



Special points of interest:

- Kapralova's Concertino, op. 21
- Kapralova's correspondence with Hanus Weigl

Inside this issue:

E. Frankova: Last Concertino	1
The Concertino in correspondence	2
H. Weigl: Rejoicing in the Memories of Vitezslava Kapralova	5
Two Letters: Vitezslava Kapralova to Hanus Weigl	7
K. Hartl: Vitezslava Kapralova. A Life Chronology	9
New publications	12

Last Concertino¹

By Erika Fronkova

The drama of composer Vitezslava Kapralova's short life (1915-1940) has rather overshadowed the real significance of her music. Kapralova left behind orchestral and chamber works that include outstanding piano and vocal pieces. The major influence on her compositional style was Bohuslav Martinu from whom she derived a feel for modern melody, rhythm and harmony to complement her classical training in composition.²

It is clear that the most important works for the understanding of the meaning of her music are pieces from the composer's last, Parisian period, in which her own compositional style was crystallizing fully and rapidly. This means that we should be all the more grateful to the team of Brno musicologists Milos Stedron and Leos Faltus³ who have reconstructed from a surviving autograph copy the composer's *Concertino for Violin, Clarinet and Orchestra*, her last⁴ and, unfortunately, incomplete work.

The piece was only the second concertante work in Kapralova's orchestral output, the first being *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra in D Minor, op. 7* (1934-35), which she conducted as her graduation piece at the Brno Conservatory.⁵ The last orchestral piece that Kapralova was to write before the Concertino was *Partita for Piano and Strings, op. 20* (1938-39).

According to a note on the first page of the autograph sketch, the composer started the three-movement Concertino on 18 March 1939 in Paris. Sources for the reconstruction of the piece have been this autograph sketch (a four-line particella consisting of the two solo parts and piano arrangement) and a score of the instrumentated part of the first movement. Both sources are deposited in the music depart-

ment of the Moravian Museum in Brno under signature A 29.717.

The reconstruction of the individual movements of Concertino can be described as follows:

First movement. The reconstruction contains 28 pages in total, with the autograph score (8 pages) corresponding to pages 1-9 and the autograph sketch (6 pages) corresponding to pages 2-28 of the reconstruction. In the first nine pages the editors took into account the autograph score, while in the rest of the movement they carried out the instrumentation on the basis of the autograph sketch.

Second movement. The reconstruction contains 9 pages in total, with the autograph sketch (3 pages) corresponding to pages 1-9 of the reconstruction. The editors based the instrumentation of this movement on the autograph sketch, taking into account the partial instrumentation it included.

Third movement. The reconstruction contains 23 pages in total, with the autograph sketch (3 pages) corresponding to pages 1-21a and the first bar of page 22 of the reconstruction. The editors based the movement instrumentation on the autograph sketch and composed the end of the unfinished movement from the second bar on page 21a to page 23.

Leos Faltus was responsible for the reconstruction of the second movement. The other two movements were reconstructed by Milos Stedron.

The reconstruction respects the dynamic, agogic and phrasing indications in the autograph sketch and autograph score only in certain areas. The dynamic and agogic indications are only generally specified in the reconstruction, and the work was

Last Concertino

moulded into its final form in an interplay with the performers and conductor. The recording of the work, made on 21 February 2001 at the recording studio of the Czech Radio in Brno, was initiated by clarinetist Pavel Busek who recorded it with violinist Pavel Wallinger and the Brno State Philharmonic, conducted by Tomas Hanus. This recording, musically directed by Petr Reznicek, was used in the new Kapralova documentary *Last Concertino*, produced by Czech Television (Studio Brno). The film was screened at the *Golden Prague Festival* and was premiered on Czech television on 3 June 2001.

Vitezslava Kapralova never completed her last concertante work but an indication of her further intentions with the piece is perhaps to be found in the composer's references to two *Old Testament* verses that are jotted down before the last of the three notation systems on the last page of the autograph sketch of the Concertino. This last system, with which Kapralova's manuscript ends, contains only two bars. The editors have created a conclusion to the work partially by using the composer's own motivic material and also by symbolically repeating the final bar as a *fadeout*.

The biblical references are *Psalms 57* (on injustice and trust in the justice of God) and *Book of Job 30: 26* ("When I looked for good, then evil came unto me, and when I waited for light, there came darkness").⁶ It is possible that apart from identifying the non-musical source of inspiration for the work, Kapralova was indicating in these short notes the intended culmination of the whole piece. One possible explanation is that the author was considering inserting a vocal (solo or choral) element into the climax of the work, using the words from the biblical quotes.

There is no doubt, however, that the two quotations are related to the overall orientation of the work that responds to the Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia. Written under the immediate impression of this national tragedy, the work shows the patriotic feelings of the young Czechoslovak composer.

Editorial notes:

¹ This article was first published under the title "Vitezslava Kapralova's Last Concertino" in *Czech Music*, 4 (2001): 6-7. It is used here with permission of the journal editor.

