25 February 1945, Krejčí stopped composing for a period of time. The *Serenade for Orchestra* (1947–1950) together with the *20 Variations on the Composer's Own Theme in the Style of a Folk Song* (1947–1949) were his first pieces since the occupation era and marked a new artistic and creative phase in his life.

Krejčí composed the *Serenade for Orchestra* in the first years of his directorship of the Olomouc theatre. In the second movement, he drew on two folk songs he had come to know while in Olomouc – *Pásla husy pode dvorem*, also called *Pasačka* [The Shepherdess] and most importantly *V našem městě Olomouci* [In Our City of Olomouc]; in this manner intentionally placing the piece regionally. The serenade represents one of the early compositions (together with *14 Variations on a Folk Song* and the *String Quartet No. 2 in D minor*) which fully manifested Krejčí's mature personality as a composer. Humour, lightness and wit, but also a brief, almost epigrammatic expression of a mix with folk lyricism and melancholic melodies. An Olomouc-based reviewer Vladimír Gregor wrote in the music magazine *Hudební rozhledy*: “If we take into account the fact that the composer took three years to write the *Serenade*, we can see a remarkable portion of his development there. Krejčí's specific humour is a positive feature of the closing movements, his music makes listeners smile which is a sign that the author's intention has had its effect. The lyrically melodic segments give voice to Krejčí's new tones, expanded later into wider areas.”¹

The première of the *Serenade for Orchestra* took place at a public performance of the Union of Czechoslovak Composers in Olomouc on 27 May 1952. The Moravian Philharmonic orchestra was conducted by Miloš Konvalinka to whom the composer dedicated the piece. The première was preceded in the same year by a radio performance of the *Serenade* conducted by Konvalinka in Brno. The Prague première performed by the Czech Philharmonic under the baton of Karel Ančerl took place two years later on 8 April 1954. The piece was well received abroad, as well, according to Karel Ančerl's account sent home from Paris (during a tour of the Czech Philharmonic to Paris in 1958) and Václav Smetáček's reports from Reykjavík.

The only information about the *Serenade* from contemporary press comes from the writings of Vladimír Gregor, who has also up until now been the sole author of an analysis of the piece

¹ Gregor, Vladimír. “Serenáda Iši Krejčího” [Serenade by Iša Krejčí], in *Hudební rozhledy*, 1953.

that was published with minor changes in *Hudební rozhledy* in April 1953 and in an extended version featuring score excerpts in 1954.²

Lacking a preset programme, with its lightness and clarity of expression, the three-movement piece resembles classical serenades. It is composed for the following instruments: piccolo, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets in B, 2 bassoons, 2 horns in F, 2 trumpets in C, 3 trombones, timpani, bass drum, cymbals, triangle, snare drum, piano and strings with an approximate duration of 17 minutes. It features all the characteristic traits of Krejčí's musical expression. The opening and the closing movements written in a fast tempo have a playful character, whereas the middle movement stands out due to its tranquillity with a hint of folk songs. The serenade is characterised by an intelligible musical form whose classical internal structure Krejčí nevertheless breaks.

ANALYSIS

1st movement: Allegro

FORMAL LAYOUT				
Introduction	a	b	c	Coda
1–7	8–95	96–151	152–240	241–256
7	87	55	88	15

The first movement Allegro is written in alla breve and in C major. In a closer look at its development as a whole, it is apparent that it was composed in the 3-part form of a rondo.³

The movement begins with a short 7-measure-long introduction which functions as a brief opening. It is formed by a co-rhythmically lead descending motif in the woodwinds and the strings playing *fortissimo*.

Part a

Part *a* is an example of an exposition type of music where the themes and motifs are presented either directly one after each other, or each with a short (2–4 measure-long) preparation. They have the character of short musical ideas, fragmentary melodic and rhythmic segments of a generally similar character and a length of 2 to 6 measures (see Ex. 1) which are not subsequently developed. The individual motifs are only presented without further development.

Ex. 1

Horn in F 

Iša Krejčí, *Serenáda pro orchestr*, 1st movement, mm. 18–19.

² Gregor, Vladimír. "Serenáda pro orchestr od Iši Krejčího" [Serenade for Orchestra by Isa Krejci], in *Hudební rozhledy*, 1954: 729–730.

³ Vladimír Gregor formally labelled the first movement of the Serenade in his analysis as a 7-part (abacaba) rondo. Gregor, Vladimír. "Serenáda pro orchestr od Iši Krejčího" *Hudební rozhledy* 7.16 (1954): 730.

Part b

Part *b* is no longer than the preceding part *a*. To differentiate and single out the new part, the composer employed contrasts in tempo. Compared to the relatively fast tempo of both parts *a* where quavers and semiquavers prevail, part *b* is relatively slow. The 24-measure-long concluding part (mm. 127–151) can serve as an example. Minims and crotchets predominate here and the note durations are prolonged by means of ligatures (Ex. 2).

The melody in part *b* is marked out by its descending character. The oboes introduce a hint of folk melody for the first time (Ex. 3, mm. 104–107):

Ex. 2

The musical score for Ex. 2 consists of three staves. The top staff is for Horns in F, showing a descending melody with dotted rhythms. The middle and bottom staves are for Violin I and Violin II, respectively, showing sustained chords with long ligatures.

Iša Krejčí, *Serenáda pro orchestr*, 1st Movement, mm. 127–128.

Part c

In the last part, from m. 152 on, the themes of the first part *a* are exposed in the same order and without changes. The first movement dynamically culminates in mm. 241–244, while the melodic and dynamic peak of the movement is placed on the first two beats of m. 244 (the flutes, the piano and the violins play A \sharp , see Ex. 4). The overall concise *secco* style required by the composer provides the first movement with a joyful and light-hearted mood.

Ex. 4

The musical score for Ex. 4 consists of three staves. The top staff is for Flute, the middle for Piano, and the bottom for Violin 1. All three parts play a chord of A sharp. The Flute part has a dynamic marking of *ff*. The Violin 1 part has a dynamic marking of *fz*.

Iša Krejčí, *Serenáda pro orchestr*, 1st Movement, m. 244.

In contrast to the classical motif and theme work based on harmony, the form in this piece is dictated by the instrumental, timbre and rhythmic components. The individual motifs differ considerably in terms of dynamics, timbre and rhythm.

For the sake of clarity the exposition of the first movement can be depicted graphically as follows:

Movement	Measures
<i>introduction</i>	1–7
<i>1</i>	8–9
<i>2</i>	10–13
<i>3</i>	14–17
<i>4</i>	18–24
<i>5</i>	25–27
<i>6</i>	28–30
<i>7</i>	31–32
<i>8</i>	33–36
<i>9</i>	37–40
<i>10</i>	41–46
<i>11</i>	47–50
<i>12</i>	51–55
<i>13</i>	56–67
<i>14</i>	68–71
<i>15</i>	72–75
<i>16</i>	76–79
<i>17</i>	80–83
<i>18</i>	84–87
<i>19</i>	88–93
<i>20</i>	94–95

The 4-measure-long rhythmic-melodic motif (Ex. 5) denoted m9 in the table above (marked with a darker background) serves the function of an internal source of unity with the overall coherence of the composition being achieved by the four-fold repetition of the motif over the course of the movement.⁴ At the end of the Serenade, the same motif is repeated in a piano solo variation (mm. 229–232).⁵

⁴ This essay the terminology used by Karel Janeček in his *Tektonika* (Prague 1968).

⁵ For the sake of brevity, example no. 1 omits the parts of the bass and snare drums and those of the strings.

Ex. 5

The image displays a musical score for Example 5, featuring eight parts: Piccolo, Flute 1.2, Oboe 1.2, Clarinet in B \flat 1.2, Bassoon 1.2, Horn in F 1.2, Trumpet in C 1.2, and Trombone 1.2.3. Each part is written in 2/4 time and includes a dynamic marking of *ff* (fortissimo). The score illustrates parallel chords, with notes often beamed together and marked with accents. The key signature changes from one flat to two flats across the measures.

Iša Krejčí, *Serenáda pro orchestr*, 1st Movement, mm. 181–184.

All the movements of the *Serenade* frequently contain parallel chords; the melody is harmonized by simple thirds, sixths or parallel fifths, as is also evident from Example 5 above. Contrast and abrupt changes in rhythm, instrumentation, accent and dynamic are the principal structural element of the first movement of the *Serenade*.

2nd movement: Andante quasi allegretto

FORMAL LAYOUT			
Part	Sub-part	Measures	Length
A	A	1–21	21
	B	22–31	9
	a'+	32–60	29
	Transition	61–87	27
B	c	88–117	30
A'	b'	118–139	21
	a'	140–164	25
	Coda	165–179	15

The movement continues by developing the first theme (from m. 32 on) which is subsequently shifted into G minor (m. 48). Modulation of the theme from a major into a minor key was a common practice in the classical era and Krejčí took it over in his style. The following transition part (mm. 61–87) is scored for a string quartet without the double bass while the first violin and the viola have rhythmically identical parts and carry the melody. The cello plays a continuously repeating one-measure rhythmical-melodic model which yields the timbre. The clusters played by the second violin create the Neoclassical sound of the entire movement. From m. 82 a new part of the composition is noticeably being prepared.

Marked as *Poco meno moso*, the middle part of the second movement (B, starting with m. 88) begins in forte and is built up based on a third new melodic theme (Ex. 9) which originates from the folk song *V našem městě Olomouci*. Professor Kvapil, a specialist in folk music, has argued that the song name is inaccurate. Based on certain similarities, Krejčí could also have been inspired by the song *V městě Holomúci stojí vraný kůň* (Ex. 10). The latter is, as well as the theme of the Serenade, written in G minor and its incipit suggests that it could indeed have been the composer's source of inspiration.⁸

Ex. 10



V městě Ho-lo - mú-ci

From the collection of songs Klapil, Pavel: *Olomoucká brána*,
song *V městě Holomúci stojí vraný kůň*, mm. 1–2.

In relation to the first two themes, the new theme begins in E flat minor. In m. 91, the composer used a resolving thirteenth chord (D \flat F A \flat C \flat E \flat G \flat B) (Ex. 11), an element that together with the eleventh, quartal and other irregularly structured chords only came into practical use in European music in the 20th century.

In mm. 118–131 (*Poco vivo e molto appassionato*), denoted in the table showing the formal layout as part A', a shortened version of the 2nd theme returns in the 3/4 metre (Ex. 6). In m. 132 the metre changes again into 2/4 and the 1st theme is subsequently introduced in m. 139 (Ex. 7), first as a variation and then (m. 148) identical to the introduction. The second movement of the Serenade concludes with a coda (mm. 165–179).

Ex. 11



Iša Krejčí, *Serenade for Orchestra*, m. 91.

⁸ The folk song *V našem městě Olomouci* appeared as the original Haná folk song which inspired Iša Krejčí in Vladimír Gregor's analysis in *Hudební rozhledy* where he wrote: "...he used two Haná folk songs *Pasačka* (transl.: Shepherdess, also called *Pásla husy pode dvorem*) and *V našem městě Olomouci*; Krejčí is, without doubt, making a sincere, serious acknowledgement of folk heritage here." Gregor, Vladimír. *Hudební rozhledy* (1953): 312.

A new syncopic theme (marked as δ in the layout above, see Ex. 14) stands in distinctive rhythmic contrast to all the themes exposed previously. The contrast is further enhanced through dynamics and instrumentation (*tutti*, *fortissimo*). The composer once again here employed theme harmonization in parallel thirds characteristic of this piece.

Ex. 14



Iša Krejčí, *Serenade for Orchestra*, 3rd Movement, mm. 126–129.

Additional contrast is introduced by the melodic motif in the strings in mm. 178-181 which refers to a folk-sounding motif from mm. 104-107 of the first movement of the *Serenade* (Ex. 15).

The third movement demonstrates a characteristic feature of repetitions always enclosed in extremely short, 8-measure-long passages. The theme denoted in the layout as part β is repeated in *pianissimo* in an identical way three times (Ex. 16). The melody is carried chiefly by the woodwinds, while out of the brass instruments the trumpet is used alone and the strings only maintain the rhythm and help create the timbre as they play merely chords in arpeggio (1st violin, viola, cello), alternatively simple scale fragments (2. violin). The lightness of this part is ensured by the piccolo part made up of trills.

Ex. 15

Iša Krejčí, *Serenade for Orchestra*, 3rd Movement, mm. 178–181.

In comparison with the conclusion of the first movement where the music develops and culminates both dynamically and melodically, the conclusion of the third movement does not make a strong enough majestic impression. In terms of rhythm and harmony, the conclusion of the *Serenade* appears somewhat unoriginal.

Ex. 16

Iša Krejčí, *Serenade for Orchestra*, 3rd Movement, mm. 85–88.

From the point of view of instrumentation, the composer enlarged the classical orchestra with the addition of several instruments. Apart from flutes, oboes, clarinets and bassoons, he added a piccolo in the woodwinds and three trombones in the brass section. The percussion section is reinforced with bass and snare drums, cymbals and a triangle along with the classic timpani. The last instrument added is the piano. The primary function of the latter mentioned instruments is to create the timbre; they enrich the sound of the orchestra. The strings, more specifically the violins, have the leading role together with the woodwinds and often play solo. Krejčí nevertheless introduces a piano solo in mm. 229–232 of the 1st movement of the *Serenade* (Ex. 17).

Ex. 17

Iša Krejčí, *Serenade for Orchestra*, 1st Movement, mm. 229–232.

The *Serenade for Orchestra* is chiefly impressive due to the contrasts between the concise and swift *secco* style, the stylised adaptations of the folk-sounding melodies and the dynamic and rhythmical changes. The melodies of the opening and closing movements are marked by a typically Neoclassical provocative humour and grotesqueness and imitate Classical models which they modify in an innovative fashion. They are accompanied by an extreme sound and unconventional timbre. Krejčí succeeded in achieving a balance between the joy and the apparent simplicity of the first and the last movements and the lyrical, at times even serious, nature of the second movement.

Martin Celhoffer

Applying Reconstructive Hermeneutics in Early Music Theory Treatises: A Case Study

Abstract | The present study deals with a hermeneutic reconstruction of the issue of partium toni discourse in Marchetto da Padova's treatise *Lucidarium in arte musicae planae*. Contemporary propositions of the issue, according to Marchetto divided the whole tone into five equal parts called dieses, are postulated in the first part. By means of dieses he deduced three types of semitones, which are currently interpreted as two-fifths, three-fifths and four-fifths of a whole tone. This provides a number of interpretative issues which are described in more detail in the second part of the study.

Keywords | Marchetto da Padova, Division of A Whole Tone, Pythagoreism in Music, Diatonic Semitone, Chromatic Semitone, Enharmonic Semitone, Diesis, Reconstructive Hermeneutics, Trecento, Monochord Division, Cantus Mensurabilis, Musica Ficta

.....

Part 1

In the field of early music theory we are used to relying on critical editing techniques (such as textual philology, etc.) with translations into modern languages. A great deal of work has been carried out in the field of critical editions of music theory sources, particularly during the second half of the 20th century making these sources available to a wider musicological audience.

Using modern language translations, however, even within the framework of a critical approach including a broad area of investigation, can lead to misunderstandings of cultural and philosophical content. It is apparent that every translation has to be to some extent an interpretation. For more precise and detailed editions methods educed from hermeneutical tradition need to be applied.

The goal of this paper is to demonstrate a possible practical way of applying reconstructive hermeneutics to a particular case. In this respect, I will omit a commentary or detailed survey of various hermeneutical traditions of textual interpretation and polemics on reconstructive hermeneutics as a method. Since this is a case study, more technical language will be used for this paper in accordance with the clarity and exactness of the argumentation. As the subject of this case study I have chosen an extremely intricate issue: the division of a whole tone introduced by Marchetto da Padova in his well-known treatise *Lucidarium in arte musicae planae* dating back to 1317 or 1318. Marchetto's proposal of a whole tone division accommodates an incredibly wide area of medieval music theory issues which comes into account, as will be seen in further hermeneutical reconstruction. This fact is not apparent at first glance and therefore the problem of whole tone division tends to be understood as an isolated issue. Considerable interpretative difficulties arise from this extremely narrow conception of the problem. In the first part of this paper I present basic propositions and recent interpretations, while in the second part I proceed to a hermeneutical reconstruction of the issue.

