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Ending Republican Gender Politics – Vítězslava Kaprálová's Cantata *Ilena*¹

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Special points of interest:

The politics of Kaprálová's cantata *Ilena*, op. 15

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Vítězslava Kaprálová's diary entry for March 15, 1939, the date of the German occupation of the remaining territories of the First Czechoslovak Republic,² is illustrated with a drawing of a grave cross (Fig. 1 on p. 2).³ Kaprálová added a question mark underneath the cross, which surely leaves room for interpretation, but could stand for the question: "How should we go on from here?" At the time, the composer might have posed this question not just solely from a higher, political perspective.

On the date of the diary entry Kaprálová lived in Paris, supported by a scholarship granted by the French Government on the recommendation of her home state that now had ceased to exist. For her, this political change meant an upcoming period of serious personal, financial and artistic difficulties.⁴ The question "How should we go on from here?" might therefore be answered – somewhat flatly – by mentioning her untimely death⁵ about a year later, in a hospital in Montpellier in June 1940, where she had fled from another German invasion, this time of France and its capital, Paris.

The demand that the occupation of her home state of the Republic (in which she grew up and which was founded in 1918, three years after she was born) needs to be related to her artistic output, results from more than a superficial parallelization of biographical circumstances and artistic endeavor. As music biography research has shown during the last decades, it is impossible to understand music separately from its context, if one does not implicitly want to prolong the 19th century notion of absolute music and the related concepts of work and genius.⁶ In the first part of this article, I will trace the manifold connections between Kaprálová's own political attitudes⁷ and her compositions by exploring the cross-relations of Republicanism and gender in

her career and times. A telling example of the multilayered interrelation of these disparate aspects in one of her compositions, the cantata⁸ *Ilena*, whose orchestration the composer did not complete, is examined in the second and final section of the article. This new perspective on Kaprálová's compositional output is intended to undermine established biographical master narratives that characterized its posthumous reception, and were not least due to the ideological regimes in her homeland between 1939 and 1989 that fundamentally shaped it.⁹

The Politics of Music

Kaprálová composed since she was a girl, and she composed from early on with a sense of her political surroundings. At the age of ten, she was inspired by Alois Hlavinka's book *Kronyka českomoravská* (*The Chronicle of Our Nation*) to compose *Po bitvě bělohorské* (*After the Battle at the White Mountain*) for piano, referring to one of the nation-building legends of Czech history, as a program for her composition. Marking a further loss of state independence to the catholic Hapsburg occupier, this battle, which had taken place west of Prague at the beginning of the Thirty Years' War and which had profound consequences for the Czech people and their language, later served as a point of reference for the long-lasting suppression of Czech culture and state independence that gained mythological status.¹² It was one of the reference points within the national cultural memory when arguing for the claim of the Czechoslovak nation to have their own state after the First World War. Kaprálová dedicated the piece to Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk, then president of the First Czechoslovak Republic, and sent a copy to him.¹³ Another dedication to

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Fig. 1: A page from Kaprálová's 1939 diary, dated March 15. Deposited (under shelf no. G 8.123) at the Moravian Museum, Department of Music History in Brno. Reprinted by permission.

Masaryk followed with the *Posmrtná variace* (Posthumous variation), a 1937 piano interlude from the song cycle *Vteřiny roku*, op. 18 (Seconds of a Year), composed to commemorate his death.¹⁴

As is commonly known, the performance of Kaprálová's *Vojenská symfonieta*, op. 11 (*Military Sinfonieta*, 1936–1937) at the 16th Festival of the International Society for Contemporary Music in London in 1937 also had strong national overtones. Kaprálová, who conducted the BBC (Symphony) Orchestra and represented Czechoslovakia, publicly referred to her political intentions in the festival program guide:

In it [*the Military Sinfonieta*] the composer uses the language of music to express her emotional relationship toward the questions of national existence . . . a subject permeating the consciousness of the nation at the time.¹⁵

Kaprálová later became involved in the activities of the Czechoslovak community in Paris in support of the endangered Republic.¹⁶ Her soon-to-be husband Jiří Mucha as well as her uncle Bohumil Kaprál became soldiers of the exile army stationed in Southern France. The composer herself wrote articles for the exile weekly *La cause Tchécoslovaque*, and took part in the music activities that supported the political concerns of the exile community.¹⁷

I am well aware that this incomplete collection of examples of Kaprálová's compositions and activities, which explicitly comprised a political context, may not represent the political opinions of their author, which we do not know a lot about,¹⁸ but might as well be at least partly the results of shrewd career planning (which proved to be successful).

The Gender Politics of Music¹⁹

Although having grown up in a musician family, with her mother being a singer, her father a pianist and composer, Kaprálová's way into composition and conducting was not an easy one: even her father, as one of the earliest witnesses of her immense talent, advised her against pursuing this career because he foresaw obstacles due to her gender. She was the first woman to study both subjects in Brno; and later in Prague, she was the only woman in her classes of composition. According to her own account of the composition lessons with Vítězslav Novák,²⁰ she did that with an enormous degree of self-confidence, being equally talented and able to do the job at the same level of quality and self-reflection as her male fellow students.

Both of Kaprálová's cities of study, Prague and Paris, underwent a period of redefinition of gender roles in their first and third periods respectively of Republicanism between the two World Wars.²¹ Kaprálová's possibilities to develop as a composer were imbedded in this new fluidity of gender roles in the Republican European states she lived in. But also social changes in the republics she was surrounded by, like Poland and, at least for the first part of her life, Germany, Austria and Hungary, might have shaped her conception of how to pursue her own career as a woman.

The strong connection between gender roles and Republicanism in France during the 19th century was described by Annegret Fauser²² and Jann Passler.²³ They examined a basic disposition of the integrative approach of Republicanism to society to be regarded as female gendered. Time and again, this gendering was counteracted by conscious political and institutional deeds meant to demonstrate maleness. Both tendencies of gendering the Republican nation state,²⁴ centered on the concept of the ideal citizen to be educated also via musical culture, originate in the aftermath of the French revolution. Not the least because of the rise of the suffragette movement and its claim for women's voting rights, European Republicanism was still strongly associated with the female gender, if not feminism, and the ideal of the new woman²⁵ during Kaprálová's lifespan.

Already during the 19th century, especially in the aftermath of the 1848 upheavals, Republicanism played a central role in the self conception of many French artists who defined their work as highly political and deeply connected their inner freedom to create with democratic rights of citizens²⁶—a tradition that arose again during the French Third Republic (1870–1940);²⁷ and a tradition that politically connected the long estab-

lished French and the young Czechoslovak Republic. During the 1920s and 1930s many Czechoslovak citizens also seem to have linked artistic concepts of genius and of creation with democratic citizen rights.²⁸

Folklorism and modernism: The holiday house

Fig. 2 shows the holiday home of the Kaprál family in the Moravian Highlands's small village Tři Studně (Three Wells), situated about 70 km northwest of Brno. The village has been named after the three nearby springs, one of them called today «Vitulka» after Kaprálová (a diminutive of her name Vítězslava). The local spring celebration of the opening of the springs, to which Bohuslav Martinů's chamber cantata *Otvírání studánek*²⁹ refers, is celebrated in Tři Studně anew since 1993, following an initiative that also included members of the Kaprál family.³⁰

The style of the Kaprál house, which was built in 1934, strongly calls upon modernist architectural traits, and remains to the present day a solitary example of its type among the surrounding buildings.³¹ The Kaprál villa in Tři Studně seems to integrate an up-to-date aesthetic approach with the requirements of a holiday home for the family, often welcoming guests for longer periods of time. It appears to be a small, provincial and more down-to-earth version (without electricity and warm water during the first years) of Mies van der Rohe's Villa Tugendhat in Kaprálová's hometown of Brno, finished in 1930 and inhabited by a Jewish entrepreneur family until they made the decision to leave the country in view of the threat of National Socialism in 1938.³² Czechoslovakia was, as Derek Sayer put it, a "hotbed of architectural radicalism between the wars,"³³ with many artists from the country exchanging ideas with avant-garde artists and architects, among them being Le Corbusier, who visited the Czech capital several times. Although not described as such until now, this seems to be another important trait of Kaprálová's artistic and political environment.

Some of the criticism that arose around Mies van der Rohe's Villa Tugendhat in the Czechoslovak Republic seems to mirror ambivalence between the national folklorism of the people and the modernist artistic and economic concepts, visualized to the point with the modernist Kaprál holiday home in its rural surroundings. The sharp-tongued leftist art critic Karel Teige did not hold himself back when referring to van der Rohe's Villa Tugendhat in mocking tones as a house that is "theatre and sculpture, not architecture—snobbish ostentation, but not a dwelling."³⁴ One of the central claims of Bauhaus, functionality, was unwrapped as actually having become a kind of "absolute" aesthetic concept, thereby being paradoxical in itself.

This paradox seems also to be relatable to the inner conception of the Republican Czechoslovak state and Masaryk's handling of monarchist structures during the nation building. While setting a non-essentialist humanist and democratic standard, based on ethics and education when arguing for the integrating qualities of a Czechoslovak state during the 1890s, he kept on following monarchist structures and contents of arguments. The Young Czechs' Movement's thoughts³⁵ thereby became entangled with folklorisms of people when meeting the political reality of peace negotiations after the First World War. According to Erazim

Vítězslava Kaprálová's *Cantata Ilena*



Fig. 2: The Kaprál house in Tři Studně (the date and photographer unknown) deposited at the Moravian Museum, Department of Music History in Brno. Reprinted by permission.

Kohák, the First Czechoslovak Republic succeeded at least partially, thanks to Masaryk, at realizing "what the old monarchy should have been, but never was, which is a just state for all its citizens."³⁶ Also in this case, as seen previously with Bauhaus, the intellectual point of departure of the movement seems to have integrated the structures it wanted to abandon when meeting social and political 'realities'.