² Martinu's influence on Kapralova's compositional style has been somewhat overrated, for it is evident only in a few of her compositions. It was the music of Igor Stravinsky that had the strongest impact on Kapralova's artistic development, as evident in Kapralova's largest orchestral work, *Suita Rustica* (1938) or her orchestral miniature *Prélude de Noël* (1939). Kapralova's early compositions are rooted in the impressionistic idiom but some of her music, such as string quartet or *Waving Farewell* for voice and orchestra, also reveal an expressionistic strain. Kapralova skillfully transformed all these influences into her own, highly original voice.

³ The impetus for the reconstruction came from the clarinetist Pavel Busek who took personal interest in the work and persuaded

composers Milos Stedron of Masaryk University and Leos Faltus of Janacek Academy of Music in Brno to prepare the piece for performance. On 10 January 2002, Busek performed the work with Pavel Wallinger and the Hradec Kralove Philharmonic, conducted by Tomas Hanus, in its concert premiere in Hradec Kralove, Czech Republic. In December 2003, the work was published by Baerenreiter (see page 12).

⁴ Although Concertino is Kapralova's last *concertante* work, the very last work by Kapralova is *Deux ritournelles pour violoncelle et piano*, op. 25, finished about five weeks before the composer's tragic death in Montpellier on 16 June 1940.

⁵ Only the first movement was premiered at the graduation concert of the Brno Conservatory on 17.6.1935. The piano part was performed by Ludvik Kundera who was accompanied by the Brno Conservatory Orchestra, conducted by Kapralova. The performance was particularly important for Kapralova, as it was her first public appearance as conductor. The complete work was given its first performance by the Brno Radio Orchestra, with Ludvik Kundera as soloist and Vitezslava Kapralova as conductor, broadcast by the Brno Radiojournal on 15.10.1936. Unfortunately, the recording has not survived.

⁶ "Yet when I hoped for good, evil came; when I looked for light, then came darkness."

The Concertino in correspondence

The Concertino for Violin, Clarinet and Orchestra, op. 21 is first mentioned in Kapralova's correspondence to her parents dated 28 March 1939:

"I've started something new but I am not sure what it is. Well, it is for two solo instruments and orchestra, if only I knew what the other instrument was. One must be violin but the other - oboe? clarinet? trumpet? Now, after forty bars, I had to stop and get the answer before resuming the work. I have been writing it most likely for clarinet, but what a strange combination. ... It is cold here like in Siberia but not colder than in my heart..."

On 5 April 1939 she writes to her parents:

"As for new compositions, I am announcing "XY" for solo violin, clarinet and large orchestra. So far I have finished a first little piece; there will be about 5 of them. I don't know its title yet; thus, in the meantime, I am calling it "XY." I've been extremely secretive about it, and that has been driving Martinu nuts."

On 11 April 1939 Kapralova writes another letter (*Figure 1* on page 3) to her parents from Rouen (where she was visiting her cousin Vera Uhlirva):

"I started thinking about the second movement of "XY". I have finally played the first movement to Martinu who liked it a lot. It is a rather strange style though, where violin and clarinet play in a cadence [*musical example*] or orchestra [*example*]. The main motive is: [*example*]."

Last Concertino

děle. Vířiv je přímo obdivuhodná jeho x. úplná přelaha, kde běže tu tyčelivost, když je s nimi od 7 mi hod. ráno, dává je ve škole, umývá a tak dále stále taká v pojatých vřících; však je také uzavřená věc. Jinek je to krásná vířiv kde je, -btis krásná ve francouzském domě myslu (staré), má krásný pohled a poměně dost volně mezi dnem. Neděle umís volně, jen třídou odpoledne. Platim zde 22-frs denně. Tily už umí leze státně i jen strachat jak straha (lun!) a citim se jinek dobře. To jinek "uměně", je se je ve umě předdu jed ne panti, tak jinek je to dobře. Všichni už je ve škole, krásně, nemůžu, jablečné, talipánci a já upo- minám se vás. Přemýšlím o druhé věci "X Y" tu prou- jenu už konečně kartinu zahrá a moc se um to líbila. Je to takový divný stih kde krásně tiels housle a klarinet v cedenci

Tak nyní jedne ne podívalu s Girem, jedním se zdavých děti (jestě je 17ti letů dečka) ne herou- džin a vřících restaurijim dlapcem. Tak us sledanou zítis, pošlu vám několik listů s Rou- anem,

Oho Váš požadok je
 Pěti, píseč ní s vaříč mamon?
 Jáme kradý s Vitou, ti jáme tu nyní ale duc

Figure 1. Kapralova's letter to parents from Rouen dated 11 April 1939. The letter is reproduced courtesy of Kapralova Estate.

Last Concertino

37 unis.

Fag I, II

Cor I, II

Cor III, IV

Vno solo

Cl in B solo

Vno I

Vno II

Vla unis.

Vlc I arco

Cb arco

H 7919

Figure 2: Concertino for Violin, Clarinet and Orchestra, op. 21. Second movement. Page 27. © 2003 Editio Bärenreiter Praha. Used with permission of Editio Bärenreiter Praha.