Propositions and current interpretations

The following crucial passages of Marchetto's *Lucidarium*, according to *partium toni*, are taken from the original sources¹. The translation from the critical edition of *Lucidarium*² is enclosed for each of them. These propositions form the basis for recent conclusions and interpretations of Marchetto's division of the whole tone. I intentionally omit the introduction to the problem where the reader can follow propositions without predetermined interpretations and analyse to what extent these excerpts from a source can be misleading. Explanations and commentaries will be provided in the second part.

Proposition 1

*“Quoad primum est sciendum quod tonus habet quinque partes et non plures neque pauciores, quod sic demonstramus: Probatum est superius tonum consistere in perfectione numeri novenarii, quod ostendimus ad sensum in corporibus sonoribus, puta in monocordo et aliis. Nunc autem ita est, quod novenarius numerus numquam potest dividi in partes aequales; est enim ibi unitas quae resistit dividi, et per consequens neque subdividi: numquam enim potest dividi novem per duos, quatuor, sex et octo, equaliter ipsum dicimus dividendo, et tota ratio est propter eius imparitatem. Relinquitur ergo quod partes ipsius esse debeant inequales, ita quod unus sit prima pars; de uno ad tres, secunda; de tribus ad quinque, tertia; de quinque ad septem, quarta; de septem ad novem, quinta; et talis quinta pars est quintus numerus impar totius novenarii. Sic patet quod tonus non potest habere nisi quinque partes, neque plures, neque pauciores, ita quod quinque partes faciunt totum tonum; et sic patet primum.”*³

*“First, the whole tone has five parts and neither more nor less. We demonstrate this fact thus: as demonstrated above, the whole tone consists in the perfection of the number nine, a fact that we substantiate with the aid of sounding bodies such as the monochord and others. Now the number nine [i. e., the whole tone] can never be divided into [two] equal segments, for there is a unit in it that resists being divided and, consequently, being subdivided. Indeed, nine [i. e., the whole tone] can never be divided (by ‘divided’ we mean ‘evenly divided’) by two, four, six, or eight; and the reason for this is that it is an odd number. Therefore the only alternative remaining is that its [two] segments must be unequal, so that [the even numbers having been omitted from consideration] 1 is its first part; from 1 to 3 the second, from 3 to 5 the third, from 5 to 7 the fourth, and from 7 to 9 the fifth; and this fifth part is the fifth odd number of the whole nine. Thus it is manifest that the whole tone can have only five parts, neither more nor less, such that the five parts make up the entire tone, and this proves point one.”*⁴

¹ According to Herlinger, Jan. (ed.) *The Lucidarium of Marchetto of Padua, A Critical Edition, Translation, and Commentary*, Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1985. See also: Gerbert, Martin. (ed.) “Marchetti de Padua Musica seu Lucidarium in arte musicae planae” (Ex. Msc. Biblioth. Ambros. Mediolanensis), *Scriptores ecclesiastici de musica sacra potissimum III.*, St. Blaise: Typis San-Blasianis, 1784, p. 64–121.

² Taken from: Herlinger, Jan. (ed.) *The Lucidarium of Marchetto of Padua, A Critical Edition, Translation, and Commentary*, Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1985.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 132–136, part of the *Lucidarium: Tractatus secundus, Capitulum quintum, Demonstratio partium toni, Primum dicti capituli*.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 132–137, compare to: Herlinger, Jan. “Marchetto's Division of the Whole Tone”, *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, vol. 34, no. 2 (1981): 193–216, 200–201.

Proposition 2

“*Quarum quelibet quinta pars vocatur dyesis, quasi decision seu division summa; hec est maior divisio que possit in tono cantabili reperiri.*”⁵

~

“*Any one of these fifth parts is called a ‘diesis’ – the last reduction or division, as it were. It is the smallest division of the whole tone that can be sung.*”⁶

Proposition 3

“*Dyesis quinta pars est toni...*”⁷

~

“*The diesis is a fifth of a whole tone...*”⁸

Proposition 4

“*Continet sicque enarmonicum duas dyeses, dyatonicum tres, cromaticum quatuor; tonus vero ex quinque dyesibus est formatus.*”⁹

~

“*Thus the enharmonic semitone contains two dyeses, the diatonic three, and the chromatic four, whereas the whole tone is made up of five dyeses.*”¹⁰

Recent conclusions and interpretations

The following conclusions are currently deduced from all of these essential propositions:

“*In the Lucidarium of 1317 or 1318, Marchetto da Padova introduced his discussion of semitones with the revolutionary words, ‘The diesis is one-fifth of the whole tone (diesis quinta pars est toni);’ he posited intervals of two-fifths, three-fifths, and four-fifths tone as well*”¹¹.

“*...by means of specious mathematics he [i. e. Marchetto da Padova] divides the tone into five equal parts, making the three semitones two, three, and four-fifths of a tone, respectively*”¹².

⁵ Herlinger, Jan. (ed.) *The Lucidarium of Marchetto of Padua, A Critical Edition, Translation, and Commentary*, Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1985, p. 138, part of the *Lucidarium: Tractatus secundus, Capitulum quintum, Demonstratio partium toni, Secundum dicti capituli*.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 140, part of the *Lucidarium: Tractatus secundus, Capitulum sextum, De dyesi*. I intentionally omitted the rest of the statement with its context; further explanation of this fact will be explained in the second part of this paper.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 148, part of the *Lucidarium: Tractatus secundus, Capitulum septimum, De semitoniis dyatonico et enarmonico simul, eo quod unum per aliud melius cognoscatur*.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

¹¹ Herlinger, Jan. “Fractional Divisions of the Whole Tone”, *Music Theory Spectrum*, Vol. 3 (1981): 74–83.

¹² Leach, Elizabeth. “Gendering the Semitone, Sexing the Leading Tone: Fourteenth-Century Music Theory and the Directed Progression”, *Music Theory Spectrum*, vol. 28, no. 1 (2006): 1–21.

“He [i. e. Marchetto da Padova] became the first theorist to propose division of the whole tone into five equal parts, which he called dieses...”¹³
 “...his division of the tone into fifths became a turning point in the history of music theory”¹⁴.
 Etc.

Commentary to the arguments above

Marchetto da Padova “by means of specious mathematics” divides the whole tone (as the number nine) into five equal parts with each of them called a diesis. Specious mathematics can be found in the strange pseudo-arithmetical definitions of these five parts, determined by odd numbers 1, 1–3, 3–5, 5–7 and 7–9, respectively 1–3–5–7–9. The only arithmetical or geometrical method was based on valid monochord divisions, following the pseudo-Euclidean and Pythagorean traditions. The “turning point in the history of music theory” can be found in fact, that Marchetto, by dividing the whole tone into five equal parts, moved away from Pythagorean tradition and proposed a completely new solution to the division of a whole tone.

We can summarise the basic arguments as follows:

1. The whole tone has only five parts.
2. These parts are equal.
3. Each of these parts is called a diesis.
4. One diesis is equal to one fifth of a whole tone
5. Therefore an enharmonic semitone (containing two dieses) is two fifths, a diatonic semitone (of three dieses) is three fifths and a chromatic semitone (of four dieses) is four fifths of a whole tone.

Part 2: Hermeneutical reconstruction

Two basic contradictions need to be solved first:

1. Equal or not equal parts of a whole tone? This is evident from Proposition 1, compare the original text and translation: particularly those arguments “*novenarius numerus numquam potest dividi in partes equales*” to “*the number nine [i. e., the whole tone] can never be divided into [two] equal segments*”; and: “*partes ipsius esse debeant inequales*” to “*its [two] segments must be unequal*”. It is apparent that the translation interprets the inequality of the parts as the inequality of two parts, while it would be possible to make a division into more than two equal parts. The crucial addition of “two” has been added. Possible reasons for this postscript are: (i) Marchetto called each part of a whole tone uniformly as a diesis; (ii) the definition of the diesis as a “fifth of a whole tone”; and (iii) the diesis as part of a whole tone contra diesis as a musical interval.
2. Which tradition was revived in *Lucidarium*: Aristoxenian or Pythagorean? It could be argued that the distribution of a given musical interval into equal parts is not anything new. Aristoxenus of Tarentum had already proposed a similar solution for the problem of the division of the octave into equal parts, i. e. six whole tones. He similarly derived different types of Greek genera by means of regular – equal fractions of a whole tone. The question consequently needs to be asked as to whether Marchetto continues in this Aristoxenian tradition.

¹³ Herlinger, Jan. “Marchetto’s Division of the Whole Tone”, p. 193.

¹⁴ Herlinger, Jan. (ed.), *The Lucidarium of Marchetto of Padua, A Critical Edition, Translation, and Commentary*, p. 17.

If his intention was a division of a whole tone into equal parts, he had to reject intervallic proportionality, since these two conceptions are in methodical contradiction. He used proportional definitions of consonances, however, and moreover, in *Lucidarium* numerous references to the important Pythagorean source can be found, Boethius' *De institutione musica*. Boethius, as is already known, proposed several arguments against Aristoxenus, particularly against his "method" of dividing superparticularis musical proportion into equal parts¹⁵. The very beginning of Marchetto's *Lucidarium* contains a significant number of Pythagorean references, primarily taken from Boethius, among other subjects the blacksmith myths, with this fact excluding Aristoxenian tradition completely.

In order to solve this issue, the appropriate questions need to be found in order to move deeper into the problem and penetrate into the contemporary perspective of the problem. Searching questions are symptomatic for hermeneutical thought. What should these concerns look like? They should provide a perspective on the problem from the historical point of view, the perspective of the author.

Hermeneutical questions and commentary

Questions:

1. What was the reason for the division of a whole tone and why did Marchetto derive various species of semitones from the whole tone instead of from the tonal system itself?
2. Why did Marchetto divide the whole tone into no more or less than five parts?
3. Why did he name the small semitone (limma) as "enharmonic" in contradiction to the actual appearance of this semitone in the diatonic genera and the same for the large semitone named "diatonic" as it appears outside the regular system of *cantus planus*? This question is directly related to another one, why did Marchetto name each of the parts of the whole tone diesis?
4. Is there any difference between the diesis standing alone and diesis as part of a whole tone? (see propositions 3 and 5)
5. Does the division scheme (1, 1–3, 3–5, 5–7 and 7–9) have some meaning or it is "specious mathematics" – i. e. a speculation or a false argument?

Commentary:

Ad 1: The reason for division of a whole tone is the necessity of *cantus mensurabilis* intervallic progressions, i. e. the concept of *pre-musica falsa* solution¹⁶. Namely, progression from the *b rotundum* toward the *b quadratum* which accommodates the diatonic (the nomenclature according to Marchetto) or large semitone, and the progression accommodates the chromatic semitone. Marchetto called this phenomenon *permutatio*: "*Fit enim permutatio ubi tonus dividitur propter consonantiam in dyatonicum et enarmonicum aut in cromaticum et dyesim vel e converso...*"¹⁷ – "*Permutatio is used where the whole tone is divided, for the sake of consonance, into a diatonic*

¹⁵ We used quotation marks for "method", because, in fact, there was no efficient method of tonal system derivation such as this.

¹⁶ *Pre-musica falsa*, can be assumed because this concept of Marchetto was quite different from the later regular *musica falsa* establishment introduced by Prosdocimo de Beldomandi in his *Parvus tractatulus de modo monacordum dividendi*, see Prosdocimus de Beldomandi, *Brevis summula proportionum quantum ad musicam pertinet and Parvus tractatulus de modo monacordum dividendi*, Jan W. Herlinger (ed.), University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln & London 1987.

¹⁷ Herlinger, Jan. (ed.), *The Lucidarium of Marchetto of Padua, A Critical Edition, Translation, and Commentary*, p. 270, part of the *Lucidarium: Tractatus octavus, Capitulum primum, De permutatione quid sit et ubi fiat*.

*semitone and an enharmonic one or into a chromatic semitone and a diesis (or vice versa)...*¹⁸ The derivation of various species of semitones from the whole tone division had the same reason, although concerning more practical considerations. The derivation of the small semitone and the large semitone is included in the established monochord division representing the whole tonal system. In such a division, it is extremely difficult to divide a random whole tone and this is a serious practical problem.

Ad 2: The division of a whole tone into five parts is taken from Pythagorean tradition, while the division of a whole tone into two or four parts is inherent to Aristoxenian tradition¹⁹. This can be demonstrated as follows: in Pythagorean tradition one operates with musical proportions²⁰. The octave 2/1 is divided into the fifth 3/2 and the fourth 4/3. The difference between them is the whole tone 9/8. Two whole tones within the frame of the diatonic tetrachord form the rest – the semitone (i. e. the small semitone called *limma*) 256/243. Thus counting the proportions of two tones and a semitone, one obtains the fourth ($9/8 \times 9/8 \times 256/243 = 4/3$). By subtracting the small semitone from the whole tone one obtains the large semitone 2187/2048. The difference between the large semitone and the small semitone is called the comma. The small semitone is further divided into two dieses within the enharmonic tetrachord. These two dieses are not equal. The whole tone is consequently divided into four dieses and a comma, namely five parts. This is another argument for the Pythagorean foundations of *Lucidarium*.

The division of a whole tone (9/8) into five parts according to Pythagorean tradition²¹:

interval		proportions	cents
<i>comma</i>		531441/524228	23,66 c
<i>limma</i> [256/243]	<i>diesis</i>	512/499	44,52 c
	<i>diesis</i>	499/486	45,70 c
<i>limma</i> [256/243]	<i>diesis</i>	512/499	44,52 c
	<i>diesis</i>	499/486	45,70 c

Marchetto's innovative proposal involved referring to all of the parts of a tone as diesis. He consequently excluded from the whole tone division nomenclature the term comma to make the division more simple and clear for musical practice.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 271.

¹⁹ For further reading see Macran, Henry. (ed.), *The Harmonics of Aristoxenus*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1902 and Winnington-Ingram, R. P. "Aristoxenus and the Intervals of Greek Music", *The Classical Quarterly*, vol. 26, no. 3/4, p. 195–208.

²⁰ This allows for a demonstration with a monochord and thus provides an empirical exemplification.

²¹ This interpretation is created according the tetrachord division in Boethius' *De institutione musica*. See Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius, *Fundamentals of Music*, Calvin M. Bower and Claude V. Palisca (eds.), Yale University Press, New Haven & London 1989.

Ad 3: Let us examine the following definition of enharmonic and diatonic semitones by Marchetto:

“*Semitonium minus seu enarmonicum est quod continet duas dyeses, quo quidem utimur in plano cantu. Dyatonicum vero tres continet dyeses, quo quidem non utimur in cantu plano, eo quod propter suam maioritatem excedat omnes consonantiarum proportiones, dissonantiam inde creans. Utimur enim eo in cantibus mensuratis.*”²²

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“*The minor, or enharmonic, semitone is that which contains two dieses; we use it in plainchant. The diatonic semitone contains three dieses; we do not use it in plainchant because it exceeds all proportions of consonance due to its large size, thus causing dissonance. We use it in measured melodies.*”²³

The first argument is that enharmonic semitone occurs within the *cantus planus*, i. e. *cantus firmus* melodies. *Cantus planus* is established in medieval music theory by means of hexachords, which are formed on the basis of the Greek diatonic system. Why did Marchetto call the small semitone “enharmonic”, however? The answer is apparent from the chart above: the idea of defining various species of semitones had come to Marchetto by all accounts from Boethius’ derivation of enharmonic tetrachord²⁴. This is naturally emphasised by the term “enharmonic” semitone, i. e. a semitone made up of two dieses. Therefore, the large semitone, contrary to its occurrence, was called “diatonic” by Marchetto and this semitone has to be constructed from three dieses instead of two dieses and a comma, as can be found in Pythagorean tradition. This fact is apparently due to the clarity of explanation for musical practice. How could a musician of the Italian *Trecento* otherwise measure a comma within the whole tone? It would be an almost impossible task.

As can be seen from the translation, the use of a diatonic semitone is in “measured melodies”. This is not a precise translation, because *cantus mensurabilis* is a technical term meaning the melody of a particular *counterpoint* added to *cantus firmus*. Due to the aesthetic perception of a musical interval, it contains a specific progression diatonic semitone, i. e. a progression from *b rotundum* to *b quadratum*. This melodic progression would never be found in *cantus planus*.