As Nicolas Dérny has mentioned, the Brno of Kaprálová's time held avant-garde artistic musical attitudes, keeping up with the repertoires of contemporary music played in Vienna, Prague, Berlin and Paris.³⁷ Therefore, comparably to the architectural choices of her family, the musical influences of the developing young composer too were stimulating and up to date, comprising music by, among others, Igor Stravinsky, Arnold Schönberg, Sergei Prokofiev, Arthur Honegger and Karol Szymanowski. Nothing so far is known about women composers she might have heard as well. In 1935, Kaprálová went to Prague and encountered an even more diverse musical scene. Nevertheless, her own pieces at that point bear considerable late Romantic traits and follow the Moravian tradition of the Janáček school, in which her father also grew up as a composer.³⁸

Romanticism and Modernism: *Ilena*

Kaprálová began the cantata *Ilena* in 1936, composed the piece from December 1937 to January 1938 and in September of that year, after having spent a few summer weeks with her teacher and lover Bohuslav Martinů in

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Ťři Studně. She seems to have begun the instrumentation of the four movements for three soloists (soprano, tenor and bass), choir, a reciter and large orchestra, immediately after having finished the composition in the format of a piano reduction with vocal parts.³⁹ Two manuscripts of her orchestration—one sketch and one clean copy—have survived. They differ in their overlapping parts in some details, and both stop before the end of the first movement: the clean copy after only eighteen measures, the sketch well towards the end of the first part of the cantata. All sources are held in the music department of the Moravian Museum in Brno.⁴⁰

It remained unclear for a while whether the composer would be able or willing to return to Paris after the summer of 1938 to continue her studies with Martinů. The renewal of her scholarship was in jeopardy; finally, in January 1939, she returned to the French capital but did not continue to work on her orchestration of *Ilena*. Two months later she drew the grave cross in her diary.

Ludmila Podjavorinská

Ludmila Podjavorinská (a pseudonym of Ludmila Riznerová, referring to Javorina mountain nearby her birthplace) wrote the text of *Ilena*, a poem entitled *Lesná panna* (*Fairy of the Forest*), published in her collection of ballads in 1930.⁴¹ In a folklorist vein, it tells the story of a girl and her mother, beginning shortly after the baby girl's birth and continuing until she becomes a very beautiful young woman and the killer of her suitor.

Born into a teacher's family in 1872 in the Western Slovak village of Horné Bzince (Bzince pod Javorinou today), Podjavorinská was two generations older than Kaprálová.⁴² She made her way into the literary world with the help of her uncle, a pastor and literary critic, by starting to publish in newspapers and journals under different pseudonyms.⁴³ During the years of the First Czechoslovak Republic, Podjavorinská not only worked as a successful author, a most unusual profession for Slovak women at the time, but also as a journalist.⁴⁴ In this capacity, she wrote about the position of women and girls in society and their access to education. Overshadowed by her work for children and a later, much tamer female image during the communist regime, her earlier writings, among them her novels and ballads, dealing with modern life and folkloristic motives, took a back seat.

Kaprálová must have read Podjavorinská's ballads shortly after their publication in 1930,⁴⁵ among them *Lesná panna*. By choosing Podjavorinská's text, Kaprálová connected two of the ethnic groups of her home state, Podjavorinská's Slovak and her Czech, or better Moravian, origin, via female authorship; the implicit and explicit gendered rhetoric of the text additionally put the female authorships of *Ilena* into focus.

Based on these findings I would like to argue that in *Ilena* Kaprálová consciously tried to work towards a social integration of different ethnicities of her home state via female authorship in the arts. This means that she might have aimed at building a bond between the diverse historical, political and economic traditions and

situations in her state's different territories with her composition. She thereby might have wanted to hold on to the founding constitutional principles of "her" state while being well aware of its endangered status of independence—not only from the outside, but also from the inside, since several ethnic groups were striving for a separation of their administrations.⁴⁶

Lesná panna

The first three parts of the cantata are variations of a rural scene at night in which a young mother protects her little baby daughter who is sleeping in a cradle.⁴⁷ In the first movement the mother shields her child right after birth from the drinking father who deplores that he does not have a male heir, but a daughter instead. This leads to rumors circulating among women of the village that the little one is in danger of being overtaken by the forces of evil. During the second scene, set to music in the following movement, a ghost knocks on the window and lures the mother, in her effort to protect her baby, into the forest. She nearly falls into an abyss, and is found the next day together with her baby, lying in a bush. The vision of the mother in the third part of the cantata, a melodrama, describes how the girl is taken by a woman dressed in white. When approaching the cradle, the mother realizes that the little girl is actually sleeping peacefully and safely. The final fourth part of *Ilena* differs substantially from the first three: *Ilena* has grown up to be a most beautiful girl with alluring eyes, who prefers to stay in the forest instead of joining other youngsters. She lures her young suitor into the woods and, in the circle of her sister forest fairies, she dances him to death. This time he is the one to be found the next morning, lifeless. The baby girl has transformed into a *femme fatale*.

Surrealisms

The multi-perspective on one and the same basic literary scene-set and the blurring of inner and outer realities in Podjavorinská's ballad clearly references surrealist conceptions.⁴⁸ Up to date at the time of the publication of the ballads in 1930, this artistic ambition is combined with folkloristic motives in the description of simple, rural living environments and its inherent traditional aspects of gender roles as well as of nature, landscapes and the forest. It thereby perfectly encompasses the previously mentioned ambivalences accompanying the construction of the First Czechoslovak Republic, varying between modernisms and folklorisms in order to unite the "multiethnic" state.

Kaprálová chooses highly diverse musical means to set the text of Podjavorinská's ballad:⁴⁹ staying within the realms of enlarged tonality, the first movement is characterized by speech generated folklore rhythms and melodic phrases that meet the demands of the recitation of the text. In the second

Vítězslava Kaprálová's Cantata Ilena

Sop.

"Pod' mi ly

do náš - ho ko la!"

Ten. solo

"Jaj, I le na! jaj I - le - na!"

col 8^{va}

Ex. 1: Vítězslava Kaprálová: *Ilena*, op. 15 (1937–1938). Part IV with Ilena's first words, set melodically (soprano, m1 of the excerpt), and the calls of Ilena's name by her suitor (tenor, mm12–13). Transcript of the autograph (A 29.723a), deposited at the Moravian Museum, Department of Music History in Brno.

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sop. Hej I-le-na Hej I-le-na A I-le-na

alt. Hej I-le-na

ten. Hej I-le-na

bass Hej I-le-na A I-le-na le som sa ma zmlkounockou podhviezda mi

piano Hej I-le-na

Ex. 2: Vítězslava Kaprálová: *Ilena*, op. 15. Part IV with the chorus calling Ilena's name (mm1–5). Transcript of the autograph (A 29.723a), deposited at the Moravian Museum, Department of Music History in Brno.

Juliette (hlas za scénou) Poco Andante

Moderato

Moje lá ska vdálce se ztratí la, za ší ré mo ře, té to no cí.

Snávra tem hvě zdy na ne bi, zda vrá tí se, vrá tí i mo je lá ska!

Ex. 3: Bohuslav Martinů: *Juliette (Snář)*, H 253 (1936–1937). Act One, Scene VIII with Juliette singing her first words from behind the scene. Transcript of the opera's piano reduction by Karel Šolc (publ. Melantrich, 1947).

Vítězslava Kaprálová's *Cantata Ilena*

8^{ma}

8

Mi - chel! Mi - chel! Mi - chel! Sly - šiš mě?

13

Mi - chel! Jsem ta - dy!

13

Kdo to je?

17

To jsem já, tvá Ju - liet - ta! Přís - la jsem za te - bou!

17

Ju - liet - ta! Ju - liet - ta!

Ex. 4: Bohuslav Martinů: *Juliette (Snář)*, H 253 (1936–1937). Act Three, Scene VIII with Juliette and Michel calling each other's names. Transcript of the opera's piano reduction by Karel Šolc (publ. Melantrich, 1947).

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movement, tonally more advanced, the deep registers predominate and nearly motionless sound layers are combined with rhythmic accelerations and fanfare-like brass interventions towards the end. Kaprálová casts the third movement as a melodrama, a form that in itself has national overtones in that it focuses attention on the declamation of vernacular.⁵⁰ Finally, the last movement seems to combine all these musical means into a climax.

During this last movement the interaction of Ilena, the solo soprano in the cantata, and her suitor, the solo tenor, adheres, time and again, to a certain combination of the two voices. The soprano devotes herself to long melismas, luring the beloved, while the tenor repeatedly calls out Ilena's name. The characterization of Ilena as seducing vocalise that puts sound over text also marks her first own words in the cantata at the beginning of the same movement (ex. 1). Before that the choir has already made the calling of Ilena's name a recurring acoustic marker of the movement, wandering in between the voices (ex. 2).

The similarities to some of the musical characteristics of the leading couple in Martinů's opera *Juliette*, premiered in Prague in March 1938, before Kaprálová finished the last movement of *Ilena*, seem striking. Martinů's opera is based on the play *Juliette ou la Clé des songes* by George Neveux, premiered in 1930 in Paris. How Martinů dealt with the composition of this surrealist text musically and what it will say about his relation to surrealism, is an ongoing discussion, most prominently led by Lydia Goehr⁵¹ and Ivana Rentsch.⁵²

Like Ilena, Juliette also introduces herself to the stage as a pure voice—not with a melisma but with a song performed behind the scene (ex. 3). And just as in *Ilena*, the lovers' calls of each other's names are central acoustic markers of the musical setting (ex. 4). Of course, another close similarity between the two works is the surrealist treatment of scene repetitions that vary as a result of fractured perspectives and multiple viewpoints. And Juliette, the main character of Martinů's opera, is, like Ilena, in itself not determinable and manifold: within the surrealist aesthetic, the borders between dream and reality stay blurred to the extent that it seems impossible to tell if Juliette (or Ilena) really exist, or remain pure idealist imagination of the ultimate feminine.