Remembering Kapralova

Rejoicing in the memories of Vitezslava Kapralova

Hanus Weigl

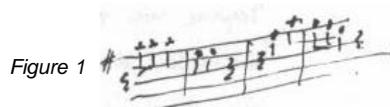


Figure 1

After more than 70 years, only a few blurred pictures endure in my memory. Focusing on these, I can locate my first meeting with Vitezslava Kapralova to the building on Kounicova Street in Brno, where the management of the *State Conservatory for Music and Drama* and the Organist School were housed. The somewhat stately building is still in the same place, now housing the Janacek (and also Kapralova) Archive in the courtyard villa where Janacek once lived. During our times, we would see there his widow, sweeping the snow from the path. We were entirely unaware of her unhappy life, and nobody had told us about the lawsuit she was waging then to retain the master's manuscripts...

It was in September 1930 when we, four students of the composition and conducting class, met with Director Jan Kunc.¹ Kapralova--then 15 years old--seemed a child to me at 18, already an undergraduate. The other two were a German student whose name was Lustig and Ota Wach who like myself was also enrolled at the Faculty of Law at the Masaryk University (at that time provisionally housed next door in the former monastery on Smetanova Street).

Our lessons were given in the former Minorite monastery at the corner of Orli and Minorite streets. There, Prof. Koblizek²--our principal--instructed us in the theory of harmony in a class we shared with about twenty piano students. He was quite a jovial, rotund elderly man who liked his beer more than the lessons. Therefore, when in spite of bitterly cold winter days we came to school, he would say: "Artisans you may become but never artists because artists do not come to school in such weather."

Later Prof. Jaroslav Kvapil³ instructed us in harmony. He was also of massive dimensions and so was his musicality which aroused our deep respect. To this day I regret that he did not continue to teach us.

The piano lessons were given to us--Vitka⁴ and myself--by Prof. Anna Holubova. The repertoire was nothing extraordinary: Czerny, Cramer-Bulow's etudes, early Beethoven sonatas. Vitka played Ravel, I remember having played Dvorak and Suk.

After the lessons, when we had dealings at the Kounicova, I walked together with Vitka and Ota Wach who seemed very much in love. They usually walked hand in hand; Ota was mostly silent, whereas Vitka was talkative. It sometimes happened that Ota was not with us and when we passed his house on the way, (he lived in *Zemsky dum* on the Kounicova), Vitka whistled their signal (*Figure 1*) which was the theme of the third movement of Dvorak's *New World Symphony*. (Characteristically of Ota: when in 1995 I found his

address in Vienna, I wrote to him and noted down from the memory that tune as a recognition sign. In his reply he first of all corrected my wrong time signature).

After the first year, Ota and Lustig left the conservatory, while Vitka and I remained in the composition/conducting class. Among our teachers were Petrzelka (counterpoint, composition), Chlubna (instrumentation), and Steinman (conducting). Chalabala certainly was not my professor at that time, as it is written in one of Vitka's biographies⁵ but he was the venerated conductor at the Opera house.

Vitka was always able to provide tickets, the cheapest of course, (third rank, first row, left side), but from there we had a splendid view of the orchestra pit and could admire the conductors: Chalabala, Balatka, Bakala, and the opera's chief Milan Sachs. He was from Yugoslavia and so were the unforgettable baritone Nicola Cvejic and soprano Marja Zaludova, whereas Gabzdyl--the chief male dancer--was probably from Russia. The ballet was directed by Mrs. Cvejic. The repertoire consisted of many first performances. I remember that *Wozzeck* impressed us tremendously. Other highlights were Borodin's *Prince Igor*,⁶ Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov*,⁷ Khovanshchina,⁸ Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade*, Janacek's *The Cunning Little Vixen*, *The Makropulos Affair*, *The Excursions of Mr. Broucek*.

All this world came to an end for me in autumn 1933, when I left the conservatory and devoted my whole time and energy to Law. Successfully, because in December the following year I was awarded my Doctorate. But then I had to secure my future existence and had almost no contact with the musical life of Brno. I do not remember seeing Vitka anymore, although we must have kept in touch, as it is documented by the letter⁹ from the end of 1935 when I did my army service. Then there is the autographed invitation (*Figure 2*) from Prague to her famous concert with the Czech Philharmonic in 1937,¹⁰ to which I sent her pink roses, as scribbled on the invitation's envelope. I could not attend the event myself because I had just started as an article clerk. In 1938 Vitka returned my Christmas wishes (*Figure 3*), although both of us were in Brno at the time but without personal contact. In 1939 I had to leave Brno, settling in Palestine. There is a letter from that period that shows the contact we had.¹¹

During the communist regime, I could not visit Czechoslovakia. Macek's biography¹² was my sole source of information about Kapralova. A copy of the *Military Sinfonietta* score had to be smuggled out. I had another score copied from the Library of Congress but with difficulties because of the copyright. Then Vitka's former husband's indiscrete novel¹³ brought me into correspondence with Jiri Mucha. Sadly, he died shortly af-

Remembering Kapralova

terwards. Somehow I felt that Ota Wach had to be alive. My two-week vacation spent at Tri Studne in 1992 was fruitless. It was only in 1995 at the Janacek Museum where a woman curator told me that Vitka was buried at Brno's central cemetery. I found her grave there at an honorary site. Two pots with fresh flowers hinted at somebody visiting the grave. By chance, Uher's "Ona a Martinu"¹⁴ came into my hands. I phoned the publisher and the next day Josef Kapral¹⁵ knocked on my door at Luhacovice saying "Let's drive to Vienna, where Wach lives." Instead I immediately rang him up and we remained in touch until his death in 1997. My further information from then on came from his sister, Prof. Marketa Cahova. Whenever I was in Prague I used to visit her. From 1998 on I spent my yearly holidays at Tri Studne. Every morning I used to walk to a spring named Vitulka,¹⁶ which the Kaprals, Josef and Alenka, tendered admirably. Alenka also died too young,¹⁷ and I don't go abroad anymore. But I keep in touch with Josef and Karla¹⁸ and I am grateful to them for every moment they let me rejoice in the memories of Vitka.