²² Herlinger, Jan. (ed.), *The Lucidarium of Marchetto of Padua, A Critical Edition, Translation, and Commentary*, p. 144, part of the *Lucidarium: Tractatus secundus, Capitulum septimum, De semitoniis dyatonico et enarmonico simul, eo quod unum per aliud melius cognoscatur*.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 145.

²⁴ See how Boethius derives the enharmonic tetrachord *hyperboleon*; Friedlein, Godofredus. (ed.), *Anicii Manlii Torquati Severini Boetii De institutione arithmetica libri duo: De institutione musica libri quinque. Accedit geometria quae fertur Boetiis*, Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1867, p. 321–322.

Ad 4: One might argue: yes. This is apparent from another pre-musica falsa progression described by Marchetto:

“Cromaticum semitonium est illud quod de quinque dyesibus quas habet tonus quatuor comprehendit, et, ut predicatur, semper cum dyesi tonum perficit. Fit enim cum aliquis tonus bipartitur propter aliquam dissonantiam colorandam, puta tertiam, sextam, sive decimam tendendo ad aliquam consonantiam, nam prima pars toni sic divisibilis, si per ascensum fiat, erit maior, quae dicitur croma; pars quae restat dyesis est...”²⁵

“The chromatic semitone is that which includes four of the five dieses of the whole tone, and, as said earlier, completes a whole tone when a diesis is added to it. This comes about when a whole tone is divided in two so as to colour certain dissonance such as a third, a sixth, or a tenth striving toward some consonance. The first part of a tone thus divisible will be larger if the melody ascends, and is called a chroma; the part that remains is a diesis...”²⁶

Moreover, the basic proposition No. 3 “*dyesis quinta pars est toni*” interpreted as “*the diesis is a fifth of a whole tone*” (means equal 1/5) is taken from the chapter “De dyesi”, in which Marchetto has described the specific melodic progression of *cantus mensurabilis* as can be seen from the proposition above²⁷. This diesis is therefore the right “quinta pars” from the *partium toni* proposition, namely the last, fifth part of a whole tone defined as 7–9 and not just a simple 1/5 of a whole tone.

Ad 5: This is one of the most obscure parts of Marchetto’s propositions and the main reason for problems of interpretation. Marchetto wrote: “*Probatum est superius tonum consistere in perfectione numeri novenarii, quod ostendimus ad sensum in corporibus sonoribus, puta in monocordo et aliis.*” – “*As proven above, the whole tone consists in the perfection of the number nine, a fact that we substantiate with the aid of sounding bodies such as the monochord and others.*”²⁸ This means the proportion of a whole tone as 9/8 which can be demonstrated with a string. Marchetto has referred to earlier parts of his *Lucidarium*, where he demonstrated the “perfection” of the number nine. This proposition is based on medieval arithmetics, the concept of the division of a continuum: “*numerus causatur ex divisione continui*” – “*number has its cause the division of a continuum*”²⁹ and according to the whole tone proportion:

²⁵ Herlinger, Jan. (ed.), *The Lucidarium of Marchetto of Padua, A Critical Edition, Translation, and Commentary*, p. 148, part of the *Lucidarium: Tractatus secundus, Capitulum octavum, De semitonio cromatico*.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

²⁷ These are progressions from dissonances (later assumed as imperfect consonances) to consonances.

²⁸ See proposition 1 above.

²⁹ Herlinger, Jan. (ed.) *The Lucidarium of Marchetto of Padua, A Critical Edition, Translation, and Commentary*, p. 112–113, part of the *Lucidarium: Tractatus primus, Capitulum quartum*.

“Sic ergo patet quod continuum, primo et de se primaria et maiori divisione, divisibile est in tres partes. Multiplicando autem divisiones, si volumus partes dividere divisione qua divisum est totum, de qualibet trium partium faciemus tres, et sic habebimus novem.”³⁰

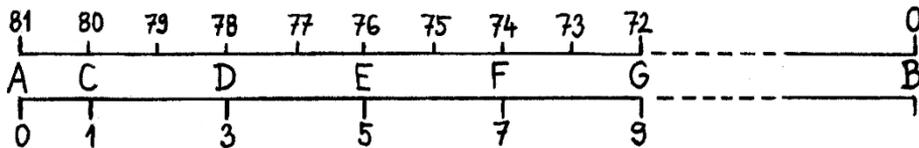
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 “It is evident, therefore, that a continuum, first and of itself, is divisible into three parts for its primary and greater division. In multiplying these divisions, if we wish to divide the parts by that division by which the whole has been divided, we shall make three of each of the previous three, and thus we shall have nine.”³¹

These are crucial propositions representing a fractal understanding of that division. This is why Marchetto used the formula 1, 1–3, 3–5, 5–7 and 7–9 for division of a whole tone. These numbers have to be situated within the frame of a whole tone proportion.

Reconstruction

Based on what has been stated above, the reconstruction of a whole tone division should be quite an easy task, with the procedure being as follows:

1. Measure one ninth of a string representing a monochord. Obtain the whole tone proportion 9/8.
2. Divide this one ninth into nine parts and mark them from 1 to 9.
3. Omit the even parts from consideration.
4. Obtain the five parts according to the scheme 1, 1–3, 3–5, 5–7 and 7–9. These parts are dieses.
5. Deduce the proportional quality of these dieses.
6. Deduce and construct the enharmonic, diatonic and chromatic semitone.



$AB/GB = 81/72 = 9/8$ [*tonus*, i. e. whole tone] 203,91 c.

$AB/CB = 81/80$ [*una sit prima pars*, the first *diesis*] 21,51 c.

$CB/DB = 80/78 = 40/39$ [*secunda pars: de uno ad tres*, the second *diesis*] 43,83 c.

$DB/EB = 78/76 = 39/38$ [*tercia pars: de tribus ad quinque*, the third *diesis*] 44,97 c.

$EB/FB = 76/74 = 38/37$ [*quarta pars: de quinque ad septem*, the fourth *diesis*] 46,17 c.

$FB/GB = 74/72 = 37/36$ [*quinta pars: de septem ad novem*, the fifth *diesis*] 47,43 c.

Based on the *cantus mensurabilis* progression, semitones can be constructed as follows:

1. A whole tone divided into a diatonic and enharmonic semitone: 9/8 to 81/76 and 19/18.
2. A whole tone divided into a chromatic semitone and diesis: 9/8 to 81/74 and 37/36.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 116.

³¹ Ibid., p. 117.

Note that the first division of a whole tone above as a composite proportion is taken from Boethius' chromatic tetrachords³². This is another argument for the proportion of the diatonic semitone 81/76 within the pre-*musica falsa* progressions of *cantus mensurabilis* instead of a regular large semitone 2187/2048 or the large semitone proportion 17/16 adapted by Marchetto. Moreover, the regular large semitone proportion 2187/2048 does not arise from *prima maior divisio* as proposed by Marchetto.

One might ask in conclusion why Marchetto did not provide the reader with explicit proportions instead of the obscure division represented by the scheme 1, 1–3, 3–5, 5–7 and 7–9. Simply put, his goal was not to propose musical proportions for each type of interval smaller than a whole tone: “...ubi primo sciendum est, quod de numeris et proportionibus eorundem nichil ad musicum ut musicus est, sed de eis pertinet ad arismetricam absolute” – “nothing concerning numbers and their proportions [in themselves] is relevant to the musician in his capacity as a musician. Rather such matters pertain exclusively to arithmetic”³³. This is consequently the reason why he mentioned the incorrect, but understandable proportions for small and large semitones as 18/17 and 17/16 in another part of *Lucidarium*³⁴. Surprisingly, these proportions are taken from Boethius' proof against Aristoxenus regarding the impossibility of dividing any superparticularis proportion equally³⁵. Marchetto's division of a whole tone can be comprehended hermeneutically as a *literary* division within the meaning of five dieses relevant for musical practice, while the *partium toni* scheme should be apprehended as an exact division. Marchetto's dieses are not equal with dieses within the enharmonic tetrachord. This division is a clear manifestation for musical practice of various types of semitones included in *cantus mensurabilis* progressions. I have shown that the substantial method of reconstructive hermeneutics serves to ask questions rather than drawing particular conclusions.

³² See chapter *Monochordi hypaton per tria genera partitio et totius dispositio descriptionis* of the fourth book of *De institutione musica*, Godofredus Friedlein (ed.), *Anicii Manlii Torquati Severini Boetii De institutione arithmetica libri duo: De institutione musica libri quinque. Accedit geometria quae fertur Boetii*, p. 332–334.

³³ Jan W. Herlinger (ed.), *The Lucidarium of Marchetto of Padua, A Critical Edition, Translation, and Commentary*, p. 162.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 156–161.

³⁵ See Godofredus Friedlein (ed.), *Anicii Manlii Torquati Severini Boetii De institutione arithmetica libri duo: De institutione musica libri quinque. Accedit geometria quae fertur Boetii*, p. 268–272.

Michaela Freemanová

Early Instruments in the Czech Republic

Abstract | Only a small number of instruments from around the year 1600 have survived in Bohemia. Most of them are in two main collections: the Czech Museum of Music Collection, and the Lobkowitz Collection. The most important of all is a set of Renaissance wind instruments which originally belonged to the most powerful Bohemian noble family, the Rožmberks (the Squires of the Rose), who owned large estates in South Bohemia. Their music instrument collection consisted of almost one hundred wind instruments, almost forty string instruments, and seven keyboard instruments around 1600. The number of instruments which the Rožmberks possessed was smaller than at royal residences (such as the court of Henry VIII), but it was nevertheless impressive. At present, the surviving Rožmberk instruments (all together eleven wind instruments, a great-bass viola da gamba and a regal) are considered a rarity of world importance. Up until the late 1980s, the Czech Museum of Music possessed a Renaissance ivory flute, donated in 1869 by Václav František Červený, the most famous Bohemian maker of brass instruments. It is almost without a doubt currently in the Berlin Musikinstrumenten-Museum – its travels and the origin of the two piece flute which the Museum owns at present, are still the subject of research. There could also be more information to be discovered concerning the instruments kept in Bohemian and Moravian stately homes, as well as concerning musical motifs in pictures and plaster wall decorations. Research on murals, initiated by the Czech Academy of Sciences suggests that discoveries in the field of Renaissance instruments may still come to light.

Keywords | Music Palaeography, Early Music Instruments, Czech Music

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Introduction

Only a small number of instruments from around the year 1600 have survived in Bohemia.¹ Very few of them are to be found outside the museums with perhaps the most important being the Renaissance organ in the Trinity Church in Smečno, Central Bohemia, which was built around 1587.² Most of the other Renaissance instruments are in two main collections: the Czech Museum of Music Collection and the Lobkowitz Collection. The collection belonging to the Princes of Lobkowitz was taken over by the state in 1950 after the Communist coup in 1948; it was returned to its original owners in 1993. It can currently be viewed in Nelahozeves Castle, Central Bohemia and in Lobkowitz Palace at the Prague Castle. The catalogue of the Lobkowitz music collection³ also lists musical instruments, among them four lutes (described in the catalogue as mandolins) – two by Laux Maler, from Bologna (shelf-marks X.Nc.1 and X.Nc.4), two others

¹ An extended version of this paper was published in: *Musikinstrumentenbau-Zentern im 16. Jahrhundert*, Michaelsteiner Konferenzberichte, Band 72 (Augsburg 2007): 227–250.

² For a photograph of the Renaissance organ in Smečno cf. Buchner, Alexander. *Colour Encyclopedia of Musical Instruments*, Prague, 1980.

³ *Stand-Repertorium des Hoch fürstlich Lobkowitzschen Musik-Archives zu Raudnitz*, 1893

by Venetian makers – Marx Unverdorben (shelf-mark X.Mc.2) and Magnus Tieffenbrucker (shelf-mark X.Mc.5).

The first three of these lutes have survived up until the present in the Lobkowitz collection. Another lute with Magnus Tieffenbrucker's label, formerly belonging to the Counts Clam-Gallas, is still in the possession of the Czech Museum of Music,⁴ where there are also four other anonymous Renaissance lutes. Two of them were turned into Baroque instruments. The third lute is complete. From the fourth lute, only the ivory ribs and the soundboard have remained. It found its way into the Museum around 1980 from the Town Museum in Kutná Hora (Kuttenberg, Central Bohemia) and nothing is known about its origins.⁵ The Czech Museum of Music exhibition, which opened in 2004, also displays, apart from the Rožmberk instruments described later, a 16th century treble crumhorn and a 17th century cornet,⁶ three 17th century shawms,⁷ a violin and viola by Antonius & Hieronymus Amati, from 1592 and 1616[?],⁸ and Italian virginals, made in the workshop of Vito Trasuntino around 1572.⁹

Rožmberk Band Instruments

Hardly any of the instruments used in the Renaissance and Baroque periods by the music bands of the Bohemian nobility have survived. An exception is the set which originally belonged to the most powerful Bohemian noble family, the Rožmberks (the Squires of the Rose), who owned large estates in South Bohemia. Their music band worked between 1552 and 1602 in Český Krumlov, the Rožmberk's main residential town, and later at their estate in Třeboň. It was inherited by Johann Georg von Schwamberg in 1612, who, being a Protestant, went into exile after the Battle of the White Mountain in 1620; the music ensemble was disbanded around 1625.¹⁰ The Rožmberk archive included three inventories of music and instruments, from 1599, 1601 and 1610. Among the wind instruments eleven shawms of different sizes, from descant to great bass, are listed; three racketts, fourteen recorders in five sizes – from descant to great bass, two mute (straight) cornets, and twenty ordinary (curved) cornets, in several sizes (probably from soprano to tenor; the description of the individual instruments is not particularly clear), three straight crumhorns (i. e. possibly cornamuses), an entire set of curved crumhorns

⁴ Czech Music Museum, Prague, 1187 E.

⁵ Czech Music Museum, Prague, 1511 E, 1179 E, 1184 E

⁶ Czech Music Museum, Prague, 1747 E, 986 E.

⁷ Czech Music Museum, Prague, 199 E 228 E, 229 E.

⁸ Czech Music Museum, Prague, 1426 E, 1119 E.

⁹ Czech Music Museum, Prague, 1992 E.

¹⁰ For the history of the Rožmberk estate's 16th century music life cf. especially:

Pánek, Jaroslav (ed.) *Václav Březan. Životy posledních Rožmberků* [Václav Březan. The Lives of the Last Rožmberks], Praha, 1985.

Pánek, Jaroslav. "Renesanční velmož a utváření hudební kultury šlechtického dvora" [Renaissance Nobleman and Music Culture at the Aristocratic Court], *Hudební věda* vol. 26, no. 1 (1989): 4–15.

Padrta, Karel. et al. *Jihočeská vlastivěda. Hudba* [The South-Bohemian Heritage. Music], České Budějovice, 1989.

Horyna, Martin. "Vilém z Rožmberka a hudba" [Vilém of Rožmberk and Music], *Opera Historica*, vol. 3 (1993): 257–264.

Václav Bůžek and Josef Hrdlička, et al. *Dvory velmožů s erbem růže. Všední a sváteční dny posledních Rožmberků a pánů z Hradce* [The Courts of the Noblemen with the Rose Coat of Arms. The Daily and Festive Life of the Last Rožmberks and the Squires of Hradec], Prague, 1997.

Václav Bůžek and Pavel Král (ed.). *Slavnosti a zábavy na dvorech a v rezidenčních městech raného novověku* [Festivities and Entertainment at the Courts and Residential Towns in Early Modern History], České Budějovice, 2000.