I am fully aware of the methodic doubtfulness behind pointing out the similarities between the compositions of Kaprálová and of her teacher and lover Martinů that more often determine gender roles than dissolve them.⁵³ With the comparison of *Ilena* and *Juliette* I want to argue that the two compositions—which, by the way, differ distinctly in their musical approaches—were born from the same inclination to create 'national' music. The solutions Kaprálová and Martinů found in their compositions when following this path were very indi-

vidual ones; they also differed distinctively in their approach to gender roles. With *Ilena*, Kaprálová took a first step towards scenic dispositions of her works. This happened at a time when *Juliette* was premiered, and the so called Julietta-motive with the Moravian cadence became important in the relationship of the two composers.⁵⁴ Kaprálová was very well aware of her own female role that she played as lover and pupil. Martinů's rather bourgeois picture of his future relationship with Kaprálová—in one of his letters he describes the two of them celebrating Christmas together with a baby in the cradle next to them⁵⁵—stands in quite a contrast to the anti-bourgeois claims of the surrealist movement, wanting to deny easy satisfaction in the consummation of their arts.⁵⁶ This could have been one of the reasons, among others, for Kaprálová's decisive conclusion in 1939, as cited by Mucha in his autobiographical novel: "As a composer, Martinů has a personality that is too strong. At his side I will never be able to prosper [artistically]. This would be my end."⁵⁷

Rather than 'just' being romantic expression of their mutual love, I would like to contextualize the important role of *Juliette* in the Kaprálová/Martinů relationship as a mutual agreement on the importance of the question of how Czechoslovak music should develop and represent the state.⁵⁸ Martinů's advice to the young composer to come to Paris and study with him and not to go to Vienna (although Kaprálová's German was much better than her French) presumably met his demand to convey his conception of Czechoslovak music at least to one pupil. In one of the letters to her parents, Kaprálová mentions that Martinů chose her to carry the torch [of his conception of Czechoslovak music] after him.⁵⁹ To a certain degree, the young Moravian composer incorporated the future of Czechoslovak music for the Bohemian Martinů, which he brought into his command mentally by teaching her and most probably also physically by becoming Kaprálová's lover. The artistically relevant question of whether Juliette really existed, if she had a body or not, was important to Martinů, as he referred to it in the program notes for the first performance of his opera:

Juliette herself is a symbol of longing, all girls in this game are called Juliette and all men are looking for this and only for this name. Is it the very same Juliette? Does she exist or is she only fiction, a phenomenon made up of thoughts?⁶⁰

In a way Martinů might have considered Kaprálová to be the ideal and, at the same time, embodied answer to the artistic question of to what extent musical symbolism could be employed to represent the Czechoslovak state—a thesis that goes far beyond the simple hierarchy of an *amour fou* between teacher and pupil, and poses the question of the artistic partnership of the couple anew. The fulfillment of their love and the bourgeois perspective Martinů had in mind might be aptly contextualized with the sub-

ject of Teige's criticism of Mies van der Rohe's Villa Tugendhat: art loses its sociocritical potential if it aims 'only' at the fulfillment of the aesthetic desire and emotional needs of the recipients.⁶¹

When Kaprálová's cantata is considered to be a successful merging of folkloristic and symbolist traits, as well as of Czech, or better Moravian and Slovak female authorships, *Ilena* can also be regarded as strengthening the autonomous role the composer wanted to play in the artistic question of a national music culture:⁶² exactly with these characteristics, but also by employing multiple female authorships, Kaprálová's approach differs substantially from that of Martinů in *Juliette*. Lydia Goehr has already concluded that Martinů's opera deviated from the usual course of events between the genders in symbolist operas: normally, women "who, serving as the objects of collective desire," are possessed by the male hero and in the course of the piece "free themselves from belonging to anyone and thus assume an agency, albeit a destructive one, of their own."⁶³ Juliette follows another chain of events instead: exactly because she is a mere projection of the male hero, she refuses to be owned and the love stays unfulfilled; even the destruction of the male hero stays a projection by himself.⁶⁴

Ilena too is never owned by her lover. But in contrast to Juliette, her destructive role is framed by social criticism: the expectation of her social environment, of her father and of the village women, made her end up as she did. In the light of the double female authorship, this destructive refusal to be possessed becomes even stronger: *Ilena* becomes a female projection that self-authorizes not only the destruction of the male hero, but also her own dissolution: after the death of her suitor she was never seen again. In the sense of Elizabeth Bronfen's theorizing of female authorship, she therefore performs the ultimate move of female refusal, an act of authorship with her own body.⁶⁵

In his autobiographical novel *Au seuil de la nuit* Jiří Mucha, Kaprálová's husband of the last months of her life, cites an excerpt from a letter written by the composer to Rudolf Kopec, in which she describes *Ilena* as having been composed "in vain" because of the end of the Czechoslovak Republic.⁶⁶ Already during the summer 1938 at Tři Studně, it seemed to have been her father and Martinů who expected her to finish the composition and orchestration of *Ilena*, while she herself already doubted that she would be able to accomplish that.⁶⁷ The decision whether to finish *Ilena* or not might have come close for the composer to the choice between staying in relationship with Martinů and marrying him or separating, between adhering to a 19th century folklorist dream of rural life and bourgeois family or facing the artistic demands of her own century.⁶⁸ Her decision seems to have been a clear one: besides the separation from Martinů and her marriage to Mucha, Kaprálová was also headed in new directions musically. She left tonality and folkloristic influences behind; and, with her unfinished *Concertino* for violin, clarinet, and orchestra, op. 21, not only conquered a more modernist musical world, but in a way also ended the Repub-

lican gender politics of her music—a circumstance that might even be considered another form of liberation which she did not survive for long.

Notes

This article was written without me having any command of Czech or Slovak. It is only thanks to the competent and dedicated work of Karla Hartl and the Kapralova Society that made many sources available in English, that I was able to find my way into research of this fascinating composer. Thanks to Kaprálová's years of study in Paris, also French sources were available; however, among other literature and sources only available in Czech, the most important edition of Kaprálová's letters, edited by Karla Hartl, [Vítězslava Kaprálová, *Dopisy domů: korespondence rodičům z let 1935–1940* (Toronto: The Kapralova Society, 2015); Vítězslava Kaprálová, *Dopisy láskám: Rudolfu Kopcovi a Jiřímu Muchovi. Korespondence z let 1938–1940* (Toronto: The Kapralova Society, 2016); and Vítězslava Kaprálová, *Dopisy přátelům a jiná korespondence, 1935–1940* (Toronto: The Kapralova Society, 2017)] could not be included for considerations made in this article. Consequently, all possible mistakes, misinterpretations or absent references to this additional literature are mine.

² Although the Munich Agreement and the resulting loss of large parts of the state territory had already endangered the independent status of the First Czechoslovak Republic in September 1938, it was the German military occupation of the remaining territory on March 15–16, 1939 that formally ended the Czechoslovak Republic, leading to an independent Slovak Republic and the protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia under German administration.

³ *Diář Vítězslavy Kaprálové z r. 1939* (The 1939 Diary of Vítězslava Kaprálová), shelf no. G 8.123. Oddělení dějin hudby Moravského zemského muzea v Brně (Department of Music History of the Moravian Museum in Brno).

⁴ Nicolas Dery, *Vítězslava Kaprálová: Portrait musical et amoureux* (Paris: Le jardin d'essai, 2015), 127–133.

⁵ On discussions about the possible causes of the composer's death, see Karla Hartl, "Vítězslava Kaprálová: An Annotated Life Chronology," in *The Kaprálová Companion*, eds. Karla Hartl and Erik Entwistle (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2011), 153n95; Karla Hartl, "The Centenary of Vítězslava Kaprálová: Looking Back, Looking Forward," in *Vítězslava Kaprálová (1915–1940): Zeitbilder, Lebensbilder, Klangbilder*, ed. Christine Fischer (Zürich: Chronos Verlag, 2017), 29n17; and Christine Fischer, "Zum Umgang mit weiblichem 'Genie': alte und neue Kaprálová-Bilder," *ibid.*, 97–103, referring to Jiří Mucha's *Au seuil de la nuit* (La Tour d'Aigues: Editions de l'Aube, 1991) as a main source.

⁶ Kevin Korsyn, "Beyond privileged contexts: Intertextuality, influence and dialogue," in *Rethinking Music*, eds. Nicolas Cook and Marc Everist (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 55–72; Antonio Baldassarre, "To be or not to be: Biography and Music Research. Thoughts on a burdened relationship," in *(Auto)Biography as a musicological discourse*. Musicological Studies proceedings, ed. Tatjana Marković and Vesna Mikić (Belgrade: Faculty of Music, 2010), 28–40; Melanie Unseld, *Biographie und Musikgeschichte: Wandlungen biographischer Konzepte in Musik-kultur und Musikhistoriographie* (Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 2014).

⁷ On her predilection for authors, rooted in the political Left, as well

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as on her own sympathies with socialism see Nicolas Derny, “Von Brünn nach Prag—eine Musikerin der Ersten Tschechoslowakischen Republik und ihr Umfeld: Vítězslava Kaprálová und Vilém Petrželka, Vítězslav Novák, Václav Kaprál,” in *Vítězslava Kaprálová (1915–1940): Zeitbilder, Lebensbilder, Klangbilder*, ed. Christine Fischer (Zürich: Chronos, 2017), 49.

⁸ The work was titled ballad by the composer herself, probably referring to the title of the poetry collection that included the poem whose words she set to music. In this article, I use the term cantata.

⁹ Thomas D. Svatos, “On the literary reception of Kaprálová and Martinů: Jiří Mucha’s ‘Peculiar Loves’ and Miroslav Barvík’s ‘At Tři Studně,’” in *Vítězslava Kaprálová (1915–1940): Zeitbilder, Lebensbilder, Klangbilder*, ed. Christine Fischer (Zürich: Chronos, 2017), 71–90.