Editorial notes:

¹ Kunc served as the first director of the Brno Conservatory from 1920 to 1945.

² Max Koblížek (1866-1947), pedagogue, organist, choirmaster.

³ Jaroslav Kvapil (1892-1958), pedagogue, pianist.

⁴ Vitka is one of the many possible diminutives of the name Vitezslava.

⁵ Kapralova studied with both: choral conducting with Vilem Steinman (1880-1962) during the first years at the conservatory and orchestral conducting with Zdenek Chalabala (1899-1962) during the last two years of her studies at the conservatory.

⁶ Premiered at the Brno Opera on 25 October 1930.

⁷ Premiered at the Brno Opera on 31 October 1931.

⁸ Premiered at the Brno Opera on 5 May 1933.

⁹ Kapralova's letter to Hanus Weigl, written at Tri Studne, is dated 26 December 1935. It is translated on p. 7.

¹⁰ Author refers to the premiere of *Military Sinfonietta*, performed by the Czech Philharmonic and Kapralova, that took place in Lucerna Hall in Prague on 26 November 1937. The concert was organized by the National Women's Council, under the patronage of Edvard Benes, President of the Republic, to whom the work is dedicated.

¹¹ Kapralova's letter to Hanus Weigl, written in Paris, is from December 1939 (see p. 7 for its English translation and p. 8 for the original).

¹² Macek, Jiri. *Vitezslava Kapralova*. Praha: Svaz cs. skladatelů, 1958.

¹³ Mucha, Jiri. *Podivne lasky*. Praha: Mlada Fronta, 1988. In his novel-autobiography, Mucha writes about Martinu's clandestine love affair with Kapralova.

¹⁴ Uher, Jindrich. *Ona a Martinu*. Praha: Československý Spisovatel, 1995. 2nd edition: Tisnov: Sursum, 2002. Unlike Mucha's biography, Uher's novel does not bring any new facts about Kapralova's life except for a few unfounded, highly speculative claims that have not been supported by solid research.

¹⁵ Kapralova's cousin and one of the heirs of her estate.

¹⁶ Another diminutive of the name Vitezslava. The village of Tri Studne (meaning "Three Wells") is named after three springs located in the nearby forest. The people of Tri Studne call one of the springs by Kapralova's nickname - Vitulka.

¹⁷ Alenka - Alena Kapralova, an untiring promoter of Vitezslava Kapralova, succumbed to cancer in 2003.

¹⁸ Author refers to the editor.



Figure 2: Autographed invitation from November 1937

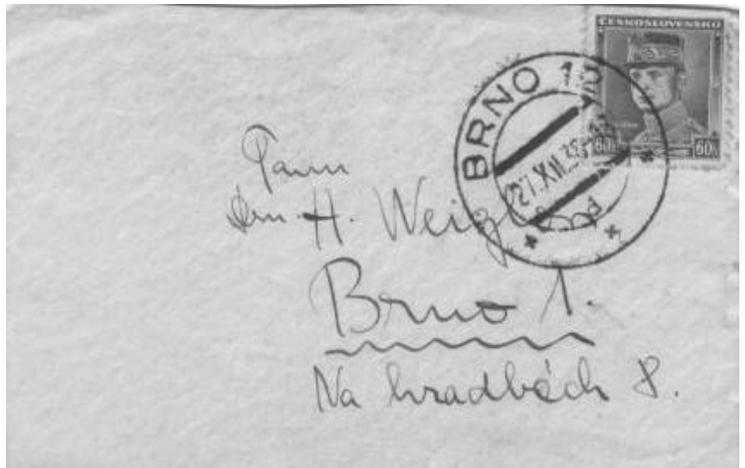


Figure 3a: Kapralova's note to H. Weigl from 27 December 1938

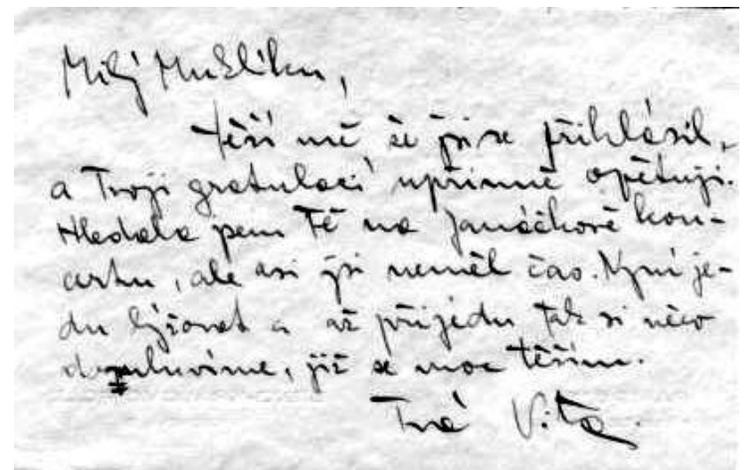


Figure 3b: Kapralova's note to H. Weigl from 27 December 1938

Two Letters

When Karla Hartl suggested to me that I write my reminiscences of Vitka (that's how she called herself at the time we studied together at the Brno Conservatory from 1930 to 1933), I decided to include two of her treasured letters, in which she truly comes to life.