(eleven pieces), eight trombones in various stages of disrepair, one curtal, seven field trumpets and three pairs of kettledrums. A number of the instruments are not easy to identify – such as *silenci* (two pieces – perhaps sorduns?), *kloryty* (five pieces, seemingly brass instruments), or *postranní píšťaly* (side pipes – four pieces – perhaps a consort of transverse flutes?). Included in the string instruments were two sets of viola da gambas, each of them consisting of six instruments (i. e. complete consorts?), plus two extra bass gambas; there were also three consorts of violins (consisting of four to six instruments, from descant to bass) and four lutes (all of them broken). The keyboard instruments mention two clavichords (one of them with a pedal, in the care of an organist – i. e. perhaps a claviorganum?), one regal, two positive organs, and virginals (probably two instruments, one of them unclearly described as a broken, unusable double instrument). The collection was extended by new instruments, bought in Nuremberg in 1611: six field trumpets, two descant trombones, one tenor trombone and one Italian cornett.¹¹

The entire collection consisted of almost one hundred wind instruments, to be used out of doors and indoors, almost forty string instruments and seven keyboard instruments. The number of instruments which the Rožmberks possessed was smaller than at royal residences (such as the court of Henry VIII), but it was impressive none the less. The surviving Rožmberk instruments are currently considered a rarity of world importance. Ten instruments (nine shawms and rauschpfeifes of three sizes, from treble to great bass, and one great bass crumhorn) were allegedly found in one of the chambers of the Gymnasium (College) of Jindřichův Hradec in 1812, a town which also originally belonged to a branch of the family of the Squires of the Rose. It was suggested that they be presented to the National Museum in 1820 which they in fact finally reached only in 1862.¹²

Several of the Rožmberk shawms (Czech Music Museum shelf-marks E 480–483) are branded with a W. A number of researchers believe that the letter “W” means Wittingau (the German name of Třeboň), or Wilhelm (Wilhelm of Rožmberk, a predecessor of Petr Vok) – in such a case they could have been either imported, or even made locally. Another tenor shawm in the Rožmberk collection, branded A, is believed to be by the Munich maker Arsazius Schnitzer (shelf-mark E 474), by whom there are also five shawms (shelf-marks E 484–488); they could also have been made by another member of the same family. The last instrument, a great bass crumhorn, is by Jörg Wier from Memmingen (shelf-mark E 489).¹³ Several other instruments by Schnitzer and Weir are known: there is a bass recorder by Arsazius Schnitzer, formerly in the collection of Canon Francis William Galpin, today in the National Music Museum at the University of South Dakota (a copy of this instrument is in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston). There are also additional Schnitzer recorders in the Biblioteca Capitolare in Verona and in the Collezione dei Strumenti Musicali in Merano; there are four crumhorns and a tenor recorder in Merano and seven crumhorns in Museo Nazionale degli Strumenti Musicali in Rome by Jörg Wier.

Two other instruments came to the Czech Museum of Music from the former Rožmberk estates – a great bass viola da gamba and a regal. They were stored at the Třeboň Deanery, but in all probability originally belonged to the Rožmberk band instruments.¹⁴

¹¹ For the Rožmberk inventories cf. State Archives Třeboň, shelf-mark Cizí rody Třeboň II, z Rožmberka 20b.

¹² For the history of the Rožmberk instruments cf. especially: Buchner, Alexander. “Zaniklé dřevěné nástroje 16. století” [Lost Wooden Instruments from the 16th century], *Sborník Národního musea v Praze* [Acta Musei Nationalis Pragae], vol. 7-A-Historia, No. 2 (1952).

¹³ Cf. Boydell, Barra. “Jörg Wier. A new light on a master crumhorn maker”, *Early Music* (October 1979): 511–518.

¹⁴ Czech Music Museum, Prague, 1329 E, 1330 E.

The Czech Museum of Music Collections

The Czech Museum of Music is a department of the National Museum, caring for the national heritage as of 1818. A number of people contributed to its collections through donations and bequests, among them Václav František Červený, the most renowned Bohemian maker of brass instruments. He donated an ivory flute in 1869.¹⁵ Seemingly because it came from Červený, it was listed as a 19th century instrument, and looked upon as such until 1968, when it was classified as a Renaissance item by members of the Galpin Society.¹⁶ Research into Renaissance instruments in world collections seems endless and full of surprises. At present, the historic value of the Prague Renaissance flute, as well as its identity, are once again doubted. David Freeman has recently demonstrated that the two piece ivory flute on display at present, is not that which was donated by Červený, and that Červený's flute is almost definitely in the Berlin Musikinstrumenten-Museum. Research still needs to be carried out on the origin of the two piece flute on display.¹⁷ There could also be additional information to be discovered concerning the instruments housed in Bohemian and Moravian stately homes. Apart from those in the Lobkowitz and Rožmberk collections, they are generally unknown. The same applies to the music motifs in pictures and plaster wall decorations. The first results of a thorough research on murals, recently initiated by the Czech Academy of Sciences, suggest that interesting discoveries in the field of Renaissance instruments may still come to light in the future, such as the mural of a viola da braccio player found during restoration work on the ceiling of one of the rooms of the Schwarzenberg Palace near Prague Castle, recently re-opened as a new seat of the National Gallery, or the mural of a cornett player, recently found during restoration work at Prague's Klementinum, seat of the National Library.

¹⁵ Czech Music Museum, Prague, 2497 E.

¹⁶ Cf. Montagu, Jeremy. "The Society's First Foreign Tour", in: *The Galpin Society Journal*, XXI (March 1968), pp. 4–23.

¹⁷ Cf. Freeman, David, "The Travels of an Ivory Renaissance Flute", in: *The Galpin Society Journal*, LX, April 2007, 233–236.

Eero Tarasti

A Proposal for a Semiotic Theory of the Performing Arts

Abstract | Studying performance with semiotics entails becoming involved in an extremely qualitative and processual field. It can be approached as a particular skill or competence preceding any performative act, or making use of certain theories, such as the Parisian school methodology. Emotions have their impact, however. Marcel Proust claimed that a performer, a musician, steps into another body when he/she begins to play; such a corporeality is intentional. The result of a performance is unpredictable and additionally belongs to the level of the 'Schein', appearance, as Etienne Souriau has put it. Existential semiotics can also be applied to performance where four modes of 'being' can be distinguished: body, identity, social practice or role and values. Each performer has his/her own profile in which these modes are emphasised and foregrounded in various ways. Such a theory of performance is of a general nature and concerns film actors, musicians and dancers. Even performance itself can be studied making use of these categories.

Keywords | Performance, Being, Appearance, Existential Semiotics, Temporality, Intentionality, Music, Theatre, Cinema

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Introduction

Performance, *execution* in French, *Aufführung* in German or perhaps even better *Darstellen*, means that something immanent is made manifest. Since a text is what is performed, i. e. the performance has a certain pre-established model or starting point, the question arises: how does this entity change into some other mode of existence, a kind of transformation? The implicit meanings of the text can now burst into life and take on new properties. Certain art forms are based upon this process, they are not yet what they should be before they take place. This process is also called interpretation when one wants to emphasise that the performer adds to the text. In the theory of semiotics this process could be called the 'modalisation' of a message or text (A. J. Greimas).

Etienne Souriau's definition is generally valid: "Performance is the material realization of an art work, and the performer is the one who enacts it"¹ Performing is consequently something physical. It is not without reason that a musician or actor is sometimes compared to an athlete. As a rule, performing artists do not discuss spiritual aspects or interpretations, but instead their physical bodies, instruments, etc. "When I woke up this morning my back was painful." "Although I put a new string on my violin yesterday, it makes a strange noise.", etc.

Moreover, Souriau has emphasised that in the so-called temporal arts, theatre, music, dance, and cinema, one postulates that they have already been given shape, and that the performer is a different person than the author of the work. His/her task is to actualize what the author

¹ Souriau, Etienne. *Vocabulaire d'esthétique*. Paris: Quadrige/Presses Universitaires de France, 2000: 703.

proposes, even when the 'sketch' of the creator is complex, demanding and rigorous. Works can receive numerous interpretations, although the text is a pre-existing entity, it has to be rendered in flesh and blood. One often needs to improvise even when the concept of a definitive interpretation is in the background, particularly in the current era. Since the artist is distanced from the idea that one would aim at one precise and faithful performance, he/she can always add something new, bringing his/her own creativity to the foreground. In this context it might be useful to echo Marcel Proust. In his statements concerning theatre art and performances by Berma (who was, of course, modelled on Sarah Bernhardt), he claimed that an artist should be satisfied to serve as a window to the work of art.

I would like to propose a new aspect of performance, and present a model for analysis which I believe may be applicable to all performing arts. I would first, however, like to present an overview of the central principles of performance philosophy and the categories defined in the reflections of Souriau.

Skill

Performing can be interpreted in the linguistic sense based on concepts such as competence and performance. Without a specific, previously acquired skill or technique, one cannot have a decent performance. An actor, musician or circus artist is assumed to possess professional skills. One might feel sympathy for an amateur performer, but any humour in the performance would be directed at him/her rather than at the listener. For professionals, the focus of the performance is directed toward the public rather than the performer, who may can suffer from stage fright, the imperfection of his/her execution, or may carry out the task with sovereign indifference as to his/her own emotions. The more skill, the less tension. On the other hand, a positive aspect of tension is that one only becomes excited about what one considers important and significant. In general, tension and nervousness cease when one realises that they do not bring joy to the performer or to anyone else. For some avant-garde art, professionalism is practically forbidden because it leads into the very routine, mannerisms and clichés that one is trying to discard. There are numerous theories concerning the role of technical exercises in a performance and the training of a performer. The French pianist Jacques Février advised the student to repeat the same figure a hundred times while reading a newspaper. Certain artists practice regularly even though they have already reached their peak. Some are of the opinion that an actor must train himself and body through hard physical efforts. In theatre and cinema, the technique of a performer is completely subordinate to the will of the director.

There is an illusion that one can immediately, miraculously, become a great artist, that one only needs someone to discover one's hidden talent. A recent issue of the Indiana Alumni Magazine (summer 2011) relates that a bankrupt businessman was found to have a fine voice. He is now studying opera at Jacobs School of Music in Bloomington. Mr. Lunsdorf had lost his job and property. He came across the music for Puccini's *Nessun dorma* one day at a music store and bought it. He sang along with a YouTube clip of Pavarotti performing this aria. He relates how he could not read music and did not speak a word of Italian. (In this case I would have recommended that he study Italian with the Opera written by Marcel Danesi, where one learns Italian by remembering and humming famous arias). Then Mr. Lunsdorf sang for an audience and went to a singing teacher. He joined the Denver musical theatre and began to take voice lessons. He received a scholarship for Indiana University as an undergraduate in 2009. After several recitals, the former Dean Charles Webb said: "He has a distinctive tenor voice which is Italianate in character and has the characteristics of resonance, brilliance, projection, and power of the great

20th century Italian opera singers”. It would also be interesting to study the ideological content of the article on this miracle à la Roland Barthes. This story clearly confirms the myth of the American dream that anything is possible at any time if you try hard enough. In singing, where the instrument which provides the basic qualities is the body itself, this dream can indeed come true, since the life stories of a number of great singers are similar. Without professional training, however, the miracle of such a voice can be ruined.

Theory

Is there a method or theory which enables one to become a great artist? There are certainly schools of performance, particularly in music for all instruments, singing, and theatre: from bel canto to Wagnerian speech song; national instrumental schools; the dance methods of Laban, Isadora Duncan, and other exponents of modern dance, not to mention Stanislavski, Meyerhold or Artaud. There are also various schools of relaxation, although what most intimidates a tense person is how to relax.

There are theories concerning guiding performance from the background, but what is their relationship to the practice of performance? In Finland, the semiotic theory of an actor’s work by Kari Salosaari is such a theory. It was used to carry out an entire repertoire of classical dramas at the drama studio of Tampere University. There are structuralist schools of theatre, psychoanalytic methods, psychodramas, etc. To some minds, too much theorizing makes the exercise of art practically impossible. A professor of literature was asked why he does not write novels himself, since he had studied much about the theory of narratives. He replied, if the trapeze artist begins to think where he steps next, he will fall down.

André Helbo has reflected on a semiotic theory of performing arts in his work.² To his mind the concept of a ‘text’ signifies in theatre various aspects. Firstly, the text itself, such as drama, a libretto, a score, can carry indications and references as to the staging. These ‘didascalies’ can be addressed to an actor concerning the details of acting or staging, lights, clothes, sound effects, etc., to the reader when they are not intended to be visible, or directed to an ‘implied spectator’.

According to Helbo, performance is defined as enunciation which takes place in the presence of an observer, within the context of theatrical conventions. These conventions or codes determine, among other things, a transition from everyday life to scenes on stage or to spectacle. Spectacles have their own theoreticians, from Yuri Loman to Tadeusz Kowzan. Lotman argues that forming a spectacle is the same as forming a narrative. It was customary to provide a life with a plot, for instance, war as spectacle in 19th century Russia. When normal life was monotonously cyclical, then war, parades, etc. brought about a certain alternation and excitement.

A theatrical situation is defined by Helbo as follows:³

- the body: the gestures of everyday life are detached from their ‘genuine’ context and transformed into signs. Each performance contains such a semiotic process;
- its semiotic nature is revealed by the fact that a ‘drunk man’ is distinctly portrayed. The ostensible quality of the action determines the acting (one might add here: what is involved is the category of *marqué*, marked);
- this foregrounding is not based upon any intention, but is conventional;
- the meanings created in this way are manifold.

² Helbo, André. *Theory of Performing Arts*. Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1987.

³ Helbo, André. *Theory of Performing Arts*. Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1987: 48.

Methodically speaking, this crucial observation has heuristic importance for the entire theory of performing art: the **linear course** of the theatrical text is transformed into a **pluridimensional, polyphonic course**. This observation was identified as characteristic of theatre as early as Roland Barthes. Of interest is the fact that when Isidoro remains silent, he does not disappear, he is continuously present on stage. He interprets what Checca tells him and experiences the process of signification as it continues. I have applied this observation to the semiotics of music, where a hierarchisation of a linear chain of signs is always present. At the beginning of the Waldstein sonata by Beethoven, for example, two musical ‘actors’ alternate or participate in a dialogue. The role of the actor in such an abstract discourse as music is a problem in and of itself, as in poetic discourse. One may state that the ‘actor’ is a unit carrying meanings and thematic figures; in music, usually identifiable as the so-called ‘theme’). In Beethoven’s music, theme or motif A in the bass is answered by motif B in discant, and consequently actor A one again ‘states’ something in a text and B responds. The syntagmatic chain consequently becomes an inner dialogue. Motif A does not disappear when B is present. It remains as a memory in the consciousness of the listener or the person for whom it is destined. Motifs, even in music, modalize one other and have inherent modal content as actors. Moreover, the interpreter, the pianist, can modalize them in numerous different ways:

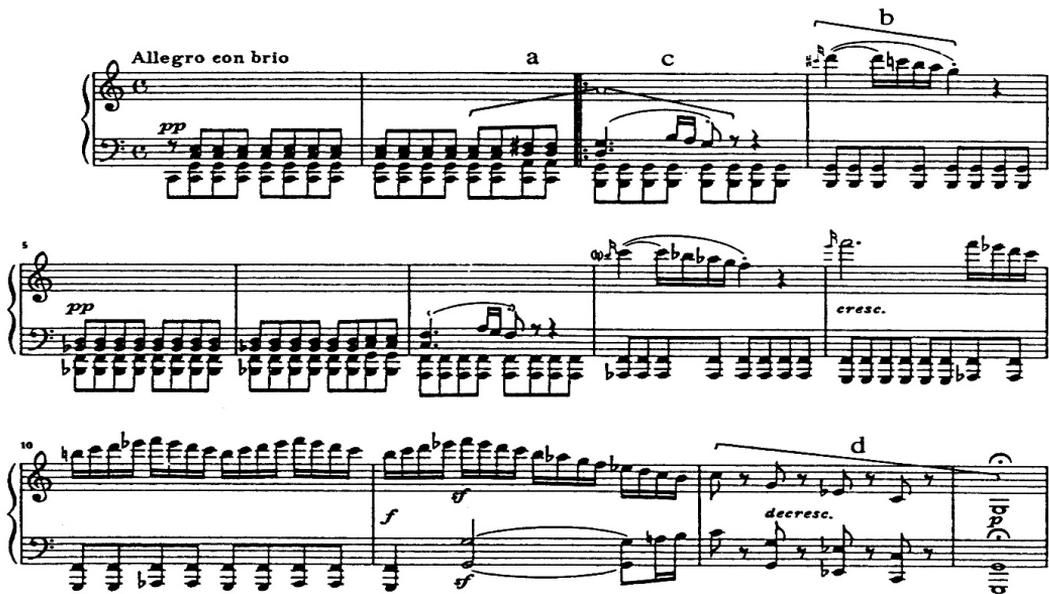


Fig. 2

This may be the core of performance, following Greimassian theory.