¹⁰ Alois Hlavinka, *Kronika českomoravská: Dějiny našeho národa pro náš lid* (Brno: vlastním nákl., 1890).

¹¹ The sixth piece of the collection *Z mých nejranějších skladeb*, composed in 1925 (see Hartl and Entwistle, *The Kaprálová Companion*, 158).

¹² Monika Flacke, ed., *Mythen der Nationen. Ein europäisches Panorama. 20. März bis 9. Juni 1998. D. H. M. Berlin. Exhibition catalogue*. Berlin: Deutsches Historisches Museum, 1998), 522–524.

¹³ Hartl and Entwistle, *The Kaprálová Companion*, 13, 28–29, 66n3, 141n14; Nicolas Derny, *Vítězslava Kaprálová: Portrait musical et amoureux*, 24.

¹⁴ Karla Hartl, “Vítězslava Kaprálová: An Annotated Catalog of Works,” in *The Kaprálová Companion*, 158.

¹⁵ “Autorka v ní vyjadřuje svůj citový vztah k otázkám našeho státního bytí hudební řečí [...] Jádrem není signál k boji, ale hudebně psychologická kresba války, vycházející z mentality našeho chápání obrany toho, co je nám nejsvětější.” Ibid., 167–168.

¹⁶ For a description of the activities of the Czechoslovak exile community in Paris, see Jean-Philippe Namont, *La colonie tchécoslovaque : une histoire de l’immigration tchèque et slovaque en France (1914–1940)* (Paris: Institut d’études slaves, 2011), 339–366.

¹⁷ Karla Hartl, “Kaprlová as a Composer of the Week: The BBC Interview,” *Kapralova Society Journal* 17, no. 1 (Spring 2019): 7.

¹⁸ See Derny, *Vítězslava Kaprálová: portrait musical et amoureux*, 75–88; and Derny, “Von Brünn nach Prag,” in *Vítězslava Kaprálová (1915–1940): Zeitbilder, Lebensbilder, Klangbilder*, 39–40, 49–51, on Kaprálová’s choice of authors of texts for song settings and possible interrelations to her political attitudes. Also Mucha, in *Au seuil de la nuit*, 137, refers to Kaprálová’s sympathies for the political Left in the Czech colony in Paris.

¹⁹ On biographical data, see Karla Hartl and Erik Entwistle, eds., *The Kaprálová Companion* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2011), 121–153; Nicholas Derny, *Vítězslava Kaprálová: portrait musical et amoureux* (Paris: Le jardin d’essai, 2015); Nicolas Derny, “Von Brünn nach Prag—eine Musikerin der Ersten Tschechoslowakischen Republik und ihr Umfeld: Vítězslava Kaprálová und Vilém Petrželka, Vítězslav Novák, Václav Kaprál,” in *Vítězslava Kaprálová (1915–1940): Zeitbilder, Lebensbilder, Klangbilder*, ed. Christine Fischer (Zürich: Chronos, 2017), 33–52.

²⁰ Derny, “Von Brünn nach Prag,” in *Vítězslava Kaprálová (1915–1940): Zeitbilder, Lebensbilder, Klangbilder*, 42–49.

²¹ Anne-Marie Sohn, “Zwischen den beiden Weltkriegen. Weibliche Rollen in Frankreich und England,” in *Geschichte der Frauen. 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Françoise Thébaud (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 1995), 110–139; Christine Bard, *Die Frauen in der französischen Gesellschaft des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Köln: Böhlau, 2008); Derek Sayer, *Prague, Capital of the Twentieth Century: A Surrealist History* (Princeton: Princeton

University Press, 2013), 221–287; Christine Fischer, “Zum Umgang mit weiblichem ‘Genie’: alte und neue Kaprálová-Bilder,” in *Vítězslava Kaprálová (1915–1940): Zeitbilder, Lebensbilder, Klangbilder*, 91–113.

²² Annegret Fauser, *The Politics of Musical Identity: Selected Essays* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2015), 71–102.

²³ Jann Pasler, *Composing the Citizen: Music as Public Utility in Third Republic France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 641–678 et passim.

²⁴ On gender and nation, see also Lisa Spanka, *Vergegenwärtigungen von Geschlecht und Nation im Museum: das Deutsche Historische Museum und das Dänische Nationalmuseum im Vergleich* (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2019), 19–26.

²⁵ Juliet Gardiner, ed., *The New Woman: women’s voices, 1880–1918*, with foreword by Victoria Glendinning (London: Collins & Brown, 1993); Ann Heilmann and Margaret Beetham, eds., *New Woman Hybridities: Femininity, Feminism and International Consumer Culture, 1880–1930* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004).

²⁶ Neil McWilliam, *Dreams of Happiness: Social Art and the French Left, 1830–1850* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), 66–70, 148–164, 267–314 et passim.

²⁷ Jann Pasler, *Composing the Citizen*, 301–490.

²⁸ Sayer, *Prague, Capital of the Twentieth Century*, 144–220.

²⁹ Bohuslav Martinů, *Opening of the Wells*, H. 354 (1955) for soli, reciter, women’s choir, two violins, viola, and piano.

³⁰ For information on this traditional celebration nowadays, see <http://tristudne.eu/foto.php?id=209> (accessed May 23, 2020).

³¹ After having served as a recreational space for the Czech Composer’s Union and later the Czech Music Fund, today it is a hotel and can be rented as a summer home. See vevile.cz (accessed May 23, 2020); also Karla Hartl, “Kaprlová as a Composer of the Week: The BBC Interview,” *Kapralova Society Journal* 17, no. 1 (Spring 2019): 4–5.

³² Simon Mawer, *The Glass Room* (London: Little, Brown and Co., 2009).

³³ Sayer, *Prague, Capital of the Twentieth Century*, 146.

³⁴ Karel Teige, *The minimum dwelling*, transl. Eric Dluhosch (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002), 150.

³⁵ The Young Czechs’ Movement publicly declared its political program in 1874/1879, striving for broadly accessible education and national democratic institutions in a close collaboration of all Slavic people. See Bruce M. Garver, *The Young Czech Party, 1874–1901, and the Emergence of a Multi-Party System* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1978).

³⁶ Erazim Kohák, “Masaryk und die Monarchie. Versuch einer Demythisierung,” in *On Masaryk. Texts in English and German (Studien zur österreichischen Philosophie 13)*, ed. Josef Novák (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1988), 389.

³⁷ Derny, “Von Brünn nach Prag,” in *Vítězslava Kaprálová (1915–1940): Zeitbilder, Lebensbilder, Klangbilder*, 33–52.

³⁸ Nicolas Derny, *Vítězslava Kaprálová: portrait musical et amoureux*, 13–17; on Janáček’s own Moravian patriotism, see e.g. Derek Katz, “A Turk and a Moravian in Prague: Janáček’s *Brouček* and the Perils of Musical Patriotism,” in *Janáček and his World*, ed. Michael Beckerman (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 145–164.

³⁹ Department of Music History, Moravian Museum in Brno, piano reduction (A 29 723a).

⁴⁰ Ibid., shelf nos. A 29.723b (instrumentation in the autograph score: *Flauto (3) et Piccolo, Oboe, B Clarin., Fagotti /bassons/, Corni, C Trompeti, Pozouni /trombones/, Timp., Arpa, Solo, Sbor /choir/, Hou-*

sle /violins/ I,II, Viole, Vcella, Kbasi /double basses/; and A 29.723c (Flauto piccolo, 2 Flauto, 2 Oboe, Corno inglese, 2 Clarinetti B, Bassclarinet, IV Corni in F, III Trompeti in C, III Posouni /Trombones/ (TAB), Tuba, Timpani, Tamburo (changed to Gran Cassa), Arpa, Piano, Sopran solo, Tenor solo, Bass solo, Smíš. Sbor (mixed choir), Violino I, Violino II, Viole, Vcella, Kbasi (double basses).

⁴¹ Ludmila Podjavorinská, *Balady* (Praha: Leopold Mazáč, 1930), 56–65.

⁴² Unless mentioned otherwise, biographical information was taken from Zlatko Klátik, *Album Ludmily Podjavorinskej : Альбом Людмилы Подъяворинской : Leben, Werk, Wirkung* (Bratislava, Mladé Letá, 1978).

⁴³ Ludmila Podjavorinská, *databazeknih.cz*, <https://www.databazeknih.cz/zivotopis/ludmila-podjavorinska-4903> (accessed May 23, 2020).

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ludmila Podjavorinská, *Balady* (Praha: Leopold Mazáč, 1930).

⁴⁶ Karl Bosl, “Gesellschaft und politische Parteien in der Donaumonarchie und in den Nachfolgestaaten,” in *Die Erste Tschechoslowakische Republik als multinationaler Parteienstaat. Vorträge der Tagungen des Collegium Carolinum in Bad Wiessee vom 24. bis 27. November 1977 und vom 20. bis 23. April 1978*, ed. Karl Bosl (München and Wien: Oldenbourg, 1979), 7–21; Ladislav Liperscher, “Die magyarischen, polnischen, ruthenischen und jüdischen Parteien in der ČSR,” *ibid.*, 217–240.

⁴⁷ I would like to thank Zdena Zed. Danko for providing me with her German translation of “Lesná panna”.

⁴⁸ Anja Tippner, *Die permanente Avantgarde? Surrealismus in Prag* (Köln, Weimar, and Wien: Böhlau, 2009), 102–147.

⁴⁹ For a detailed description of the musical means, see Martin Kostaš, “An Analysis of Compositional Methods Applied in Kaprálová’s Cantata *Ilena*, op. 15,” *Kapralova Society Journal* 10, no. 1 (Spring 2012): 1–5. Kostaš’s orchestration of the cantata was premiered in Brno in Besední dům on May 31, 2007 with the Brno Philharmonic Orchestra, the Brno Academic Choir, and the Gaudeamus Choir Brno, led by conductors Ondřej Tajovský and Katarína Mašlejová, see <http://www.kapralova.org/ILENA.htm> (accessed May 27, 2020).

