

CHAN 3029



Sir Charles Mackerras

CHANDOS
OPERA IN
ENGLISH

FATE OSUD



PETER MOORES FOUNDATION



Leoš Janáček

Leoš Janáček (1854–1928)

Osud (Fate)

Opera in three acts
Libretto by Leoš Janáček and Fedora Bartošová
English translation by Rodney Blumer

Míla Valková Helen Field
Živný, a composer Philip Langridge
Míla's mother Kathryn Harries

Act I
A poet, A student Peter Bronder
Dr Suda Stuart Kale
First lady Christine Teare
Second lady Elizabeth Gaskell
Old Slovak woman Dorothy Hood
Major's wife Mary Davies
Councillor's wife Gaynor Keeble
Lhotský Barry Mora
Konečný Mark Holland
Miss Stuhlá, a schoolmistress Catriona Bell
Miss Pacovská, a student Rebecca Moseley-Morgan
First guest, First young gentleman Gareth Rhys-Davies
Second guest, Second young gentleman Philip Lloyd-Evans
Waiter Ralph Mason
An engineer Timothy German
A young widow Frances Manning
Fanča Cheryl Edwards

Act II

Doubek, Míla and Živný's son, as a child Samuel Linay

Act III

Hrazda, a student Peter Bronder

Verva, a student Barry Mora

Součková, a student Yolande Jones

Kosinská, a student Christine Teare

Doubek, as a student Michael Preston-Roberts

Dr Suda Stuart Kale

Schoolmistresses, Students and Schoolgirls, Guests at the Spa, Students at the Conservatory

Orchestra and Chorus of Welsh National Opera

Andrew Greenwood chorus master

Sir Charles Mackerras

Guide to Czech pronunciation: c = ts, č = ch, š = sh, ž = zh; the stress falls always on the first syllable of a name or word, all vowels with accents are lengthened.

Act I

1 Orchestra 1:42 44

2 Orchestra (Music from the bandstand) 3:30 44
'Free as a bird I bask in the sunshine'

A poet

3 'Heavens, it's him!' 4:53 45

Míla

4 'Is it your child you've come for?' 5:57 46

Míla

5 "Sun in the heavens up on high" 1:56 49

Dr Suda

6 'We're back too late' 4:39 50

Živný

7 'The sun's vanished' 5:47 51

Míla

8 'Never will I forget this fleeting moment!' 4:46 52

Engineer

Act II

9 Orchestra 5:18 54

'Slumber on undisturbed in the shadow'

Živný

10 Piano 3:08 54

'I do, I do!'

Míla

11 'We're married now' 2:50 55

Živný

	Time	Page
¹² 'Mummy, Mummy!'	2:24	56
<i>Doubek</i>		
¹³ 'Unspoken thoughts go far beyond words'	3:37	56
<i>Míla's mother</i>		
Act III		
¹⁴ Orchestra	3:43	57
'Listen to the thunder over the horizon'		
<i>Students</i>		
¹⁵ "Endless the pain I must suffer"	1:58	57
<i>Hrazda</i>		
¹⁶ Orchestra	4:49	58
'Enough of that!'		
<i>Verva</i>		
¹⁷ "Mummy, Mummy! Do you know what love is?"	3:18	59
<i>Verva</i>		
¹⁸ 'People said it must have been his falling in love'	4:23	60
<i>Živný</i>		
¹⁹ 'Bitter memories!'	5:46	60
<i>Živný</i>		
²⁰ 'It seems to be so clear'	4:11	61
<i>Živný</i>		

TT 78:33

Janáček: Osud

Janáček's 'Fate': the making of the libretto

You know that I am looking for a libretto.

A modern one. [...]

I want to have Act I completely realistic, drawn from life at a spa. There is a wealth of motifs there!

Act II is to be actually a *hallucination*. No more reality, instead the mind, provoked almost to a nervous breakdown, propels the action further to the point where it is hard to say whether it is real or a hallucination, a delusion.

While the setting of Act I is magnificent spa scenery, Act II ought to reveal the extravagant interior of ladies' boudoirs, the scenery of southern landscapes.

Act III will be strange. [...]

This is the earliest scenario of *Fate*, contained in a letter from Janáček written some time in October 1903 to Mrs Kamila Urválková. Janáček had met Mrs Urválková that summer at the Moravian spa of Luhačovice, where he had gone to recover after the death of his daughter Olga earlier that year. *Jenůfa* was recently finished and awaiting its Brno premiere, and Janáček's mind was open and receptive to new impulses. Mrs Urválková

provided one. Hearing that Janáček was a composer she told him about her previous encounter with a composer, Ludvík Čelanský, who in revenge at the termination of their love affair by her rich parents had pilloried her in a one-act opera, suggestively called *Kamila* and produced in Prague in 1897. Janáček was encouraged to write another opera where she might be seen in a more favourable light.

Much of this famous and extraordinary story has to be speculation, given only the most cryptic comments by Janáček himself in his autobiography and little other external evidence, though most of the facts fit and are corroborated by the earliest libretto of *Fate*. There is no evidence, however, that Janáček ever contemplated a 'revenge' opera (there is no sign of any 'Kamila' in this first scenario); instead he was inspired by the fact that a real-life incident had given rise to Čelanský's *Kamila*. He set to work imagining an opera which would be largely about himself, 'completely realistic, drawn from life at a spa'. Here a composer, Živný, meets Mrs Míla Valková. Like Janáček, Živný had a daughter who had recently died. Like Kamila Urválková,

Míla Valková tells of her love for a composer, whom she has had to part with because of opposition from her parents. Míla is now unhappily married with a young son.

Act II, in Janáček's first scenario, was to bring about a crisis, and in the earliest libretto this was provided by the conflict between Míla's husband and the composer Živný, who has been writing her love letters. Again the parallel to Janáček's own life is striking. An intense correspondence between Janáček and Mrs Urválková had flourished before its abrupt termination by her husband. In the earliest libretto the end is more dramatic: Míla's husband shoots at Živný, but mortally wounds Míla.

The 'strange' Act III is the most developed act in Janáček's first scenario and contains many features that were to remain into the final version. It is set in the great hall of a music conservatory, with students assembling, ('the usual student high spirits'); on a wall there is a poster for an opera to be performed that evening. The students argue about the opera and beg their professor, the composer Živný, to tell them something about it. He does so gladly – it is in fact the story of his life. He is haunted by the death of his wife, and the opera he has written is not complete: he abandoned it in great agitation at the end of Act II.

Even while he wrote to Mrs Urválková, Janáček had already found a librettist, a young schoolteacher called Fedora Bartošová. Her only qualification for the job was that she had written a little poetry, and Janáček probably chose her because she had been a friend of his beloved and much-mourned daughter Olga. Bartošová taught in a neighbouring town so that their collaboration, much of which was carried on by letter, is well documented. Janáček sent her his prose scenario in stages, the final act on 8 December. Bartošová then put this into verse and was finished by Christmas 1903, though additions and corrections continued for a few months. One thing that emerges from the correspondence is how fluid and changeable Janáček's scenario was: he was making up much of the story as he went along.

In the final version the settings of Act I (the Spa) and Act III (the Conservatory) remained, but in Act II the 'scenery of southern landscapes' (later localised to the Dalmatian Riviera) gave way to the composer's study, and with it changed the nature of the all-important crisis. Quite suddenly, on 10 April 1904, Janáček suggested a completely different turn to Živný and Míla's chance meeting in Act I. What, he said, if Míla's child was also Živný's, a product of an earlier liaison? Thus in Act II

they are living together with their five-year-old son – not just writing letters to one another. Míla's husband was omitted. Soon after this stage in the libretto's development Bartošová was quietly dropped, having contributed a new Act II (which Janáček ignored) and a monologue for Živný intended to open Act III but which Janáček adapted to form the backbone of his new Act II.

Janáček completed his score in the early part of 1905 but revised it extensively over the next year and submitted it for performance to the Brno Theatre only in the autumn of 1906. By then he had added a new character – Míla's mother – whose derangement at the thought of her daughter's marrying the penniless composer Živný now provided the conflict and crisis in Act II. Apart from her dramatic entrance at the end of the act, much of her Act II part was sung off-stage; Janáček simply inserted her lines, together with those for Míla, against Bartošová's monologue for Živný.

Brno was keen to perform Janáček's new Opera and got as far as instructing a producer and a designer and beginning solo rehearsals. But Janáček, seeing a chance to make his mark in the capital, withdrew the work from Brno and submitted it instead to the newly-established Vinohrady Theatre in Prague. Despite yet another revision, much

prevarication by the Theatre and even a lawsuit (initiated by Janáček, though later withdrawn), it remained there unperformed until 1914, when Janáček bitterly asked for it back. Later, when his fortunes changed with the success of *Jenůfa* in Prague, Janáček thought of revising the text and submitted it to literary experts such as Jaroslav Kvapil, the librettist of Dvořák's *Rusalka*, and the writer and translator Max Brod. All shook their heads over it, and Janáček quietly put the work away and got on with writing new operas.