Time

As Souriau has pointed out, the performing arts are a temporalisation of a static text. As the text is gradually rendered observable to the senses, subtle temporal strategies come into play. Numerous elements of an actor’s language of gesture depend a great deal on precise, appropriate timing. On the basis of Birdwhistle’s gestural theories, Salosaari developed a list of the various temporal gestures an actor can make: to elevate, to sink, to make denser, to retardate, to accelerate, to expand,

to diminish, to increase, to resolve, to sustain, to soften, etc.⁶ The American Alexandra Pierce has developed a theory of 'expressive' or 'generous movement' on the same concept. The performer must create the correct temporal dramaturgy for the performed work as well as find its narrative level. Salosaari correctly states: "Narrative activity is a kind of syntagmatic intelligence".⁷ An artist can, of course, anticipate the result, as Serge Rachmaninov did when carefully calculating exactly where in his work a dramatic climax should occur. Correct timing must appear as certainty, not as hesitation. Uncertainty can also, however, be an aspect of interpretation. It is said that the conductor Serge Koussevitsky would begin to conduct by allowing his arms to sink slowly. Since the musicians had to guess exactly when they should begin to play, they had to be particularly vigilant. It is advisable at times for a performer to rehearse in a markedly slower tempo than in performance, particularly for music. Sometimes the composer gives the permission for tempo rubato – what does it mean to 'steal time'? In the age of Romanticism, it was argued that if time was stolen one did not need to give it back. In general, musicians are aware that one can slow down as much as one wishes within a bar, but must regain the basic beat afterwards.

Even if performing entails linearizing an acronic text, or to put it in semiotic terms to syntagmatize, the problem of each performance is – when we place tones, words, gestures consecutively – how to create hierarchies. A performance which is merely a series of signs lacks depth, expressivity and levels of meaning, i. e. isotopes – which in a witty discourse are always complex. This aspect has been investigated using behaviourist methods by measuring and analysing existing performance using tapes and recordings. The leading example of this method has long been *La mesure des gestes* by Paul Bouissac.

The British musicologist John Rink believes that the secret lies in the way that a musician shapes his performance. Do musicians shape their performances consciously, or unconsciously? Anyone educated as a musician knows that analysis of form is one of the most unpopular disciplines at all conservatories. The form or shape as analysed by a theoretician is not necessarily cognitively the same as that which the performer realises and the listener experiences. Mark Reybrouk has studied cognitively, amongst other things, the rhythmic structures of Mahler's symphonies and obtained interesting results. John Rink presumes that the logic of shaping is essentially similar for all performers and creators from Beethoven to Woody Allen. Rink determines that the concept of a 'performance motif' is something quite different from a thematic motif in an analysis of form. He has, for example, analysed an interpretation by Arthur Rubinstein of a Chopin mazurka and remarked that on the performance level it presents the form as ABA, in which sections A are rhythmically irregular and B regular. Why is the middle section regular, however? Not necessarily in order to provide a criterion or standard as to how a listener observes and conceives the irregularity of sections A, for what is involved can also be the negation of the basic irregularity of the entire work. In the traditional genre of the mazurka, the accents can vary on three different beats of a bar, and the performer can provide even more variation. Where then is the basic isotope of that mazurka by Chopin, in relation to which we can either engage or disengage, to carry out *embrayage/débrayage*?

This reflection actually leads us to ponder the dimension of the depth of a linear performance 'text' and what is pertinent therein. In other words, what elements one has to bring to the foreground and mark as distinctive and what elements are pushed into the background as unessential. Each performer knows this rule as it applies to works with difficult, complex and rich textures. Rubinstein admitted that he never played all the notes in *Iberia* by Albeniz, but

⁶ Salosaari, Kari. "Eleellisyyden tutkimuksesta näyttelijäntyössä". *Synteesi* 1/2000, p. 3–11.

⁷ Salosaari, Kari. "Perusteita näyttelijäntyön semiotiikkaan. I osa: Tewaterin kieli ja näyttelijä merkityksen tuottajana", *Acta Universitatis Tamperensis Series A*, vol 262 (1989): 92.

was careful to play the essential ones. Only the structural notes were played. Heinrich Schenker's system of analysis was intended to help performers distinguish structural notes from secondary ones. I would add here that existential semiotics in turn enables us to recognise **the existential notes** from non-existential ones and build the inner world of the signification of the work. The problem with spectrograph analysis and other measurements is that they do not take into account that the criteria of pertinence can change in a performance. In fact, performance creativity is based upon the idea that these criteria are not fixed. A pertinent example is provided by the recollections of Richard Wagner as director of his own works. According to eye-witnesses from Bayreuth such as Porges and Fricke, he never conducted his operas twice the same way. He continually changed the way they were performed. This is of course why Cosima's efforts to maintain the 'authentic' manner in Wagner's day were comical and caused the interpretation of the entire drama to stagnate into awkward stereotypes. Heinrich Porges wrote: "Though everything Wagner did at the rehearsals – every movement, every expression, every intonation – bore out this principle of fidelity to nature, one must not forget that he was simultaneously handling the whole vast music-dramatic apparatus and endeavouring to convert it into a living breathing organism⁸ ... Nevertheless, all the extraordinary things Wagner did at the rehearsals created the impression of having been *improvised*. It was as though everything he demanded and he so eloquently demonstrated occurred to him in a flash with complete lucidity just at that very moment."⁹

Richard Fricke testifies, in contrast "Working with Wagner is extremely difficult, because he does not stick to one thing for long. He jumps from one subject to another, and you cannot pin him down for one subject, which could immediately find a solution. He wants to be his own stage director, but for this detailed work. I may say he lacks all it takes, for his mind is focused on the entirety, losing sight of details and forgetting how he had wanted things done the day before... Wagner regularly speaks in an undertone, indistinctly, gesturing with hand and arms, only the last few words of a sentence giving you any idea of what he means..."¹⁰

Emotions

Compositions, plays, poems and theatre pieces do not actually exist before they are interpreted. A special aesthetic category of *espressivo inexpressive* art was postulated in the 20th century: the emotionless performance of a work, precisely based on the evidence of the text, score, etc. (concerning Stravinsky and Prokofiev).¹¹ This concept has to be viewed, however, as the negative side of the interpretation of all arts. In semiotics, it is said that the text has to be modalized in performance to make an impact; it must be furnished with the modalities of **will, know, can, must** and **believe**. The performer's interpretation is an important source of semantics, particularly in the abstract arts. Jean Renoir required that his actors read their roles completely without expression so that he could add his own nuances as the director.

It has been stated earlier that Greimassian semiotics became a semiotics of passions by the use of modalities. Yet the extent to which is this true and how emotions appear in a performance is problematic. Do they directly appear as gestures? Horowitz argued that when it comes out of the face, it does not come out of the music. In Aristotle's theory of tragedy, two emotions pre-

⁸ Porges, Heinrich. *Wagner Rehearsing the 'Ring'. An Eye-Witness Account of the Stage Rehearsals of the First Bayreuth Festival*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1881–1896 (rep. 1983): 3.

⁹ *op. cit.* 4.

¹⁰ Richard Fricke (trans.) and James Deaville and Evan Baker (eds.) *Wagner in Rehearsal 1875–1876. The Diaries of Richard Fricke*, New York: Pendragon Press, 1906 (rep. 1998): 32–33.

¹¹ See Jankélévitch, Vladimir. *La musique et l'ineffable*, Paris: Librairie Armand Colin, 1961: 25–97.

vailed: horror and compassion. This may be true on stage, but what about music performers? In the past, performers were educated through old-fashioned systems based upon the dictatorship of a teacher or director in which the performer was subordinated to discipline mixed with fear. There are celebrated stories concerning the cruel criticisms of Russian ballet masters and prima donna conductors. Koussevitsky would shout at a cellist, you played wrong. The musician would counter, I played g and a exactly as in the notes. “No, the mistake was between the notes!” was the answer. The purpose of an authoritarian teacher was to cause the student to fear the teacher and lesson so much that going on stage was nothing in comparison. One thereby conquered stage fright. Other teachers were milder. Jorma Panula’s principle for his conductor class was, help, but do not disturb!

The intentional body

Although performing is, of course, a corporeal activity, it has been misunderstood in many theories and studies. What is involved is an intentional ‘soma’ rather than the immediate physical body, even though it does, of course, participate in performance. Etienne Souriau discussed the corporeal arts whose material is the human body: dance, theatre, song. In this sense, playing is not merely purely corporeal. A musician may seem to vanish behind his instrument, yet what he produces in his utterance completely depends on corporeality. It is intentional corporeality, however. How else could one explain, for instance, the functioning of a symphony orchestra? One hundred musicians can be packed for hours in the same space, side by side, under extreme control, which is undoubtedly worse than working in a landscape office. This situation is only possible because the musicians forget their physical bodies somewhat as they shift into another body, a ‘soma’. Although Proust would describe a harpist plucking tones from strings as if they were stars in the sky, or the cellist handling his instrument between his legs as if he were peeling a cabbage, such impressions merely have to do with the intentionality of the primary body. The musician never forgets, of course, his physical body. A wind instrumentalist can have only certain entrances in a symphony of one hour, although his body must concentrate on these entrances; his blood pressure may rise when seeking the correct timing and the tone can be extremely stressful and physically demanding.

Souriau discusses corporeal expression. Specifically, how erroneous research which detaches physical corporeality from intentionality can be when it is based on a science, a system arising merely from measurements of physical aspects. The basic unit of corporeal expression is, among other things, **a gesture**; this technique is naturally fundamental for all street artists. In abstract arts which, like music, lack immediate corporeality, the notion of an actual body has become fashionable in recent efforts to find the behaviourist basis for music. According to Souriau, a gesture or gestus requires bodily movement, particularly with the arms and hands. A gesture is part of the focus of the actor, dancer, speaker or orator. Gestures have both expressive and indicative functions. Gestures provide information, demonstrate, imitate; they can be either spontaneous or codified. The arts utilize gestures for aesthetic expressivity by emphasising their form: an arabesque-like line, rhythm, etc. Gesticulation is based upon exaggerated gestures, in semiotics one would argue on distinctive gestures brought to the foreground. It is noteworthy, however, that the Dictionary of the Body by CNRS (*Le dictionnaire du corps*, 2008) does not mention the notion of gesture at all. It merely discusses the techniques of the body in the vein of Marcel Mauss. Yet, in music it is essential to find the correct gesture in music or its signifier and combine it with an embodied, physical gesture. Jules Gentil of Ecole Normale de Musique claimed that piano playing is *science des gestes* and had in principle two movements: *pousser/tirer*

(to push and draw). They formed as he said, the 'breathing of the hand'. Metaphors referring to the body are often used in performing arts, thus confirming Lakoff's theory on the origin of all metaphors in our bodies.

Unpredictability

Considering performance as dialogue in the sense of Mikhail Bakhtin, one of its most important characteristics is that its end result can never be anticipated. Souriau remarks¹² that the "work looks less and less like anything is determined in the sense that performance would realise it in a definite manner." A true performance is never a mechanical 'translation' of a text into other languages, for instance from text to tones, gestures etc., for performance typically entails disturbances, 'noise' in the informational theoretical sense. It is expressly presumed that the performer adds something new to the text by means of his interpretation, in order to give it life. For this reason, the machine-like quality of tunes created by computers may perplex us. Disturbances are in any case possible and sometimes even desirable, which is why people are still interested in attending concerts, theatres and operas in order to follow a live performance. I once asked a composer to come with me to a concert of Beethoven's Eroica featured in the program, and he answered: I have already heard it. A performance can always reveal, however, a new, unexpected aspect of the work. How a performer achieves contact with the audience is a problem in and of itself as is contact in general in human communication. Our Italian colleagues Gino Stefani and Stefania Guerra Lisi have arranged symposia and published works on this topic. In contrast, the origin of Bakhtin's notion of dialogue has been disputed. He lived after the Revolution in Nâvel, where public disputes on common topics such as the existence of God, etc. were organised. While there, Bakhtin came to the conclusion that ideas and concepts could not exist until they entered a dialogue as an **ideologeme**, a belief in the world of the speaker.

The unpredictability and unexpectedness of performance is nevertheless also connected with physicality. A performer can never be completely certain that the physical aspect of a performance will succeed. The story is told of a young student who returned home from his conservatory entrance examination in tears. He said that all went well, except that the fugue was cut! The first imperative of a performer is naturally that the show must go on. The chain of communication must not break.

Schein

The dialectic of **Schein** and **Sein**, **Appearance** and **Being**, finally provides the basis for evaluating the reality of a performance. Performance is always juxtaposed with a text as its starting point. For some, a performance must always be a faithful interpretation of the text which is its point of departure. The presence of **Being** in performance is, arguably, the authentic form of an art work which a performer may or may not achieve. In order to attain it, he has to study its structure, meanings, isotopes, context, history, aesthetics, the artist's biography, and other factors extensively. Despite these facts, one can easily forget that performance is not merely a reconstruction. The claim of authenticity does not mean that performance is an obedient copy of the original. This is attempted by ignoring all which has taken place in time between the creation of the work and its new manifestation and this information cannot be disregarded. Our image of authenticity intrudes between the original and the copy (i. e. the performance) upon which, in the end, the performance is evaluated. We do not go to a theatre, opera, concert to listen to historical documents of ideas and emotions of the past, but because the work to be performed has, as it is

¹² Souriau, Etienne. *Vocabulaire d'esthétique*. Paris: Quadrige/Presses Universitaires de France, 2000: 703.

said, *ästhetische Gegenwartigkeit*, it communicates with us in the here and now. By this we do not deny that an aspiration towards authenticity is an obligation. As early as the 17th century, Francois Couperin argued: *Nous écrivons différemment de ce que nous exécutons* (we write differently than we play). The notation is only a starting point:

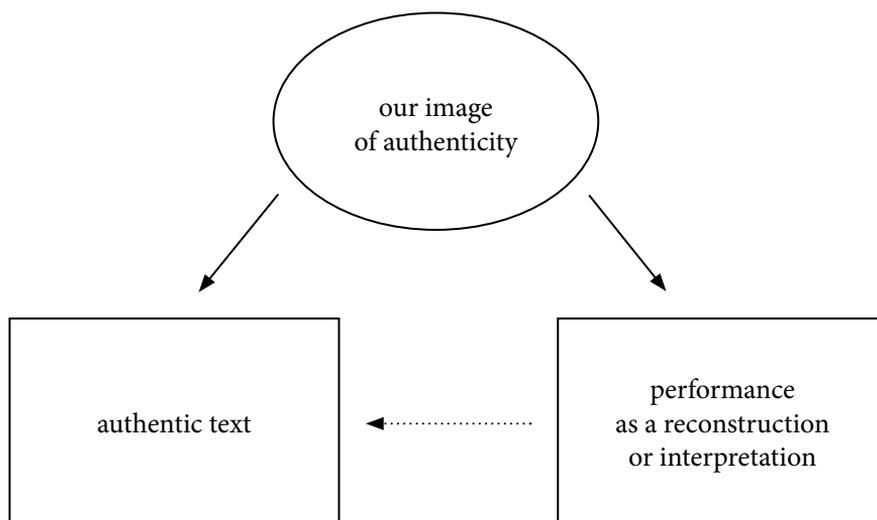


Fig. 3

The performance practice for opera which prevails today is that the director builds his own work upon the original text, which in turn is reduced to a mere title and a pretext to portray the ideas of the stage director. This is particularly evident in recent interpretations of operas by Mozart, Verdi and Wagner. Harry Kupfer changes the end of *Parsifal* so that Amfortas dies and Kundry marries Parsifal. Roman Hovenbitzer allows Elsa to survive with Gottfried. In a recent production the Flying Dutchman was not redeemed but remained condemned in his boat after Senta's suicide. The stage director takes responsibility for determining the average viewpoint of the contemporary spectator and transforms the plot of the opera to make it compatible with the values and ideas of the present time. In doing so, one forgets that operatic music was intended to express a specific semiotic universe of meanings. If the narration changes, the music should change as well. A character's inner self may change, for example, and correspondingly become contemplative and internal. When the director bases the staging on external factors, however, the music remains the same. When Busoni's *Doctor Faust* was staged by Teatro Comunale in Bologna in 1985, Faust became an alpinist instead of a scholar amidst his books. Although music and text may constitute a close dialogue, the director changes the proximity of the singers so that they have to shout to one another from the extreme ends of the stage.