⁵⁰ Judith Mabary, “Kaprálová and the Czech Tradition of Melodrama,” in *The Kaprálová Companion*, 81–92.

⁵¹ Lydia Goehr, “Juliette fährt nach Mahagonny or a Critical Reading of Surrealist Opera,” *The Opera Quarterly* 21, no. 4 (Autumn 2005): 647–674.

⁵² Ivana Rentsch, *Anklänge an die Avantgarde. Bohuslav Martinůs Opern der Zwischenkriegszeit* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2007); see also Katrin Stöck, “Der Einfluss von Surrealismus und Poetismus auf Bohuslav Martinů und seine Oper Julietta,” in: *Musikkonzepte - Konzepte der Musikwissenschaft. Bericht über den Internationalen Kongress der Gesellschaft für Musikforschung Halle (Saale) 1998*, vol. 2, eds. Katrin Eberl and Wolfgang Ruf (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2000), 677–683; Vladimír Karbusický, “Der erträumte und nacherlebte Surrealismus. Martinůs Oper ‘Juliette ou La clé des songes’,” in *Theorie der Musik. Analyse und Deutung* (vol. 13 of *Hamburger Jahrbuch für Musikwissenschaft*) ed. Annette Kreutziger-Herr (Laaber: Laaber Verlag, 1995), 271–336.

⁵³ Aleš Březina, “Eine ‘phantastische Schule’ des Komponierens für Streichorchester: Martinůs Eingriffe in die Partita (1938) von Vítězslava Kaprálová,” *Schweizer Jahrbuch für Musikwissenschaft* 17 (1997): 95–113.

⁵⁴ Erik Entwistle, “‘To je Julietta’: Martinů, Kaprálová and Musical Symbolism,” *Kapralova Society Newsletter* 2, no. 2 (Fall 2004): 1–15.

⁵⁵ Kateřina Mařová, “Letters to Kaprálová and Other Correspondence

of Bohuslav Martinů in the Music History Department of the Moravian Museum in Brno,” *Kapralova Society Journal* 6, no. 1 (Spring 2008): 2.

⁵⁶ Goehr, 647–650.

⁵⁷ “Comme compositeur, Martinů a une personnalité trop forte. A côté de lui, je ne pourrais pas m’épanouir. Ce serait ma fin.” In Jiří Mucha, *Au seuil de la nuit*, translation Karel and Françoise Tabery (La Tour d’Aigues, Editions de l’Aube, 1991), 291.

⁵⁸ Fischer, *Vítězslava Kaprálová (1915–1940): Zeitbilder, Lebensbilder, Klangbilder*, 107–112.

⁵⁹ Deryn, *Vítězslava Kaprálová: portrait musical et amoureux*, 92; Mucha, *Au seuil de la nuit*, 121.

⁶⁰ “Julietta selbst ist ein Symbol der Sehnsucht, alle Mädchen in diesem Spiel heißen Julietta und alle Männer suchen nach diesem einzigen Namen. Ist das ein und dieselbe Julietta? Existiert sie überhaupt oder ist sie nur eine Fiktion, ein Gedankenphänomen?” In Vladimír Karbusický, “Der erträumte und nacherlebte Surrealismus. Martinůs Oper ‘Juliette ou La clé des songes’,” *Jahrbuch für Musikwissenschaft* 13 (Laaber: Laaber Verlag, 1995), 273.

⁶¹ Goehr, *The Opera Quarterly* 21, no. 4 (Autumn 2005): 647–650.

⁶² See Fischer, *Vítězslava Kaprálová (1915–1940): Zeitbilder, Lebensbilder, Klangbilder*, 91–113.

⁶³ Goehr, *The Opera Quarterly* 21, no. 4 (Autumn 2005): 653.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 665.

⁶⁵ Elisabeth Bronfen, *Over her dead body. Death, femininity and the aesthetic* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), 141.

⁶⁶ “[I]l me semble qu’avec la république s’en est allée aussi ma chance. La *Sinfonietta* ne sera plus exécutée à présent, la *Ballade* a été composée en vain.” (Mucha, *Au seuil de la nuit*, 153.)

⁶⁷ Ibid., 185.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 161.

About the author

Christine Fischer received her doctorate from the University of Bern in 2004 with a thesis on Maria Antonia Walpurgis of Bavaria. In 2007–2013 she was Associate Professor of the Swiss National Science Foundation at Schola Cantorum Basiliensis with an interdisciplinary research project on the performance practice of Italian opera at German-speaking courts of the 17th and 18th centuries. Studies in music education (PH Ludwigsburg), musicology, art history and Italian philology (Ludwig Maximilians-Universität Munich), musicology and ethnomusicology (University of California Los Angeles), gender studies (University of Basel) as well as project partnerships and teaching activities in the field of theatre studies led to a cross-disciplinary orientation of her research interests that include, but are not limited to, gender, diversity and music, history of ideas in music, culturally derived performance practice, and postcolonialism and music history. Fischer has written and edited several books, including *Vítězslava Kaprálová (1915–1940), Zeitbilder, Lebensbilder, Klangbilder* (Zürich: Chronos, 2017), a collective monograph based on papers given at an international conference that she co-organized with Daniel Lienhard, under the auspices of *ForumMusikDiversität*, at the occasion of Kaprálová’s centenary in 2015 in Basel. She currently works as Senior Research Associate at the Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts – School of Music.



KAPRÁLOVÁ. COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC. Giorgio Koukl. Naxos (Grand Piano) 2017.

There have been a number of outstanding albums released over the years that include solo piano music by composer Vítězslava Kaprálová; however, this album marks the first complete recording of Kaprálová's solo piano works by the Czech Swiss pianist Giorgio Koukl. His technique is so pristine that a listener quickly takes it for granted, and after hearing him, what one remembers most of all is his sheer musicality! His sense of touch, articulation, phrasing, and use of tone colors and vast contrast in dynamics are remarkable. Of course, a great deal of the credit goes to Kaprálová – despite not surpassing the young age of 25, she was quite prolific, and her exquisitely crafted music displays unique qualities and innovative technical devices well beyond the years and experience normally attributed to someone of her age.

In addition to the artistry of Giorgio Koukl, tremendous praise also goes to the recording engineers, Dag Helseth and Michael Rast. The recording quality is truly exceptional – the Steinway Grand Piano Model D is expertly captured in the Conservatorio Lugano – enabling the listener to further experience the subtle nuances so masterfully performed by Koukl. In fact, this disc reveals musical depths to an extent rarely encountered in recordings of solo piano music.

Special thanks to Karla Hartl and The Kapralova Society for their assistance to this recording project, and in making much of Kaprálová's previously unpublished music available!

Chris A. Trotman

Women of the 19th Century Concert Hall

Mlle Ida Boullée, 1832 – 1863, pianist, composer.

Tom Moore

Among the many forgotten women who were composing pianists in the nineteenth century Paris was M^{lle} Ida Boullée who took a first prize in piano at the Conservatory in the summer of 1851 and died of unknown causes less than twelve years later, in the summer of 1863. No nineteenth-century biographies or lexica trace her life.¹ We are lucky to be able to find some small details about her family from period sources, such as tourist guides and almanacs. The earliest appearance as an independent professional, which I have been able to locate for her, lists Boullée as a professor of piano, residing at the same address (28, Rue de Rivoli) as two others sharing the same surname: a certain J. Boullée, of the Hotel Wagram, and a Jenny Boullée, who worked in fashion. J. Boullée must surely be Jules Boullée who is identified as the proprietor of the Hotel Wagram by *The Indispensable English Vade Mecum, or Pocket Companion to Paris* (1839).² One might reasonably surmise that Jules Boullée was either the elder brother or, more likely, the father of the two Boullée sisters, Ida and Jenny.

Ida Boullée first appeared in the press as a student of Félix Le Couppey³ in the list of prizes awarded at the Paris Conservatory in 1849, when she shares an 'accessit' with five other women.⁴ In 1850, she won second prize, together with M^{lle} Charron and Caroline Lévy. Two years later, she was awarded a joint first prize in the category for women pianists, once more with Caroline Lévy.⁵

The first concert that Boullée presented under her name dates to 1854 and was reviewed both in *Le Ménestrel* and the *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris*. The latter wrote:

In order to make oneself a place among these so very diverse talents, in order to create for oneself an individuality, as we were saying, one must first imitate, must copy, that one who initiates you into musical feeling through the artifices of instrumental mechanism, and this is what M^{lle} Ida Boullée has done. Through her playing, fine, pure, clean and lightly colored with expression, one sees that she has identified herself with the system of instruction of her excellent teacher, Mr. Lecoupey. With a classical and correct manner, she performed the septet of Hummel, the *rondo capriccioso* of Mendelssohn, some pretty little etudes,⁶ a gavotte of Bach, and the *Fête vénitienne*⁷ of Heller.⁸

The 1854 concert by Ida Boullée, then aged 21, was considered significant enough to be reported outside of Paris by the German press.⁹

Starting in 1855, Boullée would give a concert at the same time each year (around the beginning of March). Also in 1855, the press began to emphasize her dual role as both virtuoso pianist and skilled composer. It is worth noting that the 1855 concert may have included works by her contemporaries Krüger¹⁰ and Schulhoff.¹¹ *Revue et gazette musicale de Paris* wrote:

To avoid the monotony resulting from critical or complimentary appreciations regarding artists appearing on the same instrument, one is not irritated, and one is always certain to have at hand, or rather beneath the pen, a pianist, such as M^{lle} Ida Boullée, performing the mu-

Mlle Ida Boullée (1832–1863)

sic of Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Schulhoff and Krüger, and who does so very well, as she proved at the concert that she gave last month at the Salle Herz.¹²

Le Ménestrel mentions neither Krüger nor Schulhoff but, significantly, Boullée's own compositions:

M^{lle} Ida Boullée gave her annual concert on Saturday, with the participation of M^{me} Brian, Messieurs Poultier and the brothers Dancla. We have already had the occasion of appreciating the correct and brilliant playing of M^{lle} Boullée. This excellent artist has played several of her compositions for us this year, and we can say that she performs with an equal talent both the music of the masters and that which she composes herself.¹³

The year 1856 saw two major public events organized by Ida Boullée, one a soirée, perhaps in a smaller, more private location, in the very first week of the year, and one a concert on February 26. It is unclear whether the latter was at the Salle Herz or the Salle Erard. The soirée received notices in both *La France Musicale* and the *Revue et gazette musicale*. The review published in *La France musicale* was particularly enthusiastic:

M^{lle} Ida Boullée last week gathered together an elite audience for a musical performance where one noted several leading figures from music and the press. . . . Her pure and clean playing perfectly renders the music of the great master, of which her repertory is almost exclusively constituted. She dares to present to the public, and for this she must be praised, the most severe works, those for which many artists fear the chilliness of the mob. To sum up, she is a true musician in all the meaning of the word. The musical soirée of which we speak was very much appreciated. Among the pieces that were performed there, we will mention . . . a fragment of a sonata composed by the intelligent pianist herself. . . . M^{lle} Boullée, we are assured, did her studies in composition under the direction of Mr. F. Bazin;¹⁴ this is to say that she is a consummate harmonist, and her sonata shows it. Ida Boullée is both a virtuosa and a composer; she performs her music and that of the masters with limitless style and a sympathetic charm which is impossible to resist. The Andante, Finale and Scherzo of a Sonata in C Minor of her composition gave the greatest pleasure. M^{lle} Ida Boullée, it is evident, is nourished by the reading of the ancient masterpieces; her harmony is correct, her ideas are melodious, original, and above all marked with the stamp of a great distinction.¹⁵

Boullée's annual concert took place on February 26. By now she was of sufficient stature that she was included in a list of the most significant pianists in Paris:

At this point there are three halls in Paris, which fill and empty without a break, twenty-four hours a day. It is evident that it would take several volumes to keep our readers au courant about everything that is piano-ed, played, sung in this Babel of concert-givers since the beginning of the season. The privileged soirées have been those by M^{lle} Marie Darjou,

remarkable pianiste;¹⁶ M^{lle} Ida Boullée, no less remarkable pianist and composer; Mr. Arthur Napoléon, a prodigy and a prodigious pianist;¹⁷ M^{lle} Contamin, a pianist as remarkable as the first two listed;¹⁸ M^{lle} Langlumé, another pianist who yields in no way to this last;¹⁹ M^{lle} Judith Lyon,²⁰ who admirably plays the new instrument by Mr. A. Debain,²¹ the harmonichord, and who also is a very remarkable pianist; Mr. Paul Dollingen, always a pianist of great merit; Mr. Emile Prudent,²² Mr. Ernst Lubeck,²³ two exceptional pianists; John Thomas, the eminent English harpist, the rival of Godefroy; of M^{lle} Picard, a young pianist full of talent; of Mr. Orlandi, a baritone from a good school, whom we would like to applaud at the theater; of M^{me} de Luigi, the brilliant student of Rosini.²⁴

In 1857, the press gave extensive coverage to an upcoming concert by Boullée, which included her own compositions:

M^{lle} Ida Boullée, who is due to give her third grand concert in the closing days of February, is a graduate of the Conservatory. . . . Active in musical composition at the same time that she is active in piano instruction, she has already been heard with success in two concerts, in February 1854 and February 1856; in addition, she has composed, and is still composing, pieces full of charm and melody. We will only recollect, for those who know them or have heard them, the *Recueil de six Etudes*, a Sonata in C Minor for piano solo, and a Sonata in C Major for piano and violin. This last one is the only one that remains unpublished.²⁵

Her annual concert was scheduled to take place on March 14, at the Salle Herz. The concert, as it happened, was postponed "because of a serious indisposition"²⁶ until March 20. *Le Pays* published this highly favorable review:

Among the beautiful concerts of the season, we must mention that by M^{lle} Ida Boullée, pianist and composer of the greatest merit. It was Mr. Bazin, the learned professor of the Conservatory, who communicated the principles of harmony to her; and, if one judges by the beautiful sonata, her composition for piano and violin that was performed at her concert of March 20, one can be certain that she is not ignorant of any of the secrets of her art. This sonata, very skillfully rendered from beginning to end, was enthusiastically applauded. As a virtuosa, M^{lle} Ida Boullée occupies an elevated rank in the hierarchy of the pianists of her sex. She played the Jota by Gottschalk, the Gavotte with Variations by Handel, the Fantaisie-Improptu by Chopin and the Duo from Euryanthe by Ravina, together with Mr. Schilling, with a grace, clarity, and delicacy of touch that one cannot praise too highly.²⁷

In 1859, Boullée gave her annual concert at the Salle Herz on March 22. Her repertoire was announced as including "Trio of her own composition, Air with variations by Handel, Sonata in A Major by Scarlatti, La regata veneziana by Liszt, La Chasse by Mendelssohn and Tarentelle by Heller."²⁸ One of the reviewers of the concert wrote:

Women of the 19th Century Concert Hall: Mlle Ida Boullée

Of all the students trained by F. Lecoupey, and they are numerous, there is not one that does him so much honor as M^{lle} Ida Boullée. As a pianist, she is at least at the height of the best ones, such as M^{lle} Joséphine Martin, M^{lle} Mattmann and M^{lle} Charlotte de Malleville. As a composer, we only know of M^{me} Farrenc²⁹ who may be superior to her, but the latter surpasses everyone, from all the height of genius as compared to talent. . . . Her playing has gained considerably in assurance, in elegance; the quality of sound is now excellence, and a true mastery is revealed in the entirety of her talent. The trio of her composition which she presented is entirely remarkable, and, M^{me} Farrenc excepted, we do not know a single other woman who is capable of writing a work of this scope.³⁰

Boullée's spring concert for 1861 was apparently the most ambitious so far: it included her Piano Concerto in A Minor in which she was accompanied by an orchestra directed by Alexandre Tilmant.³¹ News of this traveled even as far as Boston, where it was included in the June issue of *Dwight's Journal of Music*.

Ida Boullée, one of our best lady professors on the piano and a composer of taste and elegance . . . was also much admired in Morceaux from Liszt and Chopin. . . . The crowning treat of the soirée was, however, the concerto, the orchestra being capitally led by Mr. Tilmant.³²

It is this concerto that is mentioned quizzically in the following feuilletton by Henry d'Audigier, a Parisian journalist:

I don't abuse concerts, you know; it's the first time this year that I have risked the adventure. The reputation of a skilled and very interesting Mademoiselle Ida Boullée tempted me; the program of her soirée was interesting, and I decided to do another experiment on myself. The hall was full, the lights glittering, I was in a very good seat; Tilmant was directing the orchestra. Mademoiselle Ida Boullée played a Concerto in A Minor to the applause of the whole assembly. All the world seemed to be charmed, delighted, intoxicated; only I remained unmoved, in the midst of this happiness, and, afflicted, humiliated by my coldness, which I attribute to my stupidity, I left the hall before the end of the concert, and here I am. What do you think of my state, dear friend?³³

Despite the evident success of Boullée and her annual concerts, there is no evidence of any concert activity for 1862. Perhaps whatever health problem would eventually claim her life in 1863 was already at work. One concert was announced to take place on February 13, 1863: "M^{lle} Ida Boullée will give a vocal and instrumental concert on February 13 at the Salle Herz. M^{lle} Boullée will perform a concerto of her own composition with orchestra, directed by Mr. Tilmant."³⁴

The first mention of the demise of M^{lle} Ida Boullée, which I have found, is that published in *Les Beaux-arts*, which gives the place but not the exact date of death that must have occurred in the last two weeks of June 1863: "Mademoiselle Ida Boullée, a young pianist well known in our salons and concerts, and who combined the talent of the virtuosa with the merit of the composer, died in Paris a few days ago."³⁵ Two more publications, *La Presse* in Paris and *Neue Berliner Musikzeitung* in Berlin, announced her death in September.³⁶ At the end of the year, and at the beginning of the new one, her name was included among the important personalities who had died during 1863.³⁷ She was also included in a list of eminent women in the arts found in a biography of the composer and feminist, Marie de Valsayre, published in 1865.³⁸

List of Works:

Recueil de six Etudes, c.1854.

Etude mélodique pour le piano. Publ. E. Girod, 1856.³⁹

Sonata in C Minor, for piano solo, c.1856.

Sonata in C Major, for piano and violin, c.1857.

Trio for Piano, Violoncello and Violin, c.1859.

Piano Concerto in A Minor for piano and orchestra, c.1861. Andante publ. Léon Escudier, 1862.⁴⁰

Notes:

¹ She appears in the *Conservatoire national de musique et de déclamation: documents* (1900), 705, as Françoise-Ida Boullée, b. Paris 31 July 1832.

² The hotel is listed with the same address (28, rue de Rivoli). *The Indispensable English Vade Mecum* (1839), 201.

³ Félix Le Couppey (1811–1887), French pianist, piano teacher and composer based in Paris.

⁴ *Le Ménestrel: journal de musique*, 29 July 1849 (no pagination); also reported in: *Le Pays: journal des volontés de la France*, 23 July 1849 (no pagination).

⁵ *Le Ménestrel*, 3 August 1851; and *Le Conservatoire national de musique et de déclamation: documents* (1900), 591.

⁶ Her own compositions?

⁷ Heller's op. 52, published c.1846.

⁸ *Revue et gazette musicale* 21, 5 March 1854, 76.

⁹ *Niederrheinische Musik-Zeitung* 2, 11 March 1854, 80.

¹⁰ Wilhelm Krüger (1820–1883), pianist and composer active in Stuttgart.

¹¹ Julius Schulhoff (1825–1898), a pianist and composer of Jewish origin from Prague.