Under the circumstances, it is not surprising that the libretto sometimes verges on the incomprehensible. The lack of focus in the original conception and the curious changes of direction and motivation in the many revisions are compounded by Bartošová's inexperience and flowery Art Nouveau diction and Janáček's later tinkering. The Czechs waited until 1958 to give the Opera its first stage production. Even then it was performed in an arrangement in which Acts I and II were inserted into Act III as a long flashback, a version used again in the 1988 production in Brno. There is no denying, however, that the music is in many places as strong as anything Janáček ever wrote, with a passionate lyricism that became more muted in the later works. Though an intelligent and committed staging, such as

David Pountney's 1984 production for English National Opera, is proof that the opera can be made to work on the stage, a recorded performance is the ideal way of enjoying some of Janáček's most incandescent music.

Synopsis

Before the Opera opens, Míla and Živný, a composer, have had an affair; a child, Doubek, has been born. Míla's mother has done her best to break up the affair and has tried to marry Míla off to another man – but Míla was pregnant with Živný's son, and the plan came to nothing. Živný has written an opera in which he has sublimated his bitter feelings at being jilted, as he sees it, by Míla.

Act I

A spa promenade about 1890, early morning
It is a fine day at a spa town and the crowds are out enjoying the sunshine. Against this social background Živný and Míla meet by chance: their companions note that they seem to know one another and leave them to talk. Míla asks him if he has come for his son. Their conversation, however, is soon interrupted by the schoolteacher Miss Stuhlá, who attempts to rehearse a group of women schoolteachers in a partsong, to the mirth of the other spa guests. With help from the chorus and a bagpiper

Dr Suda sings a satirical ballad about the all-knowing sun before leading them off on an impromptu excursion. Left alone, Živný and Míla discuss their past in a lyrical exchange. When they hear the excursionists return, they decide to go off together, to the horror of Míla's mother who arrives too late to stop them.

Act II

Živný's study on a winter day, four years later
Míla and Živný are married, living with their son and with Míla's mother, now deranged at the catastrophe of her daughter's marrying a penniless composer. Her voice is occasionally heard from off-stage over the conversation of Živný and Míla. Živný is still haunted by his unfinished opera with its bitter account of Míla's character. On the piano he plays from the score and in a fit of remorse begins tearing it up. They are interrupted by their tiny son Doubek, who has observed the goings-on of the servants and asks innocently 'what love is'. Míla's mother, having eluded the servants who watch over her, breaks into the room and mockingly sings a love-song from Živný's opera. She runs off, with Míla trying to restrain her. Off-stage, both topple to their deaths over a balcony. Živný sees this as a bolt from the blue: another crushing intervention of 'fate'.

Act III

The Great Hall in the Conservatory, eleven years later

Students are trying out a passage (a storm scene) from the new opera written by their professor Živný, which is about to receive its premiere. After the students have made a 'storm' of their own, the student Verva enters and tells them more about the work. He believes it is autobiographical: the composer 'Lenský' is in fact Živný and the opera, though seemingly complete, is 'without the last act'. Verva sings through one of the solo scenes between Míla and Doubek (a replay of the incident in Act II where Doubek asked what love is), to the embarrassment of Doubek, now a student at the Conservatory. When Živný suddenly appears the students ask him to tell them something about the opera. He does so with passion, describing the chief character Lenský and how he fell in love. The emotional charge of what are in fact personal recollections becomes too much for him and against the background of a storm outside he collapses after seeing a vision of his dead wife. A doctor is called (it is in fact the solicitor Dr Suda who arrives). In his final words Živný maintains that the last act of the opera is still in 'God's hands'.

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The soprano **Helen Field** was educated at the Royal Northern College of Music and the Royal College of Music, London. Her many roles with British opera companies have included Mimi, Musetta, Gilda, Marenka, Tatyana, the Vixen, Jenůfa, Desdemona and Cio-Cio San for Welsh National Opera, Susanna, Daphne, Manon and Magda (*La rondine*) for Opera North, Violetta, Donna Anna, Pamina and Marguerite (*Faust*) for English National Opera, and roles in Tippett's *New Year* and Birtwistle's *The Second Mrs Kong* at the Glyndebourne Festival. Among recent performances are The Governess (*The Turn of the Screw*), Salome, Aithra (*Die ägyptische Helena*) and the title role in James MacMillan's *Ines de Castro*.

A busy international career has taken Helen Field to Théâtre royal de la Monnaie, Deutsche Oper, The Metropolitan Opera and De Nederlandse Opera, as well as to Cologne, Dresden, Montpellier, Ludwigshafen and Bonn.

For the BBC she has appeared in *Fidelio* (as Marzelline) as well as *Otello*, *The Cunning Little Vixen* and *New Year*. Her recordings include *The Greek Passion* (Martinů), *A Village Romeo and Juliet* (Deliuss) with Sir Charles Mackerras and *Rigoletto* (as Gilda) with Mark Elder and the Orchestra and Chorus of English National Opera.

Educated at the Royal Academy of Music, the tenor **Philip Langridge** is one of the world's most distinguished singers. He has made numerous recordings and won two *Grammy Awards* (*Moses und Aron* and *Peter Grimes*), a *Gramophone Award* (Britten's *War Requiem*) and a *Classic CD Award* (*The Turn of the Screw*).

He appears regularly at the international festivals of Salzburg, Edinburgh and Glyndebourne, and at The Metropolitan Opera, Teatro alla Scala, Bayerische Staatsoper, Royal Opera Covent Garden and English National Opera. He has received particular praise for his performances in *Death in Venice*, *Boris Godunov*, *The Midsummer Marriage*, *The Rake's Progress*, *Idomeneo*, *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, *Semele* and Sir Harrison Birtwistle's *The Mask of Orpheus* and *The Second Mrs Kong*. Many performances have been recorded on video, such as those in Weber's *Oberon* and Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex*. He received an *Olivier Award* for his performance in *Osud*.

Current engagements include *Das Rheingold* and a revival of *Moses und Aron* at The Metropolitan Opera, new productions of *La clemenza di Tito* in Munich and *Peter Grimes* in Milan and Los Angeles, and revivals of *Billy Budd* in Barcelona and Paris and *Palestrina* at Royal Opera Covent Garden.

Philip Langridge was awarded the CBE in 1994.

Kathryn Harries, soprano, studied singing and piano at the Royal Academy of Music and made her Royal Festival Hall debut in 1977. Her first operatic performance was as Leonore (*Fidelio*) for Welsh National Opera in 1983. Her many roles with British opera companies have included Adalgisa (*Norma*), Donna Anna (Dargomizhsky's *The Stone Guest*), Irene (*Rienzi*), Sieglinde, Kundry, Kát'a Kabanová, Emilia Marty (*The Makropulos Affair*), The Composer (*Ariadne auf Naxos*), Clairon (*Capriccio*), Judith (*Duke Bluebeard's Castle*) and Countess Geschwitz (*Lulu*).

After her notable American debut as Kundry at The Metropolitan Opera in 1986 she has returned as Guttrune and also appeared at Lyric Opera of Chicago as Marie (*Wozzeck*) and Protagonista (Berio's *Un re in ascolto*). She has performed with opera companies in Lyon, Nice, Geneva, Linz and Bamberg as well as with Opéra national de Paris-Bastille, Châtelet théâtre musical, De Nederlandse Opera, Staatstheater Stuttgart and New Israeli Opera in Tel Aviv. Her roles have included Donna Elvira, Dido (*Les Troyens*), Gertrude (*Hamlet*), Senta, Carmen, Giulietta (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*), Kostelnicka (*Jenůfa*), Santuzza,

Begbick (*Mahagonny*), and the title roles of *Ariane et Barbe-bleue* and *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*.

The company now known as **Welsh National Opera** gave its first public performances in the Prince of Wales Theatre, Cardiff, in April 1946. The success of these performances led to the rapid expansion of the Chorus which, though largely made up of amateurs, quickly became known for its distinctive sound of very high quality; it became fully professional only in 1973. During its first decades of operation the Chorus was accompanied by various professional orchestras. In 1970, however, a permanent orchestra was founded, which in 1979 was named the Orchestra of Welsh National Opera.

During the 1970s, under the musical directorship of Richard Armstrong, the company emerged as a major force in the operatic world, touring Great Britain and making guest appearances in Lisbon, Wiesbaden, Dresden and Leipzig among other European cities. Musical Directors Sir Charles Mackerras (1987–1991; he remains Conductor Emeritus) and Carlo Rizzi (since 1992) have brought the company world-wide renown, taking critically and popularly acclaimed productions on tour to New York, Milan, Paris and Tokyo.

The company has launched the careers of some of today's finest British singers, among them Thomas Allen, Arthur Davies, Helen Field, Dennis O'Neill, Bryn Terfel and Janice Watson.