Performance is always representation. *Le monde naturel*, reality, looms behind it, although it is always a step away from that reality. As German philosophers have stated, *Schein*, appearance, manifestation. Therefore the expression "The Movies, greater than Life" may sound tempting. Performance is communication of communication, as Ivo Osolsobe argues. How should we interpret a situation in which an actor acts as if he is sleeping on stage, but actually falls asleep? Spectacles are also representations, conveying the values and ideologies of the spectators. Once I brought an Iranian student, who had never seen an opera before, to an opera performance. It was *Boris Godunov* by Mussorgski. In the second act which takes place in a monastery, the

protagonist Grigori is masked as a monk. The student at my side was tempted to cry out, but that is Grigori! From the time of Mozart, German opera houses displayed signs in the audience with the text: *Mitsingen verboten* (no singing along). It is precisely, however, the ideological aspect of performance which is blended with reality that becomes a theatre ruling over one's life whose models are brought to life such as Verdi's operas during Risorgimento, and the spectacles of the Soviet Union, the Third Reich and China under Mao.

Yet in a certain sense one can argue that the semiotic theory of translation is tightly linked to performance, since one actually translates one reality into another, for instance, the visual notation or a text into gestures, sounds, or tones, a transformation which places it into the very specific realm of *Schein*.

In contrast, the realization of the *Schein* character of the performance leads to a recognition of its function in play and its influences on the quality. The life work of anthropologist Anthony Seeger has been the filming and recording of the rituals of the Suya Indians of Xingu River at Mato Grosso. He and the cameras ultimately became part of the ritual itself. The Indians were able to observe their own performance in their thousand-year-old ritual. This greatly amused them and they began to joke in front of the camera and improve their performance. In the end, they filmed themselves. Accordingly, they were not subordinate to an anthropological object as an example of Stone Age rites, but moved at once from the archaic to the ethnosemiotic age.

The spectator may have such an intense desire for *Schein*, to see the performance itself. The most important performances of theatrical works, films, musical works, etc. for us are **those which we have never experienced, seen, heard or followed**. We may have wanted to experience them, but since this was not possible we were forced to imagine them. When I was a small boy, the Finnish National theatre performed Shakespeare's Julius Caesar. The display cabinet on the front wall of the theatre showed photographs from the performance. Since I was too young to attend the performance, I visualized a personal image of it based only on those black and white photos. The rest I had to imagine based on what I had heard from my elder brother about the performance. I was told that a particularly expressive moment was the scene of Caesar's triumph. In the middle of the action, an oracle appears on stage, crying: Beware the Ides of March! This scene was on a photo on the wall of the theatre. It seemed even more impressive than the moment when Brutus slays Caesar with his dagger, that is, in a boy's fantasy. I became a Wagnerian in the same fashion after seeing a performance of Parsifal at the age of twelve, and after having received three records (which a German Wagnerian had sent me after having heard of a distant young admirer of Wagner) and from an arrangement for piano of the Pilgrim's Chorus from Tannhäuser. Otherwise, I could only read from books and hear occasional radio broadcasts. Wagner was, more or less, a fictive entity for me. The music that I imagined in this way was probably much more impressive than that what I might have actually heard. Music is not in the sounds and tones but behind them.

The reality of performance is always vanishing and susceptible to oblivion. What actually remains in our minds out of the quantity of performances we have seen? In all probability merely a few stellar moments. The reason we remember may be connected with the context in which we have heard them. Boris Asafiev, composer and music scholar, a contemporary of M Bakhtin, argued that we remember *memoranda, moments and gestures, figures and points of attraction* from performances (according to Altti Kuusamo, a Finnish visual semiotician), or other things; a proper living artistic culture is built from them. Culture always has memory. It always determines which texts are remembered and which are forgotten. Performers deeply influence, however, what points of the work we do remember by means of their modalisations. For instance, I remember that as a youth I saw a television production of the tragedy Daniel Hjort by Julius Wecksell, a Finnish-Swedish poet. I remembered a single line from it, a phrase

said by a lady with a black scarf: *Och detta hat är jag* (and this hatred is me). Hologrammically, one element may come to represent the entire work of art. I also remember Zarah Leander from Cirkus Peacock at Linnanmäki, Helsinki. She sang, *Vill du se en stjärna, se på mig*. (Do you want to see a star, look at me). She appeared on stage on a raised platform as a great diva who had already seen her best days. Only now do I realise how humiliating it may have been for a big star to perform in so vulgar an environment after all of her previous experience. From the staging of *Uncle Vanya* by the legendary Finnish stage director only one memory has endured, the end of the play: ... and then we shall rest ...

There are avant-garde performances which, however, force spectators into the spectacle itself and consciously break the limit of representation of the proscenium arch. An experimental drama was presented by the theatre School in Helsinki a number of years ago. I went to see it because the young actors told that it was relevant to my existential semiotic theories. One of the young dramaturgists warned me, however, to remember to ask a ticket to that part of the audience which stays passive. And I did so, for a good reason! The active part of the audience had to go on stage dressed in plastic coats, while others threw juice and cream cake at them.

An existential semiotic theory of performance

After these preliminary reflections, I would like to launch a new theoretical model and attempt to apply it to the performing arts. It is the most recent elaboration of my existential semiotic theory, my model with four moments, a 'semiotic square'. It articulates our subject and his/her being by two aspects, which may be called Me and Society, or *Moi* and *Soi*, and four interpretations of the philosophical aspects of being. I shall begin by discussing the philosophical background of this theory (there is a large article forthcoming in *The Oxford Dictionary of Psychology*). Here, I will merely describe a four-part model whose origin lies in the Greimassian semiotic square but also deviates essentially from it, since it is transformed into a dynamic movement symbolized by the letter 'Z', those four aspects are **body, person (identity), social practice and values and norms:**

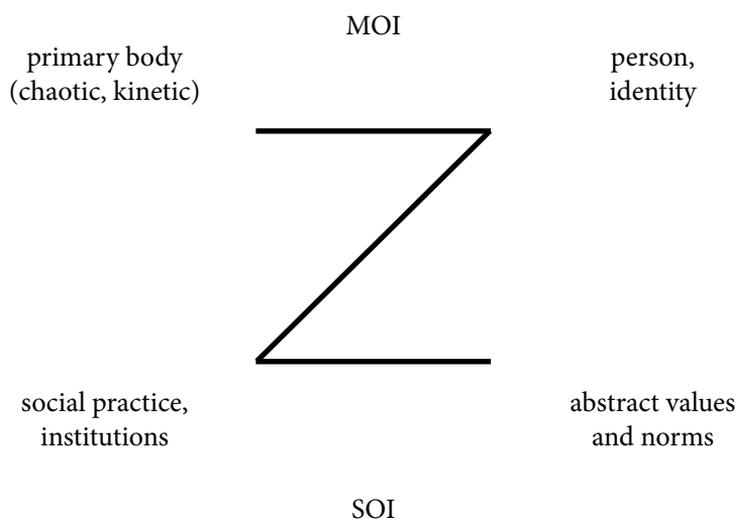


Fig. 4

For simplicity, I have numbered these four cases as M1, M2, M3 and M4, and S1, S2, S3 and S4 based upon which direction one is moving in the model: from a concrete, sensual body towards abstract norms and values, or from these intelligible categories towards their gradual exemplification and embodiment. I consider these two movements the essential tensions of ontological semiotics. Here the signs are seen insofar as they express, amongst other things, these four instances in performance so to say from the inside, **emicly**. One of my students suggested that these signs could be called **zemic** signs where **z** stems from this course of tension, and **emic**, referring to the theory by Pike, meaning the internal aspect:

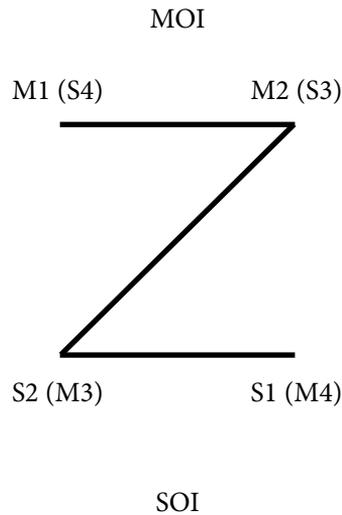


Fig. 5

The hypothesis behind this model is the following: there is no performing utterance which would not be based to some extent, would not refer to, mark or foreground some of these four cases. One can always analyse and make them explicit for any performance genre. The way in which these modes of being, and these categories of *Moi* and *Soi*, are manifested takes place through various degrees of affirmation and negation. Even in the model of Salosaari, the central point were the 'boxes' which portrayed these modal operations: denial, affirmation, doubt, persuasion, etc.

Yet in the existential semiotic model what is affirmed, denied, persuaded, etc. are just these four superimposed instances. Note that the first letter indicates the dominant modes and the one in parentheses the less apparent mode. Additional modalities are built upon this basic 'ontology' such as:

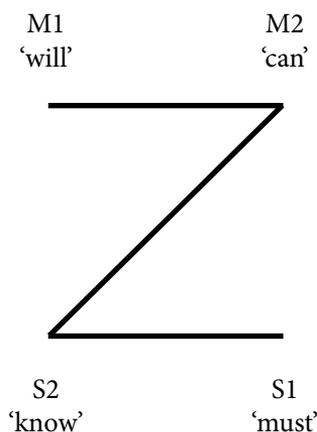


Fig. 6

and the new existential sign categories pre-, act- and post-, endo-, exo-, pheno-, geno- and qualisigns.

I do not discuss here the essential notion of transcendence, which also radically enriches this semiosis.

A visualization of the performer himself as well as his career and development can be articulated in any case with this model in two directions. For the first, there is the body with its innate inclinations which through education, learning and dialogicity, etc. develops into the permanent identity of a person. A person with specific physical and corporeal properties begins to search for a proper profession, or if he/she has a body good at motion, perhaps for dance, if he/she has a verbal body, then perhaps an actor, if he/she has a good voice, then a singer; if he/she has a good tongue, teeth and musical ear, he/she may play a wind instrument; if good hand-eye coordination, a pianist, if an excellent sense of rhythm, a percussionist and so forth. Altogether, he/she is shifted here from M1 to M2. Furthermore, when he/she develops in this vocation further, he/she is finally able to express on the level of S2 i. e. in a role in an institute or express the deepest values of S1, his community.

Corresponding to the value of *Soi* is the beauty of gestures, this principle may concretize in a society for instance as a ballet school and institution. It attracts proper 'bodies' and persons, i. e. those who have the required motor skills, sense of gestural language, aestheticity, outlook and personality traits such as perseverance, goal- directedness, etc. Certain persons are consequently selected to realise the values of the *Soi*; moreover this is preceded by corporeality as such in flesh, sensuality, etc. or m1. To which extent this process takes place in either direction **by itself**, automatically, or 'organically', and to which extent it has to be continually helped and supported in a dialogue with teachers, masters, maestros, etc. is a problem in and of itself. Or as one experienced art teacher crystallized his life experience: some realise, some do not.

From this model, however, new methodical challenges follow. First of all, obviously signs which appear in each mode or M1, M2, S2 and S1 are perhaps somewhat similar or different. Most often one may think that they become transformed in a certain fashion, for instance a gesture of M1, done by one person spontaneously, becomes via gradual habit a part of the person M2, perhaps eventually developing into a genre sign in some social practice, for instance in the communication of a rhetorician, ballet dancer, performer, etc. A sign is ultimately sublimated into a specific aesthetic, ideological or other value. Silence is for example also a gesture, pause. It

can be a sign of M1, taciturnity, speechlessness like among autistic people. It grows into character in M2, and furthermore into the trait of a certain role. In the opera Peter Grimes by Benjamin Britten, the hero is unable to defend himself verbally with fateful consequences. Speechlessness can appear as a dramatic pause created by an actor or musician, and finally silence can be a cultural feature and represent as value the tacit knowledge in a culture in which speech is not appreciated. If each mode of M1-S1 has its own signs, then how in them manifest pre- act- post-quasi-, endo-, exo- pheno- and genosigns – are they then kinds of supersigns which overcode those lower level signs and above all place them into a state of continuous becoming. A certain gesture can be still presigned in M1 whereas in M2 it has already become an act sign, and has become a post-sign respectively on the *Soi* level when it is imitated. The aforementioned question of the signs proper to each mode can also be put as follows: **are there purely corporeal, personal, institutional and normative** signs? Let us think of g-signs (Thomas A. Sebeok) or gestures: we are at a ballet watching Swan Lake, The movement of the wings of the swan imitated by arms and hands is a sign of M1. It can be done differently, however, when it is pursued by Margot Fonteyn or Ulanova or Plisetskaya or in the case of the Black Swan by Muhamedov or Baryshnikov, when it becomes a sign of M2, i. e. the entire personality of a dancer is included. Ballet has its particular codes, how it should be effectuated following its rules, and then the gesture is ballet: S2, and at the end it has its aesthetic message along with the music and plot: it is tempting, soft, sensual, and fateful:

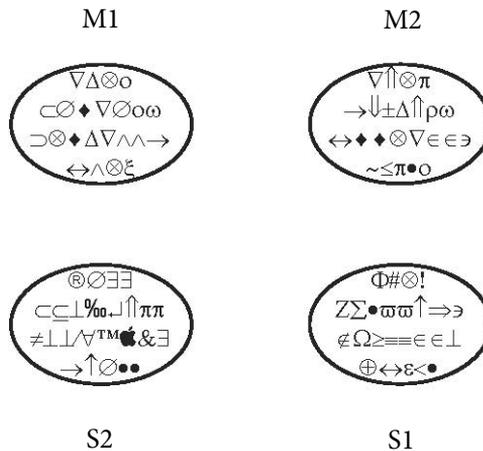


Fig. 7

Within the problem of how one species of signs is transformed into another, we can distinguish three cases: 1) there are signs which pass through all the modes; 2) there are signs whose Z-movement stops in one phase or mode, and 3) there are signs which are valid in only one mode.

In any case the situation is such that signs belong to three worlds: the natural world or ‘reality’ (which is always already semiotized, i. e. *le monde naturel* as Greimas said), the narration or the world of the text, and its representations in time and place via actors i. e. performance:

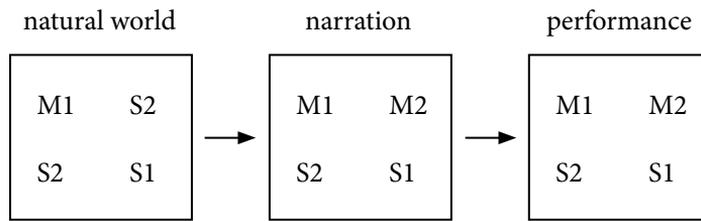


Fig. 8

Moreover, a crucial methodical point here is that we have to be able to read these ‘worlds’ so to say transparently through one other, or they exist simultaneously. This interpretation may be helped by an analogy from Lévi-Strauss’s mythical model or different readings of the myth of Oedipus via its various versions:

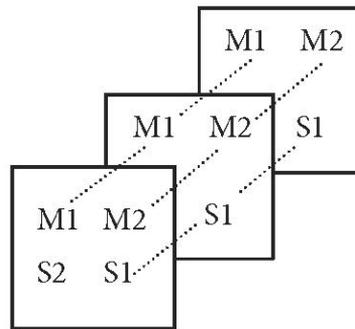


Fig. 9

It furthermore holds true that M1, M2, S2 and S1 appear inside each world always at the same time side by side or superimposed. By which method are we then able to read such polyvalent, texts with complex isotopes? Such a methodology is needed as a sort of X-ray of signs. One major **criticism against** semiotics has been that it has generally been satisfied to first classify signs into certain types and then search and name the proper token or exemplification for each. For instance an ‘icon’ is such a label: such and such a sign: well here we have an icon! One states when one encounters such a phenomenon. Yet this means most often enormous truncation, simplification of reality, schematization since no sign is merely an icon or index or pre-sign or quasi-sign or endo-sign etc. but represents various assigned categories at the same time. When one chooses only one sign species to portray the act of signification, one pushes aside an entire quantity of other sign species, it is often also an ideological choice, the richness of signs is reduced into one dominant idea, ears and eyes are closed to other meanings. Hence the new method must be based upon a new reading approach in which the levels of reality, the modes of being, and worlds from M1 to S1 are present. On which basis shall we make a selection in favour of one sign?

I accordingly propose four readings: M1, M2, S2 and S1 and moreover there can be particular signs inside each mode in the vertical dimensions as relations of type signifier/signified, *sa/sé* – and in the linear, consecutive dimension or signs unfolding from one other, signs becoming signs, signs which are *noch nicht*, not yet signs or in the ultimate case utopian signs in the sense of Ernst Bloch. Which method then would be able to take into account this transparency of the

sign, the superposition, and its multileveled nature, representing the state in which they actually appear in our lives, in the *Dasein*? When I next scrutinize nearest the ‘third world’ of the signs, or performance, on aims there for inferring from the face of an actor, intonation of the voice, gesture, etc. those many levels and for interpreting the meaning as a consequence from their joint impact upon us; only then a sign appears us as faitfait total social (Marcel Mauss)... and at the same time as fait total individual or fait total subjectif (which for us is body + person).

If we organise the aforementioned levels, however, into a generative course, we notice that often in practice, that is, in performing texts – dramas, compositions, ballets, cinemas – the aesthetic idea consists of these levels falling into conflict with one other. For instance, corporeality meets resistance from the norms of society, or a societal value cannot be realised since the person of a protagonist deceives it, for example, the person is not worthy of the idea, the person never obtains the profession which he should obtain, i. e. the shift from M2 to S2, etc. This is on the level of narration, although the same situation can occur in performance, representation in time. A film director deliberately assigns a role to a person who deviates from other ‘levels’ regarding M1 and M2. The Swedish beauty Greta Garbo is cast as a KGB agent in *Ninotchka*. Monsieur Hulot with his clumsy properties of M1 and M2 is placed into a markedly conventional and limited context of Soi amidst protagonists representing it, merely to create contrast and comedy. In the *Journal d'un curé à la campagne*, Bresson places a prosaic, substantial older priest beside a spiritual young priest: two different M1s. In Renoir's *La règle du jeu* the final tragedy occurs as an innocent, comical person falls victim to an accident, shot by a jealous servant as the wrong person. Marilyn Monroe's M1 (a sensual blonde), given a naïve character as M2, is placed amidst the hard American gangster world and its Soi. In Rossellini's neorealist film *Germany, Year Zero*, distancing is achieved through music. An atonal avant-garde sonority assumes a psychodiegetic role, portraying the chaotic mind of a young boy or childish M1; it is combined with the musical signs of S2 and S1 in their ‘negative’ form. (The music serves here as a transcending device like the journal at the time of the priest in Bresson).

Our model does not, however, have to be applied with the school-like systemization of Grei-mas's generative course.

Jaroslav Volek

Melodic Archetypes in the Compositions of Josef Suk

Translated from Czech by Judith Fiehler

Abstract | The following article was originally published in a collection of fourteen essays by Jaroslav Volek (1923–1989), *Struktura a osobnosti hudby* (Praha: Panton, 1988). Jaroslav Volek ranks as one of the most insightful of all international music theorists. His demonstration of the interconnected nature of a deep structure with semiotics, musical intelligence, emotional impulse, and the limitless power of creative inspiration reveals a remarkably fundamental aspect of Czech music which is difficult to communicate otherwise. The fact that Volek was not allowed to teach under the Communist regime is in a way, our good fortune. Otherwise, he might not have had the time to document a lifetime of sensitive, profound musical analysis in his publications. Volek’s work has had a significant impact on the direction of contemporary Czech musicology, aesthetics and semiotics.

Keywords | Jaroslav Volek, Melodic Archetypes, Josef Suk

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Part I

Suk’s music, with its highly personal melodic quality, is always more passionate, powerful, and, at times, even more intimate to the smallest detail than many of his illustrious contemporaries and predecessors have shown. His music has been described and portrayed through a wealth of perceptive concepts, particularly in recollections by the Master’s students, as well as by performers and listeners who have admired his work. It has been shown to be lyrical and monumental, contemplative and dramatic. It was Suk’s melodic invention which Dvořák spontaneously praised at the première of *Radúz a Mahulena*:¹ “This is music from heaven.” It is difficult to say what actual structural factors, such as intervallic progressions or unfolding melodic accents in cantabile phrases, produce this impression. Let us consider, however, a case in which a detailed analysis may enable us to recognise certain features of Suk’s creativity.

As Václav Štěpán has observed,² the sheer number and the wealth of motifs and motivic fragments, particularly the varied and complex tectonics of Suk’s compositions, led at most to extravagance, and at least to a generous dispersal of the melodic material that tends to take the shape of polythematicism and polymelody beneath the surface of the composition that tends to take the shape of. I have pondered whether there could be a counterbalance to this complexity. For

¹ As is customary among musicians, this abbreviated title is used to refer to Suk’s music for Julius Zeyer’s play *Radúz a Mahulena* op. 13, written in 1897–8. Suk developed its motifs more extensively in his orchestral suite *Pohádka* op. 16, written in 1901.

² Václav Štěpán, *Novák a Suk*, Praha: Hudební matice umělecké besedy, 1945. Translator’s note: Volek’s citations are often undocumented, and when they are, he does not provide page numbers.

example, a group of motifs that are otherwise substantially different, entirely independent melodic concepts may have similar contours. I have provisionally called such shared characteristics **archetypes**. The mere analysis of the contour or outline could lead one to assume relationships based on a superficial similarity that – would inappropriately give precedence to synthesis based on visual examination alone. Another term, **infrastructure**, appears to be overly burdened with connotations involving the general laws of compositional syntax, although in a strict sense it does actually refer to the infrastructure underlying the melodic structure itself. The term **archetype** has inherent disadvantages. I therefore prefer to state at the outset that certain uses of this term in general and specialist language are not relevant here, such as the so-called archetypal significance of structure in advanced psychology and the psychological theory of archetypes. I identify this usage as **semantic**. My use of this term is fundamentally **syntactic and morphological**, even though it indisputably contains a definite content. Secondly, rather than using the prefix **arche-** to describe something old or archaic, it can be defined as a descent to a deeper, more profound basis of structural construction for melody. A number of Suk's archetypes have already been analysed,³ but without a complete understanding of their given interrelationships except through case-by-case coincidence. The archetype takes its shape from this existing material as well as its combinations, whose inherent characteristics are sufficiently well-defined- to be profiled in an appropriate, generalized way, with an appropriate degree of precision. Such a characteristic could consist of melodic movement upward, downward, or continuing on the same level; if and how intervallic steps and leaps follow one another in melodic lines; an underlying metric / rhythmic characteristic; articulated continuity and discontinuity (legato, staccato, intermittent pauses, and so forth). Additional properties that enable us to determine an archetype may be the presence or absence of melodic ornamentation, of extremely detailed melismatic groups, etc.

Unlike an interval or rhythmic value, an archetype is not a theme, motif or melodic form in actual sound. However, a specific cluster of themes and melodies can have a common basis or pattern in an archetype. This definition seems to bring our concept of archetype close to the Czech concept of **intonation**,⁴ since groups of diverse forms and motifs with the same **intonation** can arise within the range of an archetype. Nevertheless, the same theme can be performed with differing intonations. It is to the greatest advantage of a distinct theme, motif, or other musical entity that a performer can choose an intonation to express and identify its notes as structural possibilities that could not have been grasped through the process of mere structural analysis. Such a choice is possible because the expressive qualities of individual structural elements are not *a priori*, but are only implied under conditions which are more or less probable and complex. Although the concepts of **archetype** and **intonation** have shared traits, they cannot be made to conform to one other or be included within one another, because varying, even contrary intonations can arise within the context of an archetype. The archetype itself is not defined by structural probability, but by a clear, generally unambiguous shape – not only notes, but also aspects of musical notation and description such as ties, dots, and phrase markings; suitable dynamic and

³ Zdeněk Sádecký, *Lyrismus v tvorbě Josefa Suka* [Lyricism in the Works of Josef Suk], Praha: Academia nakladatelství československé akademie věd, 1966; Oldřich Filipovský, *Klavírní tvorba Josefa Suka* [Josef Suk's Compositions for Piano], Plzeň: Nakladatelství Theodor Mareš, 1946.

⁴ Translator's note: In English-language musicology, **intonation** refers to the incipit of a specific Gregorian chant, which sets the pitch, style, and expressive quality for the performance of the chant as a whole. Its melodic pattern runs through the chant as a unifying thread. Janáček, like many of his Czech contemporaries, received his primary training in sacred music. Thus it was natural that he would also use this term to describe similar practices in secular music, and apply it to more complex melodic structures based on the same principle. **Intonation** (in Czech, **intonace**) is currently used in the literature of Czech music theory when discussing music of all genres.

metric / rhythmic indications for joining and separating musical phrases; interpretive details; melodic flow.

Before two of Suk's archetypes are presented, allow me to examine the relationship between what are called **monothematic** and **archetypal processes**. These processes are, to some degree, opposed to one other. The two leading figures of Czech modernism, Novák and Suk, were contemporaries but took different paths. Their styles seem to crystallize precisely to monothematic and archetypal processes respectively. Monothematicism, the process of composing an entire work on a single theme or thematic group, can only be achieved through deliberate, conscious compositional activity. The archetypal principle requires a deeper, intuitive, subconscious creativity which can not only express relationships within a specific work, but also the relationships of one work to another. Novák tends to use a virtuosic variation technique, without using obvious archetypes to link the themes of his compositions. Suk's music is polythematic and tends to avoid the traditional processes of the variation technique. To replace them, he makes use of evolutionary unfurling and linking of varied melodic kernels, some of which may have a common archetypal basis.

Suk's orchestral work *Zrání* op. 34 is interesting from this perspective. Unlike the other parts of his symphonic tetraology, it reveals his personal creativity as well as his maturation as an artist and human being. The introductory lyrical *Adagio quasi andante* of *Zrání* demonstrates his approach to the fundamental shape of the work. According to Štěpán,⁵ this passage, flowing as freely as the protoplasm in which embryos are formed, is the kernel of practically all the subsequent – and observe! – varied themes and motifs that will subsequently crystallize from its matrix. By applying traditional variation and motivic techniques, monothematicism shapes and transforms all of the thematic material from a single predetermined theme. In contrast, the approach generally used in *Zrání* is the unfurling of one motif from another in close thematic synopsis. Suk's piano work *O přátelství* op. 36 presents another approach – a musical stream in which the early forms converge to produce the full, independent existence of the principal theme in a **posterior** rather than a **priori** shape.

The difference between these approaches and impulses can be formulated by observing that a theme is semantically a **sign**, whereas an **archetype** is the material or indication from which a sign is formed. A theme is powerful, penetrating, occupying an extremely large area of work through repetitions and the numerous transformations to which it gives voice. An archetype is fertile, drawing additional motifs and themes (rather than mere variations) from itself as background support. Nevertheless, the archetype is not given the priority that a traditional theme would have. It actually blocks the path to monothematicism. This is why Suk's large symphonic creations are strongly polythematic, and why they tend, in performance as well as concept, toward polymelody, the concept of the musical thread, music in layers. Expressing the contrasting nature of the styles of Novák and Suk through the terms **monothematicism** versus **archetype** is certainly not hundred percent absolute. Novák at times seems to find a definite archetypal common element for specific themes, such as a motivic fragment of a rising fifth followed by a rising second. There certainly is no lack of evidence that Suk could have composed monothematically. His capability to do so is usually demonstrated by referring to his use of **Durchführung**, through-composition. Suk works in a more general context, which enables him to quote deliberately specific, important motifs throughout his entire oeuvre. Examples are the motif of love from Op. 7⁶ as well as the motif of death, used in *Radúz a Mahulena* and *Asrael*, op. 27. Additional

⁵ Štěpán, p. 261 ff.

⁶ Translator's note: Suk's Op. 7 is the *Piano Pieces*, composed 1891-1893. Volek identifies op. 7 as *Píseň lásky*, however, in section III of this article.

musical ideas quoted and disseminated are: the motif of the chorus *O mladosti*, Vratkov's song and Mahulena's song from *Radúz*; the motif of fate from the cycle *Životem a snem*, op. 30; *Zráni*. The theme of the slow movement of the *Symphony in E major* op. 14 was taken from his *Sonatina for piano* and was also used in his *Episodes* for piano and elsewhere.

Such migrations of thematic material have been observed in Czech music since the time of Smetana. They usually have a clear semantic connotation of expressive reminiscence and are linked by content. They do not seem to be related through an archetype, however. On the contrary, when such precomposed themes with well-defined significance are quoted and transformed in new contexts, they seem to be deliberately masked. This process takes advantage of the capability of the musical sign to carry symbolic meaning. It is precisely this capability that determines the unchanging shape of the idea in relation to the idea's iconic, expressive aspect which does change in quotation.

The question thus arises whether it is exactly this abundance of quotations of pivotal motifs with symbolic connotations in Suk's oeuvre (as well as in his personal life) which serves as a definite counterbalance to the polythematicism of his large compositions, the movement toward extensive plurality in compositions such as the cycle *Životem a snem*; whether it could be an entirely personal, precise way of applying the principle of **unitas multiplex** [unity from diversity] with a double meaning.

Part II

I would now like to try to visualize two of Suk's archetypes in their natural context rather than in words or graphs, and view them in their thematic reality.

Archetype 1 can be defined on the basis of a rising **tritone**, rhythmically positioned to provide reinforcement approximately on the **principal beat of the measure**, and to serve as a reminder that the initial interval is much smaller than the next. The upward movement is generally not symmetrical; in fact, the rule seems to be that **asymmetry** is its fundamental aspect.

This archetype distinctly appears in melodically exposed areas such as principal entrances of themes. Since these entrances frequently have, as has been said, different intonational characteristics, they cannot be identified as related to a single intonation. They can, nevertheless, represent a kernel of possibilities for intonation by means of a generalized semantic aspect (entry with a rising robustness, firmness, energetic majesty; a family resemblance in increasing upward motion; avoidance of regular pattern, etc.) which endures as a common element. I will now examine certain examples of intonational differences in the embodiments of Archetype 1 and its group of characteristics.

The principal theme of the first movement of *String Quartet no 1 in Bb major* sounds as follows:



Here, the kernel of the melodic idea is placed alongside the following three-note figure at the bar line between the second and third measures, and then at the bar line between the third and fourth measures. It is, nevertheless, the important principal theme, and its value markedly increases as the movement continues.

A melodic-rhythmic content is placed within the intervals of this rising, asymmetric figuration at the entrance of the theme in *Suite* op. 21.



When I compare these two versions of the archetype, I find the following differences in intonation. The example taken from the quartet conveys harmonic tranquillity, outlining notes of the tonic chord: its constant dynamic level and legato interpretation produce a soft, youthful, brisk effect. In the *Adagio* of the *Suite*, the situation is entirely different: the intervallic progression is more daring. The major second and diminished fifth outline a third inversion chord rather than one in the root position, there is a striking harmonic progression from G minor to F major, and the climax is reached with the sounds of complex chords (the combination of the bass note Bb and the diminished seventh chord on F#). Here, dynamics and phrasing have the aggressive character of *sforzando*. Although the theme changes to a major variant in the following *Allegro vivace*, the progression **g-a-e** preserves the lapidarity and the third-inversion asymmetry of the rising intervals:



It can be said that the stress and gravitas of the harmonic functionality of the somewhat melancholy theme of the *Suite* contrast sharply with the first movement of the cycle *Jaro*, op. 22a.



The intervallic construction here has the form of a minor third followed by an augmented fourth. It is quite unconventional harmonically because of the semantics of the theme of the fundamental chord progression: D, F7 to the arpeggiated B7 at the first entrance of the chromatic mediant and the three-note figure that can be analysed as a secondary mediant. The striking originality of its energy is charged, takes flight, perhaps aroused, like spring bursting into bloom. The syntactical stability of the very beginning of the composition is, among other things, due to the fact that it actually moves in the key of E major. The tonic consequently seems to be present even before measure 47, the entrance of extremely subtle transformations of the principal theme. The

rising intervals are a major second here and a perfect fourth, while the accompanying chords are entirely scale-wise – T-D-ST.



In the third piece of *Jaro – V očekávání* – another theme can be found. I do not believe that this is merely a diminution of the theme at the beginning of the cycle, but that it displays an archetypal relation to it. The first recollection of Archetype 1 (rising intervals of a minor second and perfect fourth)



can be considered a simple preparation for the characteristic, imaginative cantilena,



in which the motivic fragment is repeated six times before it ends on the dominant. It is followed by a song of yearning in which the archetype appears in inversion, as descending transformations which always begin with minor seconds. It continues with a variety of generally larger intervals, from a major third to a minor sixth – all of which are harmonically situated in a peaceful Gb major context with an emotionally appropriate use of secondary chords: the third, sixth, and Mixolydian seventh.

The next example is from *Večerní nálada*, no. 3 of *Letní dojmy*, op. 22b, the most extensive and most programmatic composition of the cycle. Once again attention should be drawn to a theme which refers to Archetype 1:



The archetype is implemented as a line of intervals of a major second and major third, connecting the tonic with the intervals of the third and the mediant chord on Ebb (actually D major), the chromatic mediant of the key of Gb major. With the aid of this and other harmonies (a combination of tonic pedal tones on the tonic and chords other than the tonic), the otherwise conventional melodic progression from the fifth scale degree through the sixth to the octave of the tonic comes into its own. The intonation accurately conveys reverie, the mood of a summer evening.

The next chronological appearance of Archetype 1 is in the *Adagio Noc* movement from *Pohádka léta*, op. 29, which Václav Štěpán describes as “horoucnost obrácená do sebe samé, extáze modlitby” [internalized passion, the ecstasy of prayer], “široce se pnoucí vzestup, vykonaný s klidnou pomalostí” [spanning an extensive ascent, accomplished with calm slowness], and as “pocit závažné substance, dané velebnou prozíravostí” [the sense of a serious substance conveyed through magnificent wisdom]. These descriptions are provided in order to demonstrate Štěpán’s ability to understand the spirit of the motif as well as to re-emphasise the intonational independence of this motif and its realm of emotional expressivity, designated as *legato piano espressivo*. The difference between the size of the first and second rising intervals is particularly noticeable: the major second is followed by a minor seventh, filling out the octave.



As the motif unfolds its dissonance fades. Another declaimed figure arises from an obvious alteration: *dolcissimo*.



This survey of embodiments of Archetype 1 as various independent musical ideas concludes with the theme of the composition *O přátelství*



with its intervallic progression of a minor third and perfect fourth, and later, in the *poco scherzando* section, of a major third and fourth. Its expressiveness shows a kinship with the *Večerní nálada* movement of *Letní dojmy*. (The reinforcing chords of *O přátelství* obviously move this theme away, from the fleeting, transient quality of a simple mood, allowing it to describe the constancy of emotional ties among friends.) This theme is also related to *Suite* op. 21 by the harmonic weight of its highest note, as well as the altered chord with complex functionality: Gb

minor-Bbb minor – c – Fb (the diminished minor seventh chord), which is de facto a combination of the tonic pedal notes Gb and an altered chord on the flatted seventh degree of the scale: Fb minor – a – c).

In order to provide additional substance to the discussion of Archetype 1 and trends in this direction, I provide a footnote with an exceptionally convincing example which confirms the theme of the present text.⁷ In closing, allow me to summarise that Archetype 1, consisting of two asymmetrical melodic combinations of smaller and larger intervals, inherently provides a legacy of a clear stylistic class. Its deliberate irregularity reveals a tendency away from classic proportion as well as primordial Romantic patterns. Its melodic arch contains direct, non-problematic leaps upward, and becomes absorbed in the passionate and nostalgic inflections of its descending line. The archetype is naturally organic, growing as a plant would, despite its semantic differences and thematic contrasts. It always has the role of something positive, crucial, particularly during the processes of unfolding and being unfolded, of something which restores the archetypal pattern and fulfils the structure of the music itself with Suk's invention and artistic design.

Part III

The melodic shape presented here as Archetype 2 may be described as a succession of ascending scale-wise intervals and is associated with an expressive, legato leap downward in a relatively slow or moderately rapid tempo. The leap may either occur before or after the rising second. I am of the opinion that this archetype is most effective when rising seconds occur before and after the leap. The wide falling interval is always consistent with the meter and rhythm. Rather than functioning as a metric close or melodic confirmation of the theme, it calls for further melodic development. It does not convey a programmatic impression of an extramusical leap in the real world (although a distance in height can also be called a leap). The leap in this archetype is not

⁷ The example concerns the monumental intonation in the *Largamente* of *Zrání*, op. 34 (rehearsal number 85), which contains an intervallic progression of a major second, minor third and another perfect fifth:



It is derived from the introduction of the work (the key to the greater part of the melodicity of *Zrání*), in which a melodic outline is repeated contrapuntally.



Moreover, the kernel of this melodic outline appears in an intervallic augmentation in the second half of the first measure between these two entries.

With a bit of license, archetype 1 can also be identified in certain motifs from the music to Zeyer's play *Pod jabloni* and the *String Quartet no. 2*, op. 31, as well as the first theme from *Ukolébavka*, op. 33 (Lullaby), where this archetype is repeated exactly. However, the generative power of the archetype is somewhat weakened there [,] because its intensity is eased by the metric/rhythmic notes g and c:



archetype 2. The exception is the *Fantasy*, where the musical idea that arises on the basis of the archetype is the last of a series of themes in the composition (the central composition in Suk's central period). In all the other cases, the themes are entirely indispensable for conveying the semantics of the composition, for they are more than equivalent to the principal motivic entry. One might even say that they bear the greatest possible personal communication of the author from the perspective of the given synthesis of the work, that they are expressions of his innermost relationship with them.

Fantasy op. 24 has an extensive three-part A-B-A large form. The outer parts can be designated as balladic-lyric (but also with moments of volatility, such as the orchestral introduction of the composition); the middle section provides sparkling relief through the sonic brilliance of violinistic agility in the high register. The **B** section is further subdivided into sections **a-b-a**. Once again, the inner section (**b**) forms an imaginative contrast to the (**a**) sections which surround it. It conveys dark passion, a broad arch of melody performed "sul G" by the concertante instrument. The melody displays the ideally unfolding kernel of archetype 2: expressive intervallic leaps at the beginning and the end of the melodic arch, and the maximal length of the rising line of seconds between them (9 intervals in the range of a tenth in all; in the subsequent repetition, 11 intervals of a second in the range of a twelfth!). It should be noted that the **rubato** indication and the implicit accelerando of durations in the ascending melody greatly increase the energetic power of the cantilena:



The emotional urgency and turbulence of the emphatically sustained "embrace" in the melodic arch is intensified here with repetition which is aurally as striking as possible, penetrating, particularly when the concertante instrument performs it in parallel octaves, and also in moments of motivic evolution when it leads to the kernel of the principal theme by means of the expressive interval of an augmented seventh:



Our next example is from Suk's bravura orchestral work *Fantastické Scherzo*. Its subsidiary theme is one of Suk's truly magical melodies. Despite its quite rapid tempo and setting (the accompanying figuration and orchestration), the scherzo-like atmosphere of the work conveys the yearning of *Píseň laská* with merely a reference to the archetype of the embrace:



The grace of the melody is enhanced by the harmony, an unconventional utilisation of secondary chords and the major subdominant in minor, as well as the rhythmic contrast of the prolonged legato with the staccato accompaniment to the playful figure which finally penetrates the theme itself. The melodic outline, the leap of a seventh filled in by rising seconds, demonstrates the function of the archetype. It provides such a gentle submissiveness, along with a dependable description, that the melody can be performed as a subjective “trembling of the soul,” although it also has an epic objectivity. It also adheres to the basic semantics of the archetype, representing a light, luxurious style through an abundance of forms.

Out of all of the presented quotations, the subjectively most resolute example of archetypal concentration is, by far, the subsidiary theme of the symphonic poem *Praga*, op. 26.

a) *Molto sostenuto*
Ob. solo *a/t.*

b) *Un pocchetino più animato*
Vno I.
Vno II.
Vle | Vcll |
Es c c Es⁴ As Es⁶ As Es⁶ As Es⁶ B⁷ (9) Es⁷ D⁷

The setting of the archetypal pattern is once again associated with a rather free tempo and a relaxed dotted rhythm. It is both supple and intimate, particularly in its orchestral transformations in the stringed instruments (one of which has been selected as an example), producing an extremely profound, persuasive effect. Otakar Šourek's forward to the printed edition of the full score identifies the origin of this musical idea as the theme of love, consisting of a single accompanied figuration in Mahulena's monologue.⁸ The pattern does not often come to the foreground. It lacks, amongst other things, the great emotional impact of the rising leap. However, the theme of love in *Praga* does contain, the expressive sixth C – Eb. It generates a powerful crescendo and generally has an expansive tendency. It could be said that it not only speaks of love, but also of strong feelings, of pathos, of intense emotion.

A magical violin solo appears in the central, faster section at rehearsal number 29 in the full score of *Praga*. Suk frequently made use of such solos in a high register over the hushed orchestra to express lyrical pathos. The melody is undoubtedly related to the love theme, although it is too much of an independent creation to be a mere variant or a derivation. Although this cantilena does not belong to Archetype 2, it is presented here because – corresponding to its morphological support of the love theme, to which it is expressively adapted – it contains a single element of the archetype: a broad legato downward leap, retaining and empowering the embrace, an ardent sweetness combined with intense emotion.

⁸ This melody appears over the words “Jsou ptáci sladcí hosté, na ruce moje ztuhlé sedají” [the sweet birds are guests; they perch on my motionless hand]

Andante

Example: poco piu animato (p. 252)

The musical score consists of two systems. The first system is for 'Vno solo' (Violin solo) and is marked 'Poco piu animato' and 'espress.'. It features a melodic line with a rising interval followed by a falling sixteenth note in a dotted rhythm. The second system is marked 'molto espress.' and continues the melodic line with similar rhythmic patterns.

The next example can be identified as one of Suk's most important musical ideas: the subsidiary, or better said, the second principal theme of the first movement *Asrael*. It appears relatively early, in measure 101, as the first episode of relief in a movement which has been up to that point rather apprehensive and threatening, conveying the atmosphere of a harsh onslaught in the introduction *Andante con moto e risoluto*, with deliberate rhythms and seemingly despairing, disruptive forms derived from the well-known three-note motif of death, taken from *Radúz*. This theme lends Suk's habitual emotional intensity to the movement and to these particular areas. According to the preface to the published edition of the full score by Karel Šrom, it represents "an escape into beautiful memories." The theme is built on the plan of Archetype 2, but with a small change; the rising interval of the second is enriched with short, falling sixteenth notes in a dotted rhythm, as if providing detail to the flowing crest of emotional trembling. A powerful effect is obtained through imitations of this motif in the horns and violoncellos against the conflicting Lydian alteration of the seventh chord on the seventh degree, d-f#-c with the fermata on the tonic eb-Bb.

The musical score is for 'Andante con moto' and is marked 'Vni cong.'. It features a complex texture with multiple parts. The first system includes parts for 'Vie' (Violin), 'Vcllo I.' (Violoncello I.), and 'Vcllo II.' (Violoncello II.). The second system includes parts for 'Vcllo II.' and 'Cb.' (Contrabasso). The score shows a melodic line with a rising interval followed by a falling fifth in the sixth measure, marked 'molto espressivo'.

The leap of a minor seventh is once again extremely wide, leading to a falling fifth in the sixth measure. This incantation is more expressively stirring and intense than the themes of *Praga*; it is truly composed **a priori**, with deliberation, containing separated notes marked *molto espressivo*. Its imitative shifts are burdened with a definite sense of fracture, whereas the intensity of the theme from *Praga* is in harmony with its stability. However, it is tinged here with actual instability. Despite its effective contrast with the preceding mood of anxiety and the devastating blows of fate, its return departs from the calmness of remembrance; it is unable to return to its source. One could venture to say that this sort of archetypal modification is the mark of Suk's inventiveness,

a persistent search to express such extremely profound yet contrasting states of mind from varied perspectives (from the standpoint of the possibilities of the archetype), to the maximum extent. It is more important for this reason to convey the gravity of the work's expressivity rather than to emphasise the individuality of its sections. This aspect is shown, for example, by the specific expressivity of falling leaps throughout the composition and the legato cantilenas which appear in several places within this five-movement symphony. The motif of the funeral intrada in the second movement contains falling intervals of diminished fourths and an augmented fifth after brief progressions of seconds. A cantilena melody is played by the trumpet and English horn:⁹



The last example of archetype 2 is taken from the piano cycle *O matince*, which contains several modified quotations. It contains passages taken, for example, from *Pohadka léta* (the trumpet choir in the first movement with progressions of seconds in the inner voice, the passage *dolcissimo tranquillo* in the movement *V moci přeludů*) and the *Epilogue* that is omitted for the sake of brevity.

The first section at the very beginning of the cycle, marked *dolce ma espressivo*, bears unmistakable traits of the archetype. After the entrance of the buoyant fanfare figuration, it ascends in a scale-wise motion to the tonic Bb, and consequently (*dolcissimo!*) descends a seventh to C.



This theme is markedly different from all of its predecessors. It sings of an entirely different world of childhood, playfulness and lightheartedness. It nevertheless has an ardent intensity which is

⁹ The work also contains clear, exalted, and broadly arched incarnations of archetype 2; for example, the two violin solos in the fourth movement of the symphony. They are plaintive, prominent high-register countermelodies to the principal theme of this movement (modally tinged with the Mixolydian seventh), performed by the English horn (in the first example, doubled with the bassoon).



Moreover, the melodies of both solos (particularly the second) and their chord progressions are conceived more dissonantly than the other music, horizontally as well as vertically, giving further evidence of the great potential that the use of an archetype gives for metamorphic intonation. Thus, there are increased performance possibilities for the music that accentuates the semantic moment of poignant transformation.

associated with empathy and love, with somewhat of a reference to non-musical factors. The inexhaustible source of Suk's inventiveness can be clearly observed here as well as the possibilities provided by the archetypal process to produce combinations of ordinary melodic patterns such as steps, leaps, an upward and downward motion and the like.

Archetype 2 also appears in additional passages of the cycle; for example, in the heavenly, ethereal cantilena in the middle section of the fourth piece (*O matinčině srdci*) which provides a vivid contrast to the struggles and tragedy in the other sections. The downward leap, now a fourth, can be heard once more against a rising chain of seconds with a falling fifth at the end of the phrase:



The beginning of the fifth piece, *Vzpomínání*, has something small but quite characteristic in common with Archetype 2. Although the introductory rising second does not seem to be relevant to the archetype (the interval **g-a** is immediately followed by **d-e**), the expressively transformational legato leap to the note **a** (played by the left hand) and the following second rising to the note **c2** will remind listeners of the other examples and illustrations. The intonation is quite specific, fully corresponding to the performing indications for these figures, *expressivo* and *tranquillo*, as well as the *Vzpomínání* – remembrance. It certainly need not be added that the lyric, ardent kernel of Archetype 2, is fully evident here.



Part IV

A few sentences in closing. The archetypes indicated here are not the only ones in Suk's oeuvre. The opening notes of *Quartet no 2*, op. 31 present, for example, a melodic-rhythmic contour which is also used in additional themes and compositions:



Similarly, the legato third intervals are stated twice in a slow tempo and followed by a short unfurling melodic line near the pitch of the first note of the melodic idea:





Another archetype is linked with the recurrences of certain stubborn repeated leaps of a fourth, fifth, and third to the central note from either side, emerging from a concept of abruptness, a terse rhythmicization of the entire form in extremely rapid tempo; also with *sforzato* dynamics at the beginning of the fourth movement of the *Serenade in Eb major*, in the *Fantasy for Violin and Orchestra in g minor*, the *Fantastic Scherzo*, and the aggressive character and rapid tempo of the theme of fate which pervades all parts of *Asrael*.

These examples and their profound correspondences demonstrate the underlying, syntactically and semantically important wellsprings of Suk's spontaneous, musical, masterfully skilled inventiveness; the deep foundation of their effectiveness; that the themes inherently arise from a need for precise communication, definite content; always in a new, tangible form. The gentleness that they have in common confirms the idea that the Master's character affected the development of his musical language. It is often said that *Asrael* signifies an extremely fundamental break in Suk's development, and that his entire oeuvre from this work onward is a massive reaction to *memento mortis*, the death of his beloved wife. This is not entirely the case, however. The archetypal coherence which has been pursued here indicates that the line of Suk's creativity is truly as continuous and plentiful as the waves of the ocean, and that there is a common denominator for all the phases of his life's work.