¹² *Revue et gazette musicale* 22, 11 March 1855, 75.

¹³ *Le Ménestrel*, 11 March 1855, 4.

¹⁴ François Emmanuel Joseph Bazin (1816–1878). A student of Auber, he taught harmony at the Conservatory in Paris.

¹⁵ *La France musicale*, 6 January 1856, 68.

¹⁶ Marie Darjou (1837–18??), student of Emile Prudent, pianist and composer.

¹⁷ Arthur Napoleão (1843–1925), thirteen years old at the time, would go on to become a major figure in the musical life of Rio de Janeiro as composer, pianist, and music publisher.

¹⁸ Louise Contamin, pianist and composer.

¹⁹ G. Langlumé, pianist and composer.

²⁰ More usually found as Judith Lion. Pianist and organist.

²¹ Alexandre-François Debain (1809–1877), French inventor.

²² Emile Prudent (1817–1863), pianist and composer.

²³ Ernst Lubeck (1829–1876), Dutch pianist and composer.

²⁴ *Le Pays: journal des volontés de la France*, 18 March 1856.

²⁵ *Annuaire musical : institut, conservatoires, théâtres lyriques, associations des artistes musiciens, sociétés de concerts...* (1857), 139.

²⁶ *Le Constitutionnel : journal du commerce, politique et littéraire*, 15 March 1857 (no pagination).

²⁷ *Le Pays*, 31 March 1857, 2.

²⁸ *Le Constitutionnel*, 21 March 1859.

²⁹ Louise Farrenc (1804–1875), French composer, pianist and teacher. She studied composition privately with Czech composer Antonín Rejcha, whose students also included Franz Liszt, Hector Berlioz, and Cesar Franck.

³⁰ *La France musicale*, 2 February 1859, 156.

³¹ Alexandre Tilmant (1808–1880).

³² *Dwight's Journal of Music* 19 (1 June 1861): 71.

³³ Charles-Louis-Alexandre-Henri comte d'Audigier (1828–1872). In: *Revue étrangère de la littérature, des sciences et des arts*, 1861, 321–23. This same anecdote is edited and presented in the third person by Louis Pollet in *Le Figaro* (2 May 1861), 3.

³⁴ *Le Ménestrel*, 8 February 1863, 79.

³⁵ *Les Beaux-arts: revue nouvelle*, 1 July 1863, 190.

³⁶ *La Presse*, 7 September 1863, 3; *Neue Berliner Musikzeitung*, 17 (16 September 1863), 302.

³⁷ *Le Pays*, 31 December 1863, 3; *Revue et gazette*, 3 January 1864, 9; and *Le Constitutionnel*, 4 January 1864; *L'univers musical*, 7 January 1864, erroneously reports that she died in September of the previous year.

³⁸ Eutrope Lambert, *Marie de Val-sayre, étude biographique* (1865), 8.

³⁹ Plate number: B.P. 341, Bibliothèque nationale de France.

⁴⁰ Plate number: L.E. 2100, Bibliothèque nationale de France. Listed in the *Journal de l'imprimerie et de la librairie en Belgica* 9 (1862): 40.

Celebrating Dr. Joy Nwosu Lo-Bamijoko at 80: Pioneer of Operatic Performance in Nigeria / by Godwin Sadoh

This article is written to celebrate the life and accomplishments of Joy Nwosu as she turns 80 in 2020. Joy Ifeoma Nroli Nwosu Lo-Bamijoko is a highly educated, articulate, savvy, and versatile musician with interests covering every area of musical specializations, including operatic singing, popular music, piano and traditional musical instruments, music education, music criticism, teaching, African ethnomusicology, dancing, broadcasting, skits writing and acting, choral conducting, and songwriting. She was the most gifted professionally trained Nigerian female musician of her generation, and apparently, the most productive female scholar, who distinguished herself in her native country and internationally as an authority on Nigerian music. Earning her PhD in Music Education with emphasis on African ethnomusicology in 1981 from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, made her the second Nigerian woman to receive a doctorate in music.

Joy was born on August 27, 1940, in Enugu, Anambra State of southeast Nigeria. Between 1958 and 1961, she attended Holy Rosary College, Enugu, where she obtained the Grade II Teacher's Certificate upon graduation. During her student days at Holy Rosary College, Joy represented her school in the former Eastern Nigerian Festival of the Arts and won first place prizes in the soprano competitions for seven years consecutively. At this young age, Joy had already started assuming prominent roles in operatic productions. For instance, she was Nanki Poo in the *The Mikado* by W. S. Gilbert and Sir Arthur Sullivan, performed at Holy Rosary College to celebrate Nigeria's independence in 1960. Her brilliant performance motivated the Holy Rosary Sisters to offer her a scholarship to study music at the Royal College of Music, Dublin, Ireland. However, the former Eastern Nigerian Government awarded Joy its own scholarship to send her to study in Rome. She went to Rome in 1962 with one ambition, to study and become an operatic singer, and she was fortunate to be admitted into one of the world's best schools in vocal performance. While in Italy, Joy studied for five years at the Conservatori Di Musica, Santa Cecilia in Rome; Luigi Perugini in Florence; and Giacchino Perugini in Pesaro.

In 1977, Joy received a scholarship from the American Embassy in Lagos to pursue a PhD program at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Upon the completion of the program in 1981, she returned to Nigeria and taught music at the University of Lagos for several years. Joy was Chair of the Department of Music at the University of Lagos from 1986 to 1987 and was later chair of the Music Unit of the Centre for Cultural Studies, University of Lagos, from 1989 to 1992. As a member of the music faculty at UNILAG, Joy taught several courses including voice, elementary piano, fundamentals of musical literacy, African music, choral repertoire, stage production, and dance. Joy retired from the Centre for Cultural Studies, University of Lagos, as a Senior Research Fellow on November 1, 1999. After her retirement from the University of Lagos, Joy went to the United States where for two years, she taught vocal music at Paterson Public Schools, and for eight years she taught vocal music and directed three choral groups: Concert Choir, Festival Choir, and Gospel Choir, at Irvington High School, New Jersey. She won several trophies and accolades with her beautiful Festival Choir, Joy entered them for choral competitions, especially the one under the auspices of the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA).

As an operatic soprano, Joy Nwosu thrilled classical music aficionados in Nigeria, Ghana, United Kingdom, Italy, and the United States, with her lovely voice and bel canto technique. She performed several arias from well-known operas by Handel, Mozart, Gluck, Bononcini, Puccini, Verdi, Faure, Bankole, Ekwueme, Fibresima, and lieder of Schubert, Schumann, and Grieg. Joy sang leading soprano roles in several operas, oratorios and cantatas including Faure's *Requiem*, Handel's *Messiah*, Haydn's *The Creation*, Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater*, and Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan's *The Mikado*. As a scholar, Joy presented several papers at conferences in Nigeria and abroad. Her areas of interest in African ethnomusicology are wide and varied. Joy has researched and published numerous articles on such topics as tuning systems, classification of Nigerian musical instruments, music education, Nigerian art music, popular music, performance practice, and the recording industry. She was also the editor of three notable journals. Joy Nwosu presently enjoys writing story books with specific emphasis on children, Igbo mythology and cosmology. She is the author of five books.

Prof. Godwin Sadoh is the author of *Joy Nwosu Lo-Bamijoko: The Saga of a Nigerian Female Ethnomusicologist*, published by iUniverse (Bloomington, IN) in 2012.

In Review

FOREVER KAPRÁLOVÁ. Vítězslava Kaprálová: Songs. Dana Burešová, soprano, Timothy Cheek, piano, Magda Čáslavová, flute, members of the Herold Quartet. Recorded on July 13–15 and 17–20, 2003. Recording director Jaroslav Rybář, sound engineer Stanislav Sýkora. Released by Supraphon in 2003. Available for digital download from Amazon, iTunes and Supraphon.

Though her father Václav Kaprál was a composer who had studied under Leoš Janáček, Vítězslava Kaprálová's mother Viktorie, a singer, was a greater influence on the composer's early choice of composition, and it is arguably in the writing of art songs that she achieved her greatest successes. Whereas Kaprálová's orchestral works reveal a keen sensitivity to cultural, and indeed geopolitical, events so that stylistic progression can often be followed from one work to the next, the piano works and the songs in particular pursue their distinct evolutionary path through more personal themes. *Forever Kaprálová* is a more-or-less complete collection of this composer's art songs, and, like Giorgio Koukl's album of the complete piano music (see p. 12) causes us to wonder if another composer has stood the test of complete collections of their work so well, especially complete collections of such early work.

The collection starts off strongly with "Jitro" (Morning), composed in 1932, when Kaprálová was just 17, to a text by R. Bojko. The musical idiom is already daring, and includes one or two unexpected insertions of dark whole-tone intervals into an ebullient song, which I hear as reminders of the night that has passed, unmentioned in the poem itself. In "Jitro", everything already sounds completely effortless, as if all the right unexpected choices are being made on the spur of the moment. A year later, in the *Jiskry z popele* (Sparks from Ashes) collection, op. 5, Kaprálová's original voice is beginning to dominate the writing. The last song of this collection of poems by Bohdan Jelínek, "And Melancholy Thoughts Draw", creates a mournfully resonant winter sound-world around a single note deep in the bass, and naturally leads us to *Leden* (January), the only song here arranged for other instruments. With flute, two violins and cello beside the piano (Dana Burešová leads her voice between them all with perfect poise in this recording), *Leden* is a surreal fantasy of an iced-up world, with appropriately icy instrumentation. Composed in 1933, *Leden* is a mature work whose inward-folding textures look forward to the Andante of the Partita for Piano and Strings of 1939.