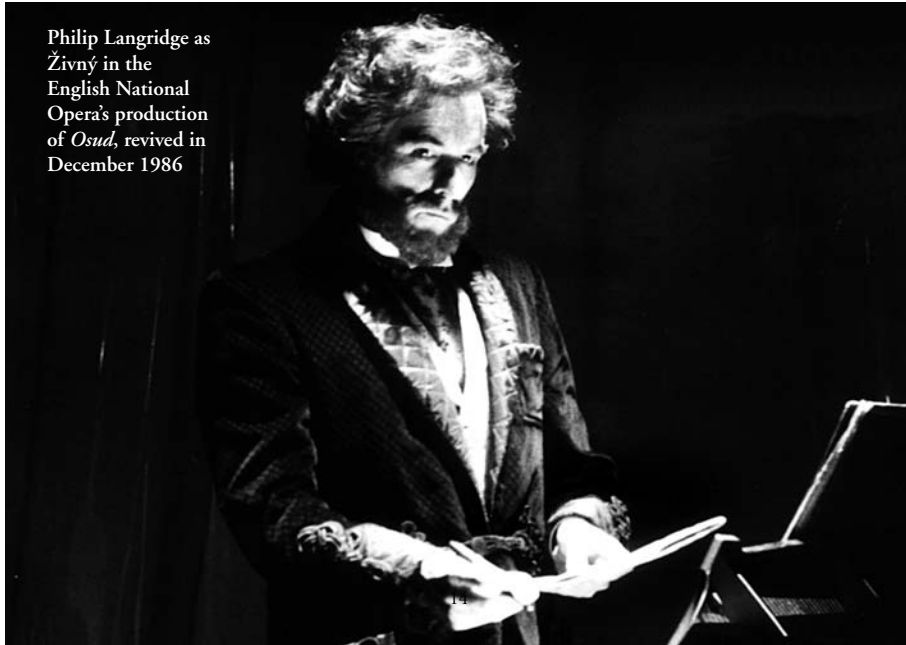
Sir Charles Mackerras was born in 1925 of Australian parents in the United States and studied in Sydney and Prague. He made his debut as an opera conductor at Sadler's Wells, where he was instrumental in producing the sensational first British performance of Janáček's *Kát'a Kabanová*, which led to Janáček's becoming standard repertory in the UK. He was First Conductor of the Hamburg Opera (1966–9) and Musical Director of both Sadler's Wells (later English National) Opera (1970–7), and of Welsh National Opera (1987–91), where his notable Janáček productions, amongst many others, won great acclaim. The production and recording of *Osud* were sponsored by the Peter Moores Foundation, who also sponsored the recording of *The Cunning Little Vixen*. He is Conductor Laureate of the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Conductor Emeritus of Welsh National Opera, Principal Guest Conductor of the San Francisco Opera, and from the 1998/99 season he is Music Director of the Orchestra of St Luke's New York.

Sir Charles Mackerras has undertaken much research into performance practice of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which has profoundly affected today's interpretations. His vast discography includes an award-winning cycle of Janáček operas with the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Britten's *Gloriana* (which won a *Gramophone Award*), Beethoven, Brahms and Mahler Symphonies, and with

English National Opera Handel's *Julius Caesar* and Donizetti's *Mary Stuart* (for Chandos/Peter Moores Foundation).

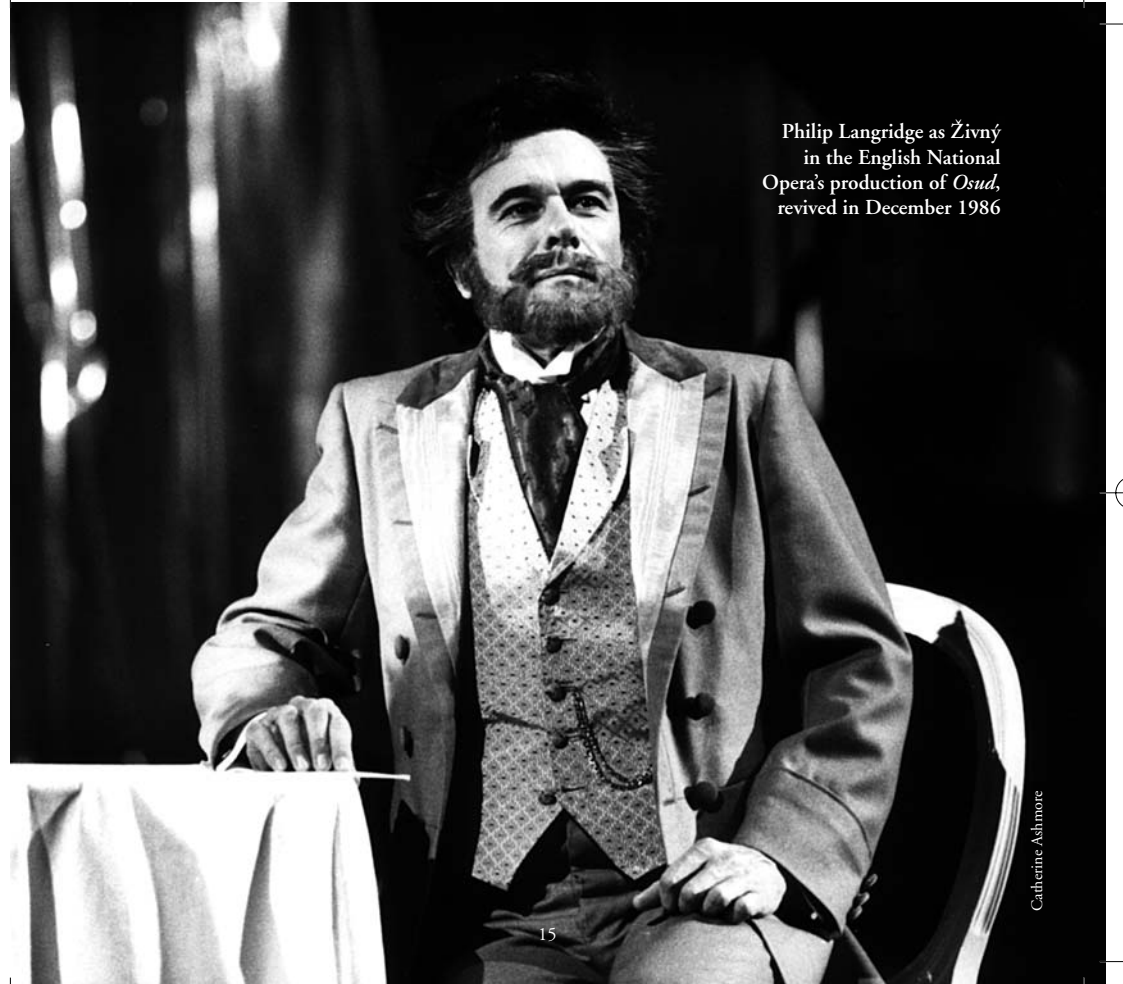
Sir Charles Mackerras received a CBE in 1974 and was knighted for his services to music in 1979. He has also received The Medal of Merit from the Czech Republic and has been made a Companion of the Order of Australia.

Philip Langridge as Živný in the English National Opera's production of *Osud*, revived in December 1986



Catherine Ashmore

Philip Langridge as Živný in the English National Opera's production of *Osud*, revived in December 1986



Catherine Ashmore

PETER MOORES, CBE, DL

Peter Moores was born in Lancashire, the son of Sir John Moores, founder of the giant Littlewoods mail order, chain store and football pools group. He was educated at Eton and Christ Church, Oxford, where he read modern languages – he was already fluent in German and Italian. It was opera, however, which was his great love. He had worked at Glyndebourne Festival Opera before going up to university, and after Oxford he became a production student at the Vienna State Opera, combining this with a three-year course at the Vienna Academy of Music and Dramatic Art.

By the end of his third year at the Academy Moores had produced the Vienna premiere of Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia*, had worked as Assistant Producer at the San Carlo Opera House, Naples, the Geneva Festival and Rome Opera, and seemed set for a successful operatic career. At this point he received a letter from his father asking him to come home as he was needed in the firm. Family loyalty being paramount, he returned to Liverpool.

By 1977, he was Chairman of Littlewoods. Three years later he stepped down from the post, although still remaining on the Board. He was a director of a merchant bank from 1978 to 1992. From 1981 to 1983 he was a Governor of the BBC, and a Trustee of the Tate Gallery from 1978 until 1985; from 1988 to 1992 he was a director of Scottish Opera. He received the Gold Medal of the Italian Republic in 1974, an Honorary MA from Christ Church, Oxford, in 1975, and was made an Honorary Member of the Royal Northern College of Music in 1985. In May 1992 he became Deputy Lieutenant of Lancashire, and in the New Year's Honours List for 1991, he was made a CBE for his charitable services to the Arts.



Peter Moores, CBE, DL

Christina Burton/PMF

Whilst still in his early twenties, Peter Moores had started giving financial support to various young artists, several of whom – Joan Sutherland, Colin Davis and the late Geraint Evans amongst them – were to become world-famous. In 1964 he set aside a substantial part of his inheritance to establish the Peter Moores Foundation, a charity designed to support those causes dear to his heart: to make music and the arts more accessible to more people; to give encouragement to the young and to improve race relations.

PETER MOORES FOUNDATION

In the field of music, the main areas supported by the Peter Moores Foundation are:

- the recording of operas from the core repertoire sung in English translation; the recording or staging of rare Italian opera from the *bel canto* era of the early nineteenth century (repertoire which would otherwise only be accessible to scholars); the nurturing of promising young opera singers; new operatic work.

The Foundation awards scholarships annually to students and post-graduates for furthering their vocal studies at the Royal Northern College of Music. In addition, project awards may be given to facilitate language tuition in the appropriate country, attendance at masterclasses or summer courses, specialised repertoire study with an acknowledged expert in the field, or post-graduate performance training.

The Foundation encourages new operatic work by contributing to recordings, the publication of scores and stage productions.

Since 1964 the Foundation has supported the recording of more than forty operas, many of these sung in English, in translation. It has always been Peter Moores's belief that to enjoy opera to the full, there must be no language barrier, particularly for newcomers and particularly in the popular repertoire – hence the *Opera in English* series launched with Chandos in 1995. This includes many of the English language recordings funded by the Foundation in the 1970s and 1980s and is now the largest recorded collection of operas sung in English.

Janáček: Osud

Janáček's "Schicksal": Die Entstehung des Librettos

Du weißt, ich suche nach einem Libretto.
Einem modernen...

Ich möchte den I. Akt vollkommen realistisch gestalten, dem Leben in einem Kurort nachempfunden. Es gibt dort eine Fülle von Motiven!

Der II. Akt soll eine regelrechte *Halluzination* sein. Nicht mehr die Realität, sondern der Geist, provoziert bis an den Rand eines Nervenzusammenbruchs, treibt die Handlung bis zu dem Punkt voran, an dem schwer feststellbar ist, ob sie real oder eine Halluzination, eine Wahnvorstellung ist.

Während der Schauplatz des I. Akts die prachtvolle Kulisse des Badeorts ist, soll der II. Akt verschwenderisch eingerichtete Boudoirs und Szenen aus dem Süden zeigen.

Der III. Akt wird seltsam sein...

So lautet das früheste Szenar der Oper *Schicksal*, enthalten in einem Brief, den Janáček irgendwann im Oktober 1903 an Kamila Urválková geschrieben hat. Er hatte Frau Urválková im Sommer 1903 im mährischen Kurort Luhačovice kennengelernt,

wo er hingefahren war, um über den Tod seiner Tochter Olga hinwegzukommen, die zu Beginn des Jahres gestorben war. *Jenůfa* war kurz zuvor fertig geworden und harnte der Uraufführung in Brünn. Janáček hatte den Kopf frei und war empfänglich für neue Impulse. Frau Urválková lieferte ihm einen. Als sie hörte, daß Janáček Komponist war, erzählte sie ihm von ihrer Begegnung mit einem Komponisten namens Ludvík Čelanský. Der nämlich hatte sie aus Rache, weil ihre wohlhabenden Eltern ihrer Liebesaffäre mit ihm ein Ende bereitet hatten, in einem Einakter mit dem suggestiven Titel *Kamila* angeprangert, der 1897 in Prag aufgeführt worden war. Daraufhin nahm Janáček sich vor, eine Oper zu verfassen, die sie in günstigerem Licht darstellte.

Große Teile dieser famosen und außergewöhnlichen Geschichte müssen auf Spekulation beruht haben, denn Janáček selbst äußert sich in seiner Autobiographie nur höchst vage dazu und es liegen kaum andere verifizierbare Hinweise vor, auch wenn die meisten Fakten zu stimmen scheinen und durch das erste Libretto von *Schicksal* bestätigt

werden. Nichts deutet darauf hin, daß Janáček je eine "Vergeltungsoper" geplant hat (im ersten Szenar ist von einer "Kamila" nicht die Rede); statt dessen ließ er sich davon anregen, daß eine wahre Begebenheit Čelanskýs *Kamila* ausgelöst hatte. Er machte sich daran, eine Oper zu schaffen, die im wesentlichen um ihn selbst gehen sollte, "vollkommen realistisch" und "dem Leben in einem Kurort nachempfunden". In diesem Kurort lernt Živný, ein Komponist, eine gewisse Frau Míla Valková kennen. Wie Janáček hat Živný eine Tochter, die kürzlich verstorben ist. Wie Kamila Urválková erzählt ihm Míla Valková von ihrer Liebe zu einem Komponisten, von dem sie sich hat trennen müssen, weil ihre Eltern gegen ihn sind. Míla ist inzwischen unglücklich verheiratet und hat einen kleinen Sohn.

Im II. Akt sollte es Janáček's erstem Szenar zufolge zur Krise kommen, und im ältesten Libretto geschah dies mit Hilfe des Konflikts zwischen Mílas Ehemann und dem Komponisten Živný, der nicht aufgehört hat, ihr Liebesbriefe zu schreiben. Auch hier ist die Parallele zu Janáček's eigenem Leben auffallend. Es hatte sich eine lebhaft Korrespondenz zwischen Janáček und Frau Urválková entsponnen, die dann durch ihren Ehemann jäh beendet wurde. Im ältesten Libretto ist das

Ende dramatischer: Mílas Ehemann schießt auf Živný, verletzt jedoch Míla tödlich.

Der "seltsame" III. Akt ist in Janáček's erstem Szenar der am weitesten ausgearbeitete und enthält die meisten Merkmale, die bis in die endgültige Fassung hinein bestehen blieben. Er spielt im großen Saal eines Konservatoriums, wo sich die Studenten versammeln ("die übliche studentische Ausgelassenheit"); an einer Wand wirbt ein Plakat für eine Opernaufführung am selben Abend. Die Studenten diskutieren über die Oper und bitten ihren Professor, den Komponisten Živný, ihnen etwas darüber zu erzählen. Er tut dies gern – geht es doch um die Geschichte seines Lebens. Er kann den Tod seiner Frau nicht verwinden, und die Oper, die er geschrieben hat, ist unvollendet: Er hat sie in äußerster Erregung am Ende des II. Akts aufgegeben.

Schon während er mit Frau Urválková korrespondierte, hatte Janáček eine Librettistin gefunden, eine junge Lehrerin namens Fedora Bartošova, deren einzige Qualifikation für die Aufgabe darin bestand, daß sie einige Gedichte geschrieben hatte. Janáček's Wahl fiel vermutlich deshalb auf sie, weil sie eine Freundin seiner geliebten und schmerzlich betrauten Tochter Olga gewesen war. Die Bartošova unterrichtete in einer benachbarten

Stadt, so daß ihre Zusammenarbeit im wesentlichen brieflich erfolgte und entsprechend gut dokumentiert ist. Janáček schickte ihr nach und nach sein Prosa-Szenar, den letzten Akt am 8. Dezember. Die Bartošova faßte es in Verse und war Weihnachten 1903 damit fertig, obwohl mit Ergänzungen und Verbesserungen noch einige Monate vergingen. Eine Sache, die sich aus der Korrespondenz ergibt, ist die Wandelbarkeit von Janáčeks Szenar: Er dachte sich die Geschichte zum großen Teil aus, während er sie niederschrieb.

In der endgültigen Fassung blieben die Schauplätze des I. Akts (der Kurort) und III. Akts (das Konservatorium) bestehen; im II. Akt trat an die Stelle der "Szenen aus dem Süden" (später konkretisiert als die dalmatische Riviera) das Studierzimmer des Komponisten, und damit änderte sich auch der Charakter der alles entscheidenden Krise. Recht unvermittelt schlug Janáček am 10. April 1904 für die zufällige Begegnung von Živný und Míla im I. Akt eine neue Wendung vor. Wie wäre es, meinte er, wenn Mílas Kind auch das von Živný wäre, das Produkt einer einstigen Liaison? Nun lebten sie auf einmal im II. Akt mit ihrem fünfjährigen Sohn zusammen – anstatt sich nur brieflich zu verständigen. Mílas Ehemann wurde gestrichen. Bald nachdem

dieses Stadium in der Entwicklung des Librettos erreicht war, wurde Fedora Bartošova stillschweigend fallengelassen, nachdem sie einen neuen II. Akt geliefert hatte (den Janáček unbeachtet liegen ließ) und einen Monolog für Živný zur Eröffnung des III. Akts, den Janáček bearbeitete, so daß er das Rückgrat seines neuen II. Akts bildete.

Janáček stellte seine Partitur Anfang 1905 fertig, überarbeitete sie jedoch im Lauf des folgenden Jahres gründlich und reichte sie erst im Herbst 1906 zur Aufführung am Theater in Brünn ein. Bis es soweit war, hatte er eine neue Figur eingeführt – Mílas Mutter –, deren geistige Umnachtung bei dem Gedanken, daß ihre Tochter den mittellosen Komponisten Živný heiraten könnte, nun für den Konflikt und die Krise im II. Akt verantwortlich war. Abgesehen von ihrem dramatischen Auftritt am Ende des Akts wurde ihre Partie im II. Akt überwiegend hinter der Bühne gesungen; Janáček fügte ihre Zeilen und die von Míla einfach in Fedora Bartošova Monolog für Živný ein.

In Brünn war man darauf erpicht, Janáček neue Oper aufzuführen, und brachte es soweit, einen Regisseur und Bühnenbildner zu engagieren und mit den Soloproben zu beginnen. Doch Janáček sah eine Chance, sich in der Hauptstadt einen Namen zu machen. Er

zog das Werk aus Brünn zurück und reichte es statt dessen am neueröffneten Vinohrady-Theater in Prag ein. Trotz einer weiteren Überarbeitung, zahlreichen Ausflüchten auf Seiten des Theaters, ja sogar einer Klage vor Gericht (eingereicht von Janáček, später jedoch zurückgezogen) blieb die Oper dort bis 1914 unaufgeführt liegen, woraufhin Janáček erbittert ihre Rückgabe verlangte. Als sich für ihn später mit dem Erfolg von *Jenůfa* in Prag das Blatt gewendet hatte, trug sich Janáček mit dem Gedanken, den Text zu revidieren und legte ihn literarischen Fachleuten wie Jaroslav Kvapil vor, dem Librettisten von Dvořáks *Rusalka*, und dem Schriftsteller und Übersetzer Max Brod. Doch Janáček erntete von allen nur ein Kopfschütteln, woraufhin er das Werk stillschweigend beiseite legte und sich daran machte, neue Opern zu schreiben.

Unter den gegebenen Umständen ist es nicht überraschend, daß das Libretto stellenweise ans Unverständliche grenzt. Die Verschwommenheit des ursprünglichen Konzepts und die merkwürdigen Änderungen der Stoßrichtung und Motivation in den unzähligen Revisionen werden durch die Unerfahrenheit und blumige Jugendstildiktion Fedora Bartošova und Janáčeks spätere Eingriffe verschlimmert. Die Tschechen warteten bis 1958 mit der ersten

Bühnenproduktion. Und selbst da wurde die Oper in einer Bearbeitung aufgeführt, die den I. und II. Akt als lange Rückblende in den III. Akt einfügt – eine Version, die erneut für die 1988 in Brünn herausgekommene Produktion Verwendung fand. Nicht zu bestreiten ist, daß die Musik an vielen Stellen so wirkungsvoll ist wie sonst irgendetwas, was Janáček geschrieben hat, mit einem leidenschaftlichen Lyrismus, der in späteren Werken in gedämpfterer Form auftritt. Obwohl eine intelligente und engagierte Inszenierung wie die von David Pountney 1984 für die English National Opera beweist, daß die Oper so aufbereitet werden kann, daß sie auf der Bühne funktioniert, ist eine Aufzeichnung auf Tonträger die ideale Methode, eine Musik zu hören, die zu Janáčeks leidenschaftlichsten Schöpfungen zählt.

Inhaltsangabe

Vor dem Zeitpunkt, an dem die Oper einsetzt, haben Míla und Živný, ein Komponist, eine Affäre gehabt; ein Kind namens Doubek wurde geboren. Mílas Mutter hat sich alle Mühe gegeben, die Beziehung zu zerstören, und hat versucht, Míla mit einem anderen Mann zu verheiraten – Míla jedoch war von Živný schwanger, und es wurde nichts aus dem Vorhaben. Živný hat eine Oper komponiert

und darin seine Erbitterung darüber sublimiert, daß er, so scheint es ihm, von Míla sitzengelassen wurde.

I. Akt

Auf der Promenade eines Kurorts um 1890, am frühen Morgen

Es ist ein schöner Tag im Kurort, und die Besucher genießen den Sonnenschein. Vor diesem gesellschaftlichen Hintergrund begegnen sich Živný und Míla zufällig: Ihre Begleiter merken, daß sie offenbar miteinander bekannt sind, und verlassen sie, damit sie sich unterhalten können. Míla fragt, ob er wegen seines Sohnes gekommen sei. Das Gespräch wird jedoch bald von der Lehrerin Fräulein Stuhlá unterbrochen, die sich bemüht, mit einer Gruppe anderer Lehrerinnen ein mehrstimmiges Lied einzustudieren und damit die Heiterkeit der Kurgäste erregt. Mit Hilfe des Chors und eines Sackpfeifers singt Dr. Suda eine Spottballade über die allwissende Sonne und bricht dann allen voran zu einem spontanen Ausflug auf. Alleingelassen sprechen Živný und Míla im lyrischen Dialog über ihre Vergangenheit. Als sie die Ausflügler zurückkommen hören, beschließen sie, gemeinsam fortzugehen. Mílas Mutter, die zu spät kommt, um sie zurückzuhalten, ist entsetzt.

II. Akt

In Živnýs Studierzimmer, an einem Wintertag vier Jahre später

Míla und Živný sind verheiratet und leben mit ihrem Sohn und Mílas Mutter zusammen. Diese hat angesichts der Katastrophe, daß ihre Tochter einen mittellosen Komponisten geheiratet hat, den Verstand verloren. Ihre Stimme ist gelegentlich hinter der Bühne zu hören und übertönt das Gespräch zwischen Živný und Míla. Živný geht immer noch die unvollendete Oper mit der negativen Darstellung von Mílas Charakter durch den Kopf. Er spielt am Klavier Auszüge aus der Partitur und fängt dann in einem Anfall von Reue an, sie zu zerreißen. Er und Míla werden von ihrem kleinen Sohn Doubek unterbrochen, der das Tun und Treiben der Dienerschaft beobachtet hat und nun unschuldig fragt: "Was ist Liebe?" Mílas Mutter ist den Bediensteten entwischt, die auf sie aufpassen sollen. Sie stürmt ins Zimmer und singt mit höhnischer Stimme ein Liebeslied aus Živnýs Oper. Sie rennt davon, verfolgt von Míla, die sie zurückzuhalten versucht. Hinter der Bühne stürzen beide von einem Balkon in den Tod. Živný sieht darin einen Blitz aus heiterem Himmel: Das "Schicksal" hat wieder einmal zugeschlagen.

III. Akt

Im großen Saal des Konservatoriums, elf Jahre später

Studenten probieren eine Passage (eine Sturmszene) der neuen Oper aus, die ihr Professor Živný geschrieben hat und die kurz vor der Uraufführung steht. Nachdem die Studenten einen eigenen "Sturm" entfacht haben, kommt der Student Verva herein und verrät ihnen mehr über das Werk. Er glaubt, daß es sich um ein autobiographisches Werk handelt, daß der Komponist "Lenský" in Wahrheit Živný ist und daß die Oper nur scheinbar fertig ist, "ohne den letzten Akt". Verva geht singend eine der Soloszenen zwischen Míla und Doubek durch (eine Wiederholung des Vorfalls im II. Akt, als Doubek wissen will, was Liebe ist). Doubek, inzwischen Student am Konservatorium, ist peinlich berührt. Als Živný unvermutet erscheint, bitten die Studenten ihn, etwas über die Oper zu erzählen. Er beschreibt voller Leidenschaft die Hauptfigur Lenský und die Umstände, unter denen er sich verliebt. Was in Wirklichkeit persönliche Erinnerungen sind, wird emotional derart aufgeladen, daß es ihm zuviel wird. Vor dem Hintergrund eines echten Sturms, der draußen wütet, bricht er zusammen, nachdem er ein Trugbild seiner verstorbenen Frau gesehen hat. Ein Arzt wird

gerufen (tatsächlich erscheint der Anwalt Dr. Suda). Noch auf dem Sterbebett bleibt Živný dabei, daß der letzte Akt der Oper nach wie vor "in Gottes Hand" sei.

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Übersetzung: Anne Steeb/Bernd Müller

Die Sopranistin **Helen Field** wurde am Royal Northern College of Music und am Londoner Royal College of Music ausgebildet. Zu ihren zahlreichen Rollen an britischen Opernhäusern zählen Mimi, Musetta, Gilda, Marenka, Tatjana, die Füchsin, Jenůfa, Desdemona und Cio-Cio San an der Welsh National Opera, Susanna, Daphne, Manon und Magda (*La rondine*) an der Opera North, Violetta, Donna Anna, Pamina und Marguerite (*Faust*) an der English National Opera sowie Partien in Tippett's *New Year* und in Birtwistles *The Second Mrs Kong* beim Glyndebourne Festival. Zu ihren jüngsten Rollen gehören die Gouvernante (*The Turn of the Screw*), Salome, Aithra (*Die ägyptische Helena*) und die Titelrolle in James MacMillans *Ines de Castro*.

Eine arbeitsreiche internationale Karriere hat Helen Field ans Théâtre de la Monnaie, an die Deutsche Oper, die Metropolitan Opera und die Nederlandse Opera geführt, außerdem

nach Köln, Dresden, Montpellier, Ludwigshafen und Bonn.

Für die BBC ist sie (als Marzelline) in *Fidelio* aufgetreten, daneben in *Otello*, *Das schlaue Fuchselein* und *New Year*. Zu ihren Tonaufnahmen gehören Martinůs *Griechische Passion*, *A Village Romeo and Juliet* von Delius mit Sir Charles Mackerras und *Rigoletto* (als Gilda) mit dem Orchester und Chor der English National Opera unter der Leitung von Mark Elder.

Der Tenor **Philip Langridge**, einer der renommiertesten Sänger der Welt, wurde an der Royal Academy of Music ausgebildet. Er hat zahlreiche Aufnahmen auf Tonträger vorzuweisen und hat zwei *Grammy Awards* (für *Moses und Aron* und *Peter Grimes*), einen *Gramophone Award* (für Britten's *War Requiem*) und einen *Classic CD Award* (für *The Turn of the Screw*) gewonnen.

Er tritt regelmäßig bei den internationalen Festspielen von Salzburg, Edinburgh und Glyndebourne auf, an der Metropolitan Opera, am Teatro alla Scala, an der Bayerischen Staatsoper, der Royal Opera Covent Garden und der English National Opera. Besonderes Lob wurde ihm für seine Darbietungen in *Death in Venice*, *Boris Godunow*, *The Midsummer Marriage*, *The Rake's Progress*,

Idomeneo, *L'incoronazione di Poppea* und *Semele* zuteil, sowie für Sir Harrison Birtwistles *The Mask of Orpheus* und *The Second Mrs Kong*. Viele seiner Auftritte sind auf Video festgehalten, darunter jene in Webers *Oberon* und Strawinskis *Oedipus Rex*. Für seine Darbietung in *Osud* wurde ihm ein *Olivier Award* zuerkannt.

Zu seinen kommenden Verpflichtungen zählen *Das Rheingold* und eine Wiederaufnahme von *Moses und Aron* an der Metropolitan Opera, Neuinszenierungen von *La clemenza di Tito* in München und von *Peter Grimes* in Mailand und Los Angeles; hinzu kommen Wiederaufnahmen von *Billy Budd* in Barcelona und Paris sowie von *Palestrina* an der Royal Opera Covent Garden.

Im Jahre 1994 wurde Philip Langridge der Orden des *Commander of the Order of the British Empire* verliehen.

Kathryn Harries, Sopran, hat an der Royal Academy of Music Gesang und Klavier studiert und 1977 in der Royal Festival Hall ihr Debüt gegeben. Ihre erste Opernrolle war die Leonore (in *Fidelio*), die sie 1983 an der Welsh National Opera sang. Zu ihren zahlreichen Partien an britischen Opernhäusern gehören Adalgisa (*Norma*), Donna Anna (Dargomjzhskis *Der steinerne Gast*), Irene (*Rienzi*), Sieglinde,

Kundry, Katja Kabanowa, Emilia Marty (*Die Sache Makropulos*), der Komponist (*Ariadne auf Naxos*), Clairon (*Capriccio*), Judit (*Herzog Blaubarts Burg*) und die Gräfin Geschwitz (*Lulu*).

Nach ihrem vielbeachteten Amerika-Debüt als Kundry 1986 an der Metropolitan Opera kehrte sie dorthin als Guttrune zurück und sang außerdem an der Lyric Opera of Chicago die Marie (*Wozzeck*) und die Protagonistin (Berio's *Un re in ascolto*). Sie ist mit Opernensembles in Lyon, Nizza, Genf, Linz und Bamberg aufgetreten, außerdem an der Opéra National de Paris-Bastille, am Châtelet théâtre musical, an der Nederlandse Opera, am Staatstheater Stuttgart und an der New Israeli Opera in Tel Aviv. Zu ihren Rollen zählen Donna Elvira, Dido (*Les Troyens*), Gertrud (*Hamlet*), Senta, Carmen, Giulietta (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*), die Küsterin (*Jenůfa*), Santuzza, Leokadja Begbick (*Mahagonny*) sowie die Titelrollen von *Ariane et Barbe-bleue* und *Lady Macbeth von Mzensk*.

Das heute unter dem Namen **Welsh National Opera** bekannte Unternehmen gab seine ersten öffentlichen Vorstellungen im April 1946 im Prince of Wales Theatre in Cardiff. Der Erfolg dieser Aufführungen führte zu einer rapiden Erweiterung des Opernchors, der, obwohl er

zum größten Teil aus Amateuren bestand, in kurzer Zeit aufgrund seines unverwechselbaren und hochqualitativen Klanges von sich reden machte. Der Chor wurde erst 1973 vollständig professionell. Während der ersten Jahrzehnte wurde der Opernchor von verschiedenen professionellen Orchestern begleitet. Im Jahre 1970 erfolgte jedoch die Gründung eines permanenten Orchesters, das 1979 den Namen "Orchestra of Welsh National Opera" erhielt.

Unter der musikalischen Leitung von Richard Armstrong entwickelte sich das Unternehmen in den 70er Jahren zu einer Größe in der Welt der Oper. Es folgten Tourneen in Großbritannien und Gastauftritte in Lissabon, Wiesbaden, Dresden, Leipzig sowie in anderen europäischen Städten. Die musikalischen Leiter Sir Charles Mackerras (1987–1991, weiterhin Dirigent Emeritus) und Carlo Rizzi (seit 1992), die mit von Kritikern und der Öffentlichkeit gleichermaßen gelobten Produktionen in New York, Milan, Paris und Tokio auf Tournee gingen, haben dem Unternehmen zu weltweitem Ruhm verholfen.

Das Unternehmen war Karrieresprungbrett für einige der besten britischen Sänger von heute, unter anderem Thomas Allen, Arthur Davies, Helen Field, Dennis O'Neill, Bryn Terfel und Janice Watson.

Sir Charles Mackerras wurde 1925 als Kind australischer Eltern in den USA geboren und studierte in Sydney und Prag. Sein Debüt als Operndirigent feierte er in Sadler's Wells, wo er wesentlichen Anteil an der Produktion der sensationellen britischen Erstaufführung von Janáčeks *Káťa Kabanová* hatte, die dazu führte, daß Janáčeks Werke ihren Weg ins britische Standardrepertoire fanden. Er war Chefdirigent an der Hamburger Oper (1966–9) und Musikdirektor an der Oper von Sadler's Wells, der nachmaligen English National Opera (1970–7) sowie der Welsh National Opera (1987–91), wo unter anderem seine bemerkenswerten Janáček-Inszenierungen große Beachtung fanden. Die Inszenierung und Einspielung von *Osud* wurden von der Peter Moores Foundation gefördert, die auch die Einspielung vom *Schlaue Füchslin* unterstützte. Sir Charles Mackerras ist Ehrendirigent des Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Emeritus-Dirigent der Welsh National Opera, erster

Gastdirigent der San Francisco Opera und seit der Spielzeit 1998/99 Musikdirektor des Orchestra of St Luke's in New York.

Sir Charles Mackerras hat sich intensiv mit der Aufführungspraxis des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts befaßt, was seine musikalischen Interpretationen wesentlich beeinflusste. Seine beeindruckende Diskographie umfaßt den preisgekrönten Zyklus der Opern Janáčeks mit den Wiener Philharmonikern, Britten's *Gloriana* (ausgezeichnet mit dem *Gramophone Award*), die Sinfonien von Beethoven, Brahms und Mahler sowie Handels *Julius Caesar* und Donizetti's *Maria Stuarda* mit der English National Opera (für Chandos/Peter Moores Foundation).

Sir Charles Mackerras wurde 1974 mit dem CBE ausgezeichnet und 1979 für seine Verdienste um die Musik geadelt. Außerdem erhielt er die Verdienstmedaille der Tschechischen Republik und wurde zum Mitglied des "Order of Australia" ernannt.

Janáček: Osud

“Le Destin” de Janáček: la genèse du livret

Vous savez que je suis à la recherche d'un livret.

Un livret moderne. [...]

Je veux un Acte I totalement réaliste, s'inspirant de la vie d'une station thermale. Il y a là une mine de motifs!

L'Acte II doit être une véritable *hallucination*. Plus aucune réalité, à la place l'esprit, poussé au bord de la dépression nerveuse, propulse l'action jusqu'au point où il est difficile de dire si c'est réel où si c'est une hallucination, un délire.

Alors que le lieu de l'action à l'Acte I est un magnifique décor de station thermale, l'Acte II doit révéler l'intérieur extravagant des boudoirs des dames du monde, le décor des paysages du sud.

L'Acte III sera étrange. [...]

Ceci est le premier scénario du *Destin* de Janáček tel qu'on le trouve raconté dans une lettre qu'il écrivit en octobre 1903 à Mme Kamila Urválková. Il avait fait sa connaissance au cours de l'été précédent à la station thermale de Luhačovice en Moravie où il s'était rendu pour se remettre de la mort de sa fille Olga, disparue au début d'année. Son opéra *Jenůfa* était depuis peu terminé, et en attendant sa

création à Brno, l'esprit de Janáček était ouvert et réceptif à de nouvelles impulsions. Kamila Urválková en offrit une. Apprenant que Janáček était compositeur, elle lui raconta l'histoire de sa liaison avec un compositeur, Ludvík Čelanský, qui pour se venger de leur rupture provoquée par les parents riches de la jeune femme, la ridiculisa dans un opéra en un seul acte, intitulé de façon suggestive *Kamila*, et produit à Prague en 1897. Elle encouragea donc Janáček à écrire un nouvel opéra où elle pourrait être représentée sous un jour plus favorable.

La plus grande partie de cette histoire célèbre et extraordinaire doit relever de la spéculation, ne serait-ce qu'en raison des commentaires particulièrement énigmatiques fournis par Janáček lui-même dans son autobiographie, et du peu de preuves extérieures, bien que la plupart des faits correspondent à la réalité et se voient confirmés par les premières esquisses du livret du *Destin*. Cependant, il n'existe aucune preuve attestant que Janáček ait jamais songé à écrire un opéra "vengeur" (il n'y a aucune "Kamila" dans le premier scénario); au lieu de

cela, il fut inspiré par le fait qu'un incident réel donna naissance au *Kamila* de Čelanský. Il se mit à imaginer un opéra qui traiterait en grande partie de lui-même, "totalement réaliste, s'inspirant de la vie d'une station thermale". Ici, un compositeur, Živný, rencontre Mme Míla Valková. Comme Janáček, Živný avait une fille qui était morte récemment. Comme Kamila Urválková, Míla Valková raconte l'histoire de sa liaison avec un compositeur dont elle a dû se séparer en raison de l'opposition de ses parents. Míla a fait un mariage malheureux, et est la mère d'un petit garçon.

Dans le premier scénario de Janáček, l'Acte II devait conduire à une crise, et dans le premier livret, cette crise était provoquée par le conflit entre le mari de Míla et le compositeur Živný, qui a écrit des lettres d'amour à Míla. De nouveau, le parallèle avec la vie de Janáček est frappant. En effet, il avait entretenu une intense correspondance avec Kamila Urválková jusqu'au moment où le mari de cette dernière y mit brusquement fin. Dans le premier livret, cette fin est plus dramatique: le mari de Míla tire sur Živný, mais le rate et blesse mortellement Míla.

L'"étrange" Acte III est l'acte le plus développé dans le premier scénario de Janáček, et il contient de nombreux éléments qui

allaient demeurer dans la version finale. Son action se situe dans le grand hall d'un conservatoire de musique où se rassemblent des étudiants, ("l'humeur très joyeuse habituelle des étudiants"); sur un mur se trouve une affiche à propos d'un opéra qui doit être donné ce soir-là. Les étudiants discutent de l'opéra, et implorent leur professeur, le compositeur Živný, de leur en parler. Il le fait très volontiers – en fait, il s'agit de l'histoire de sa vie. Il est hanté par la mort de sa femme, et l'opéra qu'il a écrit n'est pas terminé: il l'a abandonné dans un grand état d'agitation à la fin de l'Acte II.

Pendant la période où il correspondait avec Kamila Urválková, Janáček avait déjà trouvé un librettiste, une jeune institutrice du nom de Fedora Bartošová. Son unique qualification pour ce travail était qu'elle avait écrit quelques poèmes, et Janáček la choisit probablement parce qu'elle avait été une amie de sa fille bien-aimée Olga qu'il pleura tant. Comme Bartošová enseignait dans une ville voisine, leur collaboration se fit essentiellement par correspondance, et elle est bien documentée. Janáček lui envoya son scénario en prose par fragments, et le dernier acte le 8 décembre 1903. Bartošová mit tout ceci en vers, et acheva son travail pour Noël 1903. Cependant, ils continuèrent à y apporter des corrections au cours des quelques mois qui suivirent. A la

lecture de leur correspondance, on peut voir jusqu'à quel degré le scénario du compositeur était indécis et changeant: en fait, il inventait l'histoire au fur et à mesure qu'il avançait.

Dans la version finale, les lieux de l'action de l'Acte I (la station thermale) et de l'Acte III (le Conservatoire) demeurent, mais dans l'Acte II, les "décors des paysages du sud" (plus tard identifiés comme étant la Riviera dalmate) laissent place au bureau du compositeur, et ceci changea la nature de la crise fondamentale. Subitement, le 10 avril 1910, Janáček suggéra une suite entièrement différente à la rencontre fortuite de Živný et de Míla à l'Acte I. Et si l'enfant de Míla était aussi celui de Živný, le résultat d'une liaison antérieure, demanda-t-il? Ainsi à l'Acte II, ils vivraient ensemble avec leur fils de cinq ans – au lieu de simplement s'écrire des lettres. Le mari de Míla fut omis. Peut de temps après ce nouveau développement du livret, Bartošová fut doucement abandonnée, ayant écrit un nouvel Acte II (que Janáček ignore), et un monologue pour Živný devant servir à ouvrir l'Acte III, mais que le compositeur adapta pour en faire la charpente de son nouvel Acte II.

Janáček termina la partition au début de 1905, mais la révisa considérablement au cours de l'année suivante, et ne la proposa au Théâtre de Brno qu'à l'automne 1906. A cette date, il

avait ajouté un nouveau personnage – la mère de Míla – dont l'instabilité mentale provoquée par le mariage de sa fille avec le compositeur sans argent Živný offrait maintenant le conflit et la crise de l'Acte II. En dehors de son entrée dramatique à la fin de l'acte, la plus grande partie de son rôle pendant celui-ci était chanté hors de scène; Janáček ajouta simplement ses paroles à celles de Míla en contrepoint du monologue que Bartošová avait écrit pour Živný.

Très intéressé par le nouvel opéra de Janáček, le Théâtre de Brno, engagea un producteur et un décorateur, et commença même des répétitions. Mais Janáček, voyant une chance de se faire remarquer dans la capitale, retira sa partition et vint la soumettre au Théâtre Vinohrady de Prague qui venait de s'ouvrir récemment. Malgré une nouvelle révision, maintes tergiversations du Théâtre, et même un procès (initié par Janáček, mais retiré par la suite), l'œuvre resta dans les tiroirs jusqu'en 1914, date à laquelle Janáček demanda avec amertume qu'on lui rende sa partition. Plus tard, quand sa fortune changea avec le succès de *Jenůfa* à Prague, Janáček songea alors à réviser le livret, et le soumit à des experts littéraires tels que Jaroslav Kvapil, le librettiste de *Rusalka* de Dvořák, et l'écrivain et traducteur Max Brod. Tous deux hochèrent de

la tête devant le texte, aussi Janáček mit-il l'œuvre de côté, et il continua à composer de nouveaux opéras.

Vu ces circonstances, il n'est pas surprenant que le livret soit par moments au bord de l'incompréhensible. L'absence de point central dans la conception originale, et les curieux changements de direction et de motivation effectués au cours des nombreuses révisions sont encore aggravés par l'inexpérience et la langue fleurie dans le style Art nouveau de Bartořová, ainsi que par les retouches ultérieures de Janáček. Les Tchèques attendirent 1958 pour créer l'opéra à la scène. Et alors même, il fut donné dans un arrangement dans lequel les Actes I et II étaient insérés à l'Acte III, comme un long flashback. Cette version fut réutilisée dans la production réalisée à Brno en 1988. Néanmoins, il ne fait aucun doute que la musique est en bien des endroits l'une des plus fortes du compositeur, et fait montre d'un lyrisme passionné qui devait devenir plus discret dans les œuvres postérieures. Une mise en scène intelligente et fervente, telle que celle réalisée par David Pountney pour la production 1984 de l'English National Opera, démontre que l'opéra peut très bien fonctionner à la scène, et une représentation enregistrée est le moyen idéal d'apprécier quelques-unes des pages les plus incandescentes de Janáček.

Argument

Avant que l'opéra s'ouvre, Míla et Živný, un compositeur, ont eu une liaison dont est né un enfant, Doubek. La mère de Míla a fait tout son possible pour briser cette liaison, et a tenté de marier Míla à un autre homme – mais comme Míla était enceinte du fils de Živný, ce projet resta sans suite. Živný a écrit un opéra dans lequel il a sublimé son amertume vis-à-vis de ce qu'il croit être un abandon de la part de Míla.

Acte I

Une promenade dans une station thermale vers 1890, tôt le matin

C'est une belle journée dans une ville thermale, et la foule se réjouit à la vue des rayons du soleil. Dans ce contexte social, Živný et Míla se rencontrent par hasard: leurs compagnons notent qu'ils semblent se connaître, et les laissent seuls. Míla demande à Živný s'il est venu pour son fils. Cependant, leur entretien est rapidement interrompu par la maîtresse d'école, Mlle Stuhlá, qui essaye de faire répéter une chanson à plusieurs voix à un groupe d'institutrices, ce qui provoque l'hilarité des autres curistes. Avec l'aide du chœur et d'un joueur de cornemuse, le Dr Suda chante une ballade satirique à propos du soleil avant de les emmener faire une promenade improvisée.

Restés seuls, Živný et Míla parlent de leur passé en un échange lyrique. Quand ils entendent les promeneurs revenir, ils décident de partir ensemble, à la grande horreur de la mère de Míla qui arrive trop tard pour les en empêcher.

Acte II

Le bureau de Živný un jour d'hiver, quatre ans plus tard

Míla et Živný se sont mariés. Ils vivent désormais ensemble avec leur fils et la mère de Míla qui a perdu la tête depuis la catastrophe du mariage de sa fille avec un compositeur sans le sou. De temps à autres, on entend sa voix venant des coulisses et se superposer à la conversation entre Živný et Míla. Živný est toujours hanté par son opéra inachevé où il dépeint de manière amère le personnage de Míla. Il joue piano un extrait de la partition, et pris de remors, il commence à la déchirer. Ils sont interrompus par leur petit garçon Doubek, qui a observé la conduite des domestiques, et demande innocemment, "c'est quoi l'amour". S'étant dérobée à la surveillance des domestiques qui la gardent, la mère de Míla entre précipitamment dans la pièce et chante en se moquant une chanson d'amour extraite de l'opéra de Živný. Elle sort en courant suivie de Míla qui tente de la calmer.

Hors de scène, elles se tuent en tombant d'un balcon. Živný perçoit cet accident comme une nouvelle intervention dévastatrice du "destin".

Acte III

Le grand hall du Conservatoire, onze ans plus tard

Des étudiants essayent un passage (la scène de la tempête) extrait du nouvel opéra de leur professeur Živný, qui va être créé. Après que les étudiants ont fait une "tempête" de leur cru, l'étudiant Verva entre et leur parle davantage de l'opéra. Il croit qu'il s'agit d'une œuvre autobiographique, le compositeur "Lensky" étant en réalité Živný, tandis que l'opéra, bien qu'apparemment achevé, est "sans le dernier acte". Verva chante l'une des scènes solo entre Míla et Doubek (une reprise de l'incident de l'Acte II où Doubek demande ce que c'est que l'amour), ce qui embarasse Doubek, maintenant un étudiant du Conservatoire. Quand Živný entre subitement, les étudiants lui demandent de leur dire quelque chose à propos de l'opéra. Il le fait avec passion, décrivant le personnage principal de Lensky, et comment il tomba amoureux. Le poids émotionnel de ce qui est en fait un souvenir personnel devient trop fort pour lui, et sur l'arrière-plan d'une tempête qui fait rage à l'extérieur, Živný s'effondre après avoir eu la

vision de sa femme défunte. On appelle un docteur (c'est en fait le Dr Suda qui arrive). Dans ses dernières paroles, Živný soutient que le dernier acte de l'opéra demeure "dans les mains de Dieu".

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Traduction: Francis Marchal

La soprano **Helen Field** a fait ses études au Royal Northern College of Music de Manchester et au Royal College of Music de Londres. Parmi les nombreux rôles qu'elle a chantés avec des compagnies d'opéra britanniques figurent Mimì, Musetta, Gilda, Marenka, Tatyana, la Renarde, Jenůfa, Desdemona et Cio-Cio San au Welsh National Opera, Susanna, Daphne, Manon et Magda (*La rondine*) à l'Opera North, Violetta, Donna Anna, Pamina et Marguerite (*Faust*) à l'English National Opera, et des rôles dans *New Year* de Tippett et dans *The Second Mrs Kong* de Birtwistle au Festival de Glyndebourne. Parmi ses récentes prestations, on citera La Gouvernante (*The Turn of the Screw*), Salomé, Aithra (*Die ägyptische Helena*) et le rôle titre de *Ines de Castro* de James McMillan.

L'importante carrière internationale d'Helen Field l'a conduite à chanter au Théâtre royal de la Monnaie, au Deutsche Oper, au

Metropolitan Opera de New York et au Nederlandse Opera, ainsi qu'à Cologne, Dresde, Montpellier, Ludwigshafen et Bonn.

Pour la BBC, Helen Field s'est produite dans *Fidelio* (Marzelline), *Otello*, *La Petite renarde rusée* et *New Year*. Parmi ses enregistrements figurent *La Passion grecque* (Martinů), *A Village Romeo and Juliet* (Deliuss) sous la direction de Sir Charles Mackerras et *Rigoletto* (dans le rôle de Gilda) avec le chœur et l'orchestre de l'English National Opera sous la direction de Mark Elder.

Le ténor **Philip Langridge** a fait ses études à la Royal Academy of Music de Londres, et est aujourd'hui l'un des plus grands chanteurs du monde. Il a enregistré de nombreux disques, et remporté deux *Grammy Awards* (*Moses und Aron* et *Peter Grimes*), un *Gramophone Award* (pour le *War Requiem* de Britten) et un *Classic CD Award* (*The Turn of the Screw*).

Il se produit régulièrement dans les festivals internationaux de Salzbourg, Édimbourg et Glyndebourne, au Metropolitan Opera de New York, au Teatro alla Scala, au Bayerische Staatsoper, au Royal Opera Covent Garden et à l'English National Opera de Londres. Il a été tout particulièrement salué pour ses prestations dans *Death in Venice*, *Boris Goudonov*, *The Midsummer Marriage*, *The Rake's Progress*,

L'incoronazione di Poppea, *Semele*, et dans les opéras de Sir Harrison Birtwistle *The Mask of Orpheus* et *The Second Mrs Kong*. De nombreuses représentations ont été enregistrées sur vidéo, notamment celles de *Oberon* de Weber et d'*Oedipus Rex* de Stravinski. Il a reçu un *Olivier Award* pour son interprétation de *Osud*.

Parmi ses futurs engagements, on notera *Das Rheingold* et une reprise de *Moses und Aron* au Metropolitan Opera de New York, de nouvelles productions de *La clemenza di Tito* à Munich et de *Peter Grimes* à Milan et Los Angeles, et des reprises de *Billy Budd* à Barcelone et à Paris, et de *Palestrina* au Royal Opera Covent Garden.

En 1994, Philip Langridge a été fait "Commander of the British Empire" (CBE).

La soprano **Kathryn Harries** a étudié le chant et le piano à la Royal Academy of Music de Londres, et a fait ses débuts au Royal Festival Hall de Londres en 1977. Son premier rôle à l'opéra fut Leonore (*Fidelio*) au Welsh National Opera en 1983. Parmi les nombreux rôles qu'elle a chantés avec des compagnies d'opéra britanniques on citera Adalgisa (*Norma*), Donna Anna (*L'Invité de pierre* de Dargomizhski), Irene (*Rienzi*), Sieglinde,

Kundry, Katya Kabanová, Emilia Marty (*L'Affaire Makropoulos*), le Compositeur (*Ariadne auf Naxos*), Clairon (*Capriccio*), Judith (*Le Château de Barbe-Bleue*), et la Comtesse Geschwitz (*Lulu*).

Après un début très remarqué aux USA dans le rôle de Kundry au Metropolitan Opera de New York en 1986, elle a été réinvité à y chanter le rôle de Guttrune, et s'est également produite au Lyric Opera de Chicago dans le rôle de Marie (*Wozzeck*) et de Protagonista (*Un re in ascolto* de Berio). Elle a chanté dans les opéras de Lyon, Nice, Genève, Linz et Bamberg, à l'Opéra national de Paris-Bastille, au Châtelet théâtre musical, au Nederlandse Opera, au Staatstheater de Stuttgart et au New Israeli Opera de Tel Aviv. Elle a chanté les rôles de Donna Elvira, Didon (*Les Troyens*), Gertrude (*Hamlet*), Senta, Carmen, Giulietta (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*), Kostelnicka (*Jenůfa*), Santuzza, Begbick (*Mahagonny*), et les rôles titres de *Ariane et Barbe-Bleue* et de *Lady Macbeth de Mtsensk*.

La compagnie aujourd'hui connue sous le nom de **Welsh National Opera** (Opéra National du Pays de Galles) a donné ses premières représentations publiques dans le Prince of Wales Theatre, à Cardiff, en avril 1946. Le succès que remportèrent ces représentations

ont entraîné un rapide développement du chœur qui, bien que majoritairement composé d'amateurs, a vite acquis une réputation de grande qualité pour l'originalité de sa sonorité; il n'est devenu totalement professionnel qu'en 1973. Au cours de ses premières décennies d'existence, le chœur a été accompagné par divers orchestres professionnels. C'est en 1970 qu'un orchestre permanent fut fondé. Il fut par la suite nommé l'Orchestra of Welsh National Opera, en 1979.

Au cours des années 1970, sous la direction musicale de Richard Armstrong, la compagnie est devenue une force essentielle du monde de l'opéra, en effectuant des tournées en Grande Bretagne, et en apparaissant en tant qu'invité à Lisbonne, Wiesbaden, Dresde et Leipzig, entre autres villes européennes. Les directeurs musicaux Sir Charles Mackerras (1987–1991; il demeure Chef d'orchestre honoraire) et Carlo Rizzi (depuis 1992) ont permis à la compagnie d'acquérir une renommée mondiale, en amenant en tournée des productions aussi bien saluées par la critique que par le public, à New York, Milan, Paris et Tokyo.

La compagnie a lancé les carrières de certains des plus grands chanteurs britanniques actuels, avec notamment Thomas