Letter One.

Tri Studne, 26.XII.1935

Dear Muklicku!

Forgive me the state of this paper, but we are at Tri Studne and I could not find anything better. I am late in wishing you happy holidays, but in time, I hope, to wish you a happy New Year. May you continue to like the military life as much as you have done so far. I was surprised at this but can understand it. How do you like Olomouc? Did Jarka speak ill of me? How are you bearing the separation? Well, I hope you will write again something about your military life.

I am enrolled in Novak's and Talich's masterclasses in Prague. With Novak it is a drudgery and with Talich a big joke; during the past six months we had just 2 lessons and even those we chatted away. Master N.⁵ gave me (and also Vrana who does the same class) homework straight away—a passacaglia—but did not like any of my efforts. Altogether, I brought him about seven versions. You can imagine how I felt; I was about to grab my suitcases and return home. But then I got angry and wrote a passacaglia, in which I was making fun of this venerated form. Everything just the opposite (to how it was supposed to be). I titled the piece "Grotesque Passacaglia" and because Tempo had just announced a competition for a little piano piece, enraged as I was I sent it in. Well, (what followed was) the wonder of wonders. Not only that Master liked it, but I also won the competition (from 24 compositions and with Vycpalek⁶ in the jury) and got the prize, i.e. 500 Kc in cash; in addition, the composition is being published as a supplement of Tempo and I have been promised a certain number of prints. First I turned my nose up at the supplement, but now I see it was good for me. Only a very few people would buy this wild thing (you wouldn't recognize Vitka's style in it: during the past six months, I have emancipated myself from the provincial Petrzelka-ism⁷). This way it will get to thousands of people, and, most importantly, to Prague's people. These citizens know nothing about Brno and its life. Do buy it, it is in Tempo No. 6. They also reprinted there my graduation photograph in the conductor's tuxedo.¹⁰ I would send it to you myself, but I have yet to receive the copies that I have been promised. This was a very successful step indeed, because in Prague one must really wrestle one's way to get noticed by the public. For example, you cannot get to the conductor's stand unless you pay 5,000 Kc in advance and even more in the case of composition. Smetana, Dvorak, Beethoven etc. flourish here but not a single person from the young generation has been programmed during the past 3 years. They barely allow graduation works and yet these are supposed to be (encouraged) under the ministry regulations. It is entirely hopeless here; at least in Brno there is the Club (of Moravian composers) that programs many new works. Prague has "Přítomnost",¹¹ of which I am a member, but with Novak and Suk etc. the past also rules; the only exception is Haba, the quartertone composer. In the theatre the situation is the same. Before I left for the holidays they performed "the first Czechoslovak performance" of the opera "Kostan",¹² you may remember it from Brno! The entire theatre was proud of this achievement but they had to call Chala-bala³ to rehearse it. The cheapest concert ticket is 8 Kc (standing

only) so it is no wonder that they can fill only a half of the hall (and the hall is not even as big as our aula). Well, you hear me only whining, don't you, and yet I fear the day when I will have to leave this place. I just like it here so awfully much. I live at Orechovka⁴ and have a lovely room and peace for composing—something I entirely lacked in Brno. My uncle and aunt Uhlírovi live downstairs (you know, the parents of Vera Uhl., the violinist); there I get my meals and a more or less homelike atmosphere, should I get homesick, which so far hasn't happened. It is terrible, isn't it. I barely miss my parents, I am just glad that I have my privacy. Our landlord lives on the first floor and I live above in the attic. It is in the prettiest quarter of Prague (as you may know), about 1/2 hour to the National Theatre by streetcar, but clean air, etc. etc.-- Well, I have written enough, now let's hear from you. My address is V.K., Praha XVIII Cukrovarnicka 33. Wishing you much glory in your military service - may you achieve at least the rank of a corporal,¹⁵ Vita.

Letter Two (see page 8) was written after a gap of 5 years—in December 1939, when I arrived in Palestine. The Kaprals, cut off from their daughter, gave me her address in Paris and begged me to report to her that they were well. That I did upon my arrival in early December. Immediately, I received her response below:

Dear Mukliku!

(I was so surprised that) my eyes have almost jumped from their sockets. Where have you been wandering, man? As for me, I got stuck in Paris and I like it but do get homesick. Not only do I long for my parents but I am such a 100% Czechoslovakian that I cannot imagine a life without Brno or Prague. I would love to hear what is happening at home - whatever you will write, it will interest me very much. You will be the same way in due time. Were you in Brno or Breclav? (I can't concentrate on writing because Rudolf Firkusny⁸ is distracting me by talking.)

Kapralova's writing is interrupted with the following greetings from her companions:

*Best regards to you, though I do not know you,
Rudolf Firkusny*

*Please, give my regards to the promised land and return after the storm is over,
Jiri Mucha*

Kapralova added the following explanation underneath Jiri Mucha's note:

You know, this is the son of Alphonse Mucha and possibly my future husband

(overleaf)

Your letter arrived in order--my address is: 12, Square Alboni, Paris 16. I wonder, however, whether you will receive my correspondence. So I will test it by sending this letter. Dear Muklicku, I wish you a beautiful Christmas and much, much happi-

Kapralova to H. Weigl

milý publiku,

uvážte jsem by vší vylučoval, jen co je pravda. Tak tedy by futuřístičtí členové? Ji jsem zase uváhal. Těmto a jsem rád, jen když se mně takto nesty-
dalo. Nejenom po světě, ale jsem tak 100% tím vědomím, že si bez toho Bona nebo Bredy nedovedu vůbec ří-
tít představit. - Bude velice rád když mi napíše jak a co navrhne a udělá.
~~světa~~ a budete pat mě bude mo-
žná. Těmto to sám na mě vlastně
křísí se nějaký čas. Byl jsi - Bona nebo
- Bredy? (Stále mně dr toho přitom)
Bude Ficklingův nebo a tak nemohu souhlasit
pat.)

*uvážte jsem, se
napisovat
Ficklingův*

Pararungite radicekou
vevni a vrátě se zase,
ai bude po tom.
Jií bude
↓
Víš, že jsem od Alfonse Hudy
a ani mně přísti mamsil.

Figure 1: The letter from Kapralova to Hanus Weigl was written in Paris in December 1939. It is reproduced here courtesy of Hanus Weigl.

ness in the New Year, and also to your wife, who--though I do not know her--is dear to me already. Keep well in your new or old land and write to me soon.

Best wishes,

Yours, Vitka.

All our young artists are sending you their regards. I often think of Brno and then I talk also about you and our studies together.

[English translation by Karla Hartl and Leda Hatrick]

Editorial notes:

¹ Meaning: dear lad.

² The village of Tri Studne was Kapralova's holiday retreat.

³ Vitezslav Novak (1870-1949). His masterclasses at the Prague Conservatory were sought after by several generations of Czech musicians.

⁴ Vaclav Talich (1883-1961). During the fall and winter of 1935 Talich had been extremely occupied. Besides his demanding job of chief conductor of Czech Philharmonic, which took him invariably on international tours, he had also hosted the ISCM Festival in Prague in September. In October, following Ostrcil's death, he was appointed music director of the National Theatre. However, Kapralova's statement may be an exaggeration, judging from her letters to parents in which she mentioned or described about six classes taught by Talich during the period.

⁵ N. = Novak

⁶ Frantisek Vrana, a classmate from Brno Conservatory. He premiered Kapralova's Two Songs, op. 4 and For Ever, op. 12.

⁷ Tempo was a music journal published by HMUB (Hudebni Matice Umelecke Besedy, also known as Edition HM), one of the most important publishers of sheet music in Prague (active from 1907 to 1949).

⁸ Ladislav Vycpalek (1882-1969), a respected composer of the second generation of Czech modern music.

⁹ Vilem Petrzelka (1889-1967). Kapralova studied composition under Petrzelka at the Brno Conservatory.

¹⁰ See the photograph on p. 1.

¹¹ Pritomnost - Pritomnost Society for Contemporary Music in Prague (active during 1924-1949; revived in 1991).

¹² *Kostan* - opera by Yugoslavian composer Konjovic. I am indebted to Dr. Hanus Weigl for this information.

¹³ Zdenek Chalabala (1899-1962) - chief conductor of the Brno Opera during 1929-1936.

¹⁴ a city quarter in Prague 6

¹⁵ corporal means kapral in Czech - it is possible that Kapralova is intentionally playing with her own name here.

¹⁶ Rudolf Firkusny (1912-1994), Czech pianist and a dedicatee of Kapralova's most popular piano work *April Preludes*.

Hanus Weigl (b.1912) was a fellow student of Kapralova at the Brno Conservatory during 1930-33. Since 1939 he lives in Tel Aviv where he has its own law practice. His compositional output includes *Orchestral Variations on Maoz Tsur*, cantata *Alilot Susan*, *Concertino for Clarinet and Strings*, and *Three Songs for Baritone and Piano*.

Vitezslava Kapralova: Life Chronology

By Karla Hartl



Photo1: Kapralova's parents' wedding photograph (1913). Photo courtesy of Kapralova Estate.

1915

January 24, Sunday, 6:00 p.m. - Vitezslava Kapralova is born in Brno, in the family of the composer and teacher Vaclav Kapral (1889-1947) and singer Vitezslava Kapralova, née Uhlirova (1890-1973).

June - Vaclav Kapral is conscripted and stationed in Albania during WWI.

Viktorie Kapralova moves with Vitezslava to her parents in Medlanky.

1916

1917

Vitezslava Kapralova



Photo 2: Little Vitezslava with her mother (1916). Photo courtesy of Kapralova Estate.

1918

November - Vaclav Kapral returns from WWI.

1919

Esteemed Prague music historian and critic Vladimir Helfert moves to Brno. He is to become a leading personality of Brno's academic and cultural life and will play an important role in promoting music of Vaclav Kapral and his daughter Vitezslava.

1920

1921

September 1 - Vitezslava enters Elementary School at Slovanske namesti in the Brno suburbs Kralovo Pole.

Vaclav Kapral meets 17-year-old Otylka Humlova, a singer in the choir he conducts. She is to become his soul mate and life-long companion.

1922

Vaclav Kapral and his friend Prof. Ludvik Kundera are instrumental in founding the Moravian Composers Club in Brno.

1923

Viktorie Kapralova and Vaclav Kapral decide to separate but agree on a joint custody of small Vitezslava.

1924

Vaclav Kapral departs to study in Paris. During his stay here he meets Bohuslav Martinu.

Vitezslava spends most of the year at the sanatorium "Safarik" in Stary Smokovec, Slovakia.'

October 5 - Vitezslava's first serious attempt at composition - *V risi baji / In the Realm of Myths* [from: Some of My Very First Compositions].

November 27 - Vitezslava composes *Valka / War* [Some of My Very First Compositions].



Photo 3: Vitezslava in 1924. Photo courtesy of Bohuslav Martinu Memorial in Policka.

Chronology of Life Events

1925

Vaclav Kapral's second study visit to Paris.

January 1 - *V myslenkach / Lost in Thoughts* [Some of My Very First Compositions]

January 5 - *Pristav / Harbour* [Some of My Very First Compositions]

May 22 - *Touha / Longing* [Some of My Very First Compositions]

September 1 - *Po bitve belohorske / After the Battle of the White Mountain* [Some of My Very First Compositions]. Dedicated to President T.G. Masaryk.

November 14 - *Na dalekou cestu / Before the Long Journey* [Some of My Very First Compositions]. Dedicated to her parents as a farewell present before leaving for Smokovec, Slovakia.

Second prolonged stay at the sanatorium in Smokovec, Slovakia.

Before the Long Journey is published in *Hudebni Besidka* by Old. Pazdirek in Brno.

1926

Stay in Smokovec, Slovakia.

January 20 - Office of the President of the Czechoslovak Republic thanks Vitezslava for dedicating her composition *After the Battle of the White Mountain* to T.G. Masaryk.²

1927

September 1 - Vitezslava starts attending High School.

Valse Triste [Some of My Very First Compositions], dedicated to Prof. Vladimir Helfert.

1928

Summer - Vitezslava and her mother spend their vacation in Novi near Adriatic Sea.

August 12 - Leos Janacek dies.

November 3 - *Maticce / To Mother*, for children's choir [Some of My Very First Compositions].

1929

April 7 - *Piano Sketch* [Sketch Book]

1930

September 1 - Vitezslava enters Brno Conservatory against the wishes of her father.³ She will study harmony with Max Koblizek and Jaroslav Kvapil, piano with Anna Holubova, ear training and choir conducting with Vilem Steinman, composition with Vilem Petrzelka and orchestral conducting with Zdenek Chalabala. Among her classmates are Hanus Weigl and Ota Vach, who are to become her life-long friends.⁴

November 7 - *Prvni prace ze skoly / First School Works*

1931

February - Vitezslava starts composing *Pet klavirnich skladeb / Five Compositions For Piano, op. 1*.

Vitezslava visits the village of Tri Studne and falls in love with the place. She persuades her family to build their summer house in the village.

1932

January - Vitezslava composes *Tempo di Marcia Funebre*, the last of the *Five Compositions for Piano*. It would later become

Funeral March, op. 2.

Spring - Vitezslava composes her first piece for violin and piano under the title *Nalada / Mood*. She later changes the title to *Legenda / Legend, op. 3a*.

April 18 - *Five Compositions for Piano* are premiered by M. Blahova in Brno.

Burleska / Burlesque for violin and piano, op. 3b, dedicated to Magda Kuhnova.

Summer - Vitezslava's stay in spa Smrdaky.

July - *Osirely / Orphaned* [Two Songs, op. 4]

August - *Jitro / Morning* [Two Songs, op. 4]

Vitezslava composes *Jiskry z popele / Sparks from Ashes, op. 5*. She dedicates the songs to Ota Vach who introduced her to poetry of Bohdan Jelinek that inspired them.

[to be continued...]

Editorial notes:

¹ Officially, Vitezslava was sent to the sanatorium to improve her fragile health. Her stay there, however, coincided with her parents' rather difficult separation and its aftermath and may have been the primary reason for Vitezslava's two prolonged stays at the sanatorium during this period. There has been much speculation whether Kapralova's reportedly fragile health in childhood eventually led to her premature death, allegedly from a form of tuberculosis. Yet, many of her contemporaries would remember Kapralova as an energetic girl and young woman full of life who was hardly ever ill.

² Dated in Prague, January 20, 1926. *Kancelar Presidenta republiky, cj. D 340/26 Slecna Vitezslava Kapralova, zacka obecne skoly v Kralove Poli. Venovanim svych skladeb zpusobila jste panu presidentu republiky radost. Potesilo zvlaste, ze cetba vaznych del jako jsou Dejiny naseho naroda, vyvolala u Vas jiz v rannim [sic!] veku ohlas, ktery jste snazila se vyjadriti hudbou. K prikazu [sic!] pana presidenta dekuje Vam podepsana kancelar srdecne za Vasi pozornost a preje Vam hojne zdaru v dalsim studiu hudby a jeji skladby. Translation: Office of the President of the Republic. To: Miss Vitezslava Kapralova, pupil of the Elementary School in Kralovo Pole. This is to inform you that the President is happy to have your compositions dedicated to him. He feels it is particularly commendable that in your tender years, a serious book such as 'The History of our Nation' had inspired you to express your feelings in music. On behalf of the President, the undersigned Office thanks for your kind thought, and wishes you all the best in your future studies of music and composition. Stamp: Office of the President of the Republic. Signature. [The letter courtesy of Kapralova Estate. English translation by Karla Hartl and Leda Hatrick].*

³ Kapral's motives were primarily protective, as he must have realized how difficult it would be for a woman to succeed in the two entirely male-dominated disciplines. He did, however, believe in his daughter's talent and later became her great supporter and agent who dedicated his last years to preserving and promoting her music.

⁴ I am indebted to Dr. Hanus Weigl for providing me with the detailed information about Kapralova's teachers.

VITEZSLAVA KAPRALOVA (1915-1940)

was born on 24 January 1915 as the only child of Brno composer Vaclav Kapral. Kapralova began her musical education at the Brno Conservatory, where she studied composition with Vilem Petrzelka and conducting with Zdenek Chalabala. She continued her studies at the Prague Conservatory, participating in the masterclasses of Vitezslav Novak (composition) and Vaclav Talich (conducting). In 1937 she received a scholarship to study in France, at the Ecole Normale de Musique in Paris, where she became a pupil of Charles Münch. She also studied composition as a private student of Bohuslav Martinu. The most important influences on Kapralova's artistic development, besides the salient tonal qualities of the Moravian melodic and rhythmic idiom used with great versatility in her work, were the music of Martinu, Bartok, and Stravinsky, the 'Paris Six', as well as the whole French ambience of the highly refined cult of form. Following the German occupation of Czechoslovakia in March 1939, Kapralova decided to stay in exile in France. In April 1940 she married the writer Jiri Mucha. A month later, she became gravely ill. Prior to the German invasion of Paris she was evacuated to Montpellier where she died in a local hospital on 16 June 1940.

CONCERTINO FOR VIOLIN, CLARINET AND ORCHESTRA, OP. 21

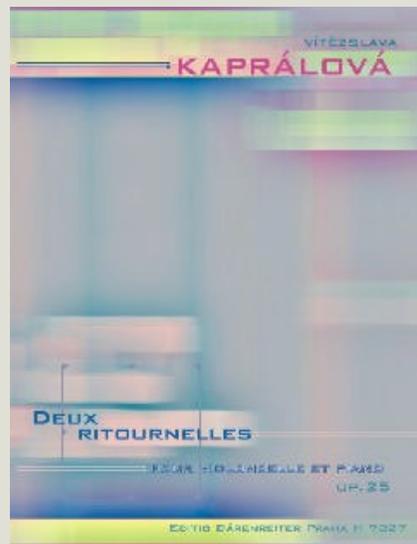
A fragment of Kapralova's *Concertino for Violin, Clarinet, and Orchestra, op. 21*, from 1939, represents the culmination of the composer's organic development towards both expressively rich and rationally disciplined modern polyphony and structure. The work was completed, based on the composer's sketch, by Prof. Milos Stedron of Masaryk University and Prof. Leos Faltus of Janacek Academy of Music. H 7919, ISMN M-2601-0251-4, 56 pages, price: 11 EUR

RITORNEL, OP. 25

Ritornel for violoncello and piano is one of the two-piece set entitled *Deux ritournelles pour violoncelle et piano, op. 25*. Kapralova composed the two pieces in May 1940 in Paris (the autograph of the cello part of one of the ritornels is dated "Paris, Mai 1940"), finishing the set on or around 11 May 1940. Of the two ritornels, only one has survived, thanks to pianist Hermann Grab who brought its copy to the United States. The pieces were to be premiered by Karel Neumann (violoncello) and Hermann Grab (piano) in Paris on 29 May 1940, but, due to the rapidly worsening political situation, the concert had to be cancelled. Karel Neumann premiered the work later that year in London. This edition of the work was prepared by editors Prof. Milos Stedron and Prof. Leos Faltus.

H 7827, ISMN M-2601-0114-2, 28 pages, price: 9 EUR

The works are published with the assistance of
The Kapralova Society



EDITIO BAERENREITER PRAHA, spol.s r.o.,

Customer Centre

Prazska 179, 267 12 Lodenice u Berouna, Czech Republic

tel.: 0042 / 311 672 903, fax: 0042 / 311 672 795

zcentrum@ebpraha.com, www.editio-baerenreiter.cz, sheetmusic.cz



34 Beacham Crescent
Toronto, Ontario
M1T 1N1 Canada

The Kapralova Society Newsletter — edited by Karla Hartl

E-mail: society@kapralova.org

Fax: (775) 255-9957

© 2004 The Kapralova Society, all rights reserved.

Download this issue from

www.kapralova.org/SOCIETY.htm