Kaprálová's songs were usually settings of words by Czech poets, most of whom were her near-contemporaries, and serve as an excellent introduction to that country's poetry; many are written in Symbolist or Surrealist style, allowing an emphasis on ambiguities and personal associations alongside direct meanings in the arrangements. When I first came across Kaprálová's songs on the internet, I was attracted by the titles of these collections, often provided by the composer herself: *Sparks from Ashes*, *Apple from the Lap*, *Forever*, *Sung into the Distance*. Usually representing a different author's poetry and a different

approach to setting to suit each poet's style, as well as marking the passing of time and the growth of skill, their more modern equivalent would have been the annual E.P. record. Kaprálová's modernity is frequently so accomplished, it seems to belong to a later age, and it is sometimes tempting to hear phrases as belonging to rock or jazz songs ahead of their time, especially when, on occasion, introductory chords to some later works evoke musical atmospheres that Joni Mitchell or Nina Simone have made familiar, as if Kaprálová predicted cool jazz. To give one example, the first chords of "Posmrtná Variace" (Posthumous variation, 1937), the album's only instrumental track. This powerful and concise tribute to Czechoslovakian president Tomáš Masaryk, written on the day of his death and using a folk song associated with him as an inner voice (thus the "variation" of the title), seems to sum up much of Kaprálová's gift in just over one minute, during which it passes through four distinct emotional and stylistic phases: cool jazz introspection, whole-tone mystery, romantic grandeur, and grief-torn discord that fades into the distance. Such an aesthetic, of rapid succession of theme, pace, colour and mood constantly stimulating our interest with fresh or refreshed imagery, noted in works like the *Military Sinfonietta* and the String Quartet, also finds a place occasionally in some of the shorter songs.

"Posmrtná Variace" is included within a collection of mostly unrelated songs by diverse poets titled *Vteřiny* (Seconds), op. 18 (1936–1939). The translator's addition of "of a minute" is a disambiguation from its other meaning in English, which would suggest a collection of B-sides—a not entirely inappropriate reading, as experimentation with different ideas defines this collection which includes the wry and tuneful "Easter". The *Seconds* songs were collected from work produced intermittently for family, friends and special occasions during a longer period of more intense focus on learning the crafts of orchestral writing and conducting; this collection thus lacks cohesion, but the songs are of a high standard and full of interest.

The three songs of *Zpíváno do dálky* (Sung into the Distance, op. 22) and the lone final song, *Dopis* (Letter) bring the album to a close, with settings ever more modern, complex, profound, uncannily familiar, personal, and affectingly melodic.

Much of classical music is melodic in name only—Kaprálová's gift for memorable phrases and lyricism was rarely restrained. Often, a strong and relatively simple melodic line—it is unusual for her to use more than one note to a syllable, so that when a vowel does carry a longer melody, as in "Easter",

the effect is noticeable—carries a song through an imaginary landscape created by the piano with the freedom such strength allows; sometimes the wind, trees, seas and sunsets in the text rise alongside it like images on a flickering film, sometimes the mood is explored note-by-note in rhythmic arpeggios so effective we forget that the accompanist is limited to a single instrument.

Sometimes, as in *Sbohem a šáteček* (Waving Farewell, op. 14), the inflexion of the text itself populates the music with echoes. The climax of this longer song features the lines *...oh swallow, who looks for its native shed, / you showed me the south, where you have your nest in a closet / your fate is flight, my fate is song*, which are revisited in the subsequent piano interlude, where the swallows take flight across the piano, one rising the other falling, until the two rise together one last time, then separate again and fly to their respective distances. In the later orchestral version of this song, the swallows are not distinct but appear as a singular, brilliantly coloured totemic bird; both readings are valid readings of Nezval's poem, each is suited to the size of its likely venue, but it is the piano version that most clearly shows the thought inside the emotion.



Ex. 1 Kaprálová: *Sbohem a šáteček*, op. 14, mm 86–91. HMUB (1947), 1st edition.

In “Ruce” (Hands) the verse that begins *The five fingers of my hand are a lyre* is accompanied by a series of five-note motifs that pluck across the keyboard like fingers on a lyre to bring its imagery to life.



Ex. 2 Kaprálová: “Ruce” from *Navždy*, op. 12, mm 1–3. Amos Editio (2005), 2nd edition.

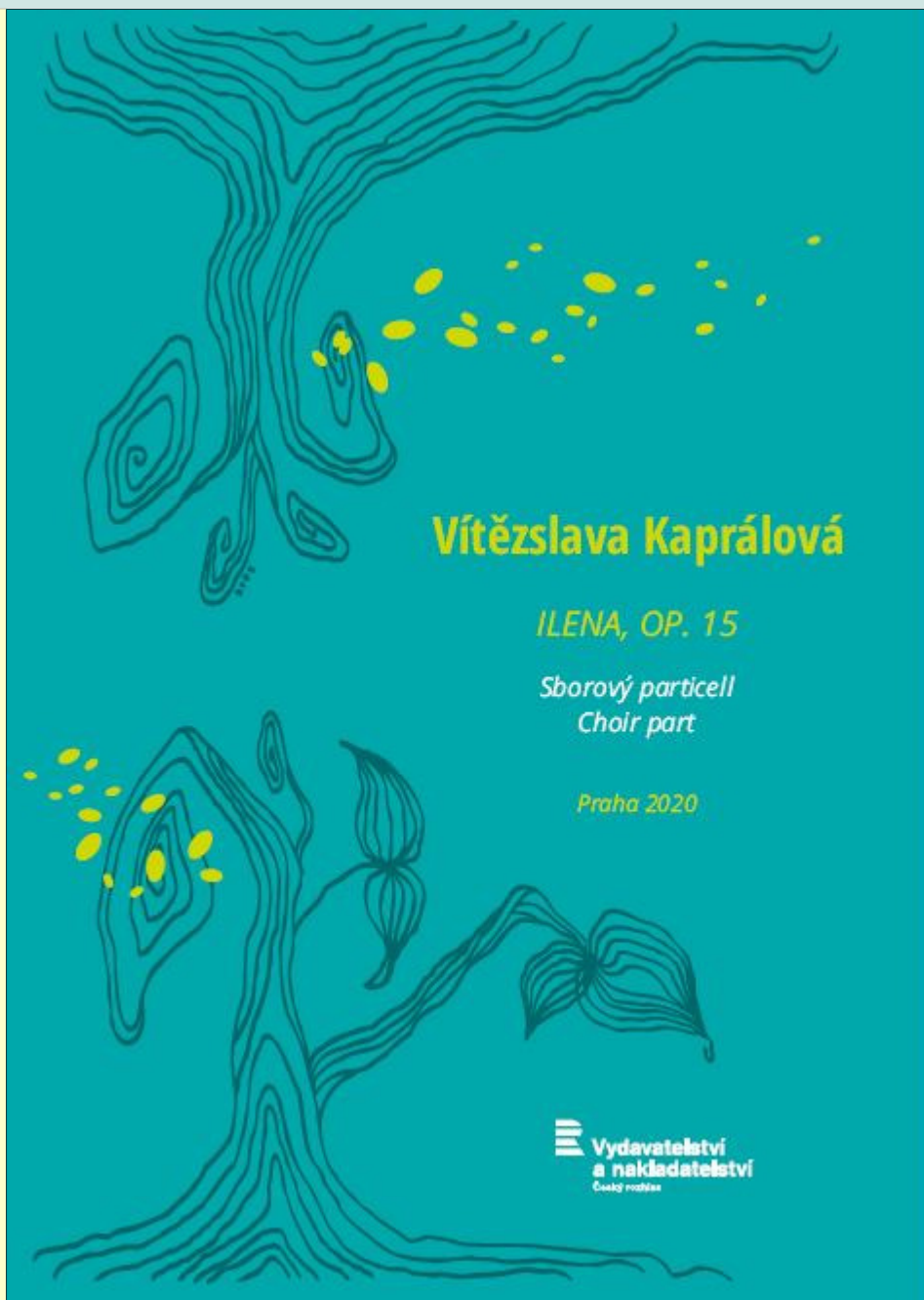
“Polohlasem” (Under One’s Breath) includes the lines *through chinks in the door, / through crevices in the window, / the wind is blowing*, accompanied by the trembling of the door and window in the wind in the

left hand part, with a rhythm that makes us feel that the poem was chosen because its events were experienced by the composer who had noted the house vibrating with just such a sound at the time. Many of Kaprálová’s songs are autobiographical; she may not have written these poems, but her selection of them often seems transparent when we refer to her timeline; the songs that result express how she feels about family, friends, lovers, mortality and her country, as well as representing aspects of her native environment, so clearly that we can follow her as if watching a film or reading a book.

Kaprálová generously wrote most of her songs in a register allowing them to be performed by a range of voice types, so we can look forward to recordings that will provide significantly different versions of them. Nevertheless, the *Forever Kaprálová* performances are complete, sensitively rendered, and often feel inspired. Timothy Cheek’s pianism and dedication in bringing this project to us is exemplary; Dana Burešová sings with perfect control and a clear voice. We know we are hearing the songs performed by people who understand every note of them. The CD *Forever Kaprálová* is out-of-print; the collection is available as a digital download from Supraphon, but its booklet is not. The poems add so much to the songs for those of us who love the songs but do not speak Czech that the booklet, or a series of bilingual translations, should also be made available.

Every composer who is able to write and be heard has the opportunity to add to the meaning of words like success, greatness or genius for future generations. Until the 20th century, female composers were rarely heard, and the 20th century female composer still suffers a disadvantage in terms of the performance, recording and broadcast of her work. From Kaprálová we have a body of art that is, by design as well as tragic necessity, concentrated; art that solves the problems of its time so well that it seldom reveals their difficulty directly; art that is often enjoyable at that level of musical appreciation that requires least study; and art that is nonetheless deeply personal, intricately musical, and strongly connected to the themes of its author’s short biography. Vítězslava Kaprálová’s love of song and poetry, as well as her unusual ability to express self-awareness through her piano writing, supplied her with a medium well capable of preserving her brilliance within the short time she was granted on Earth.

George Henderson



 Vydavatelství
a nakladatelství
Český rozhlas

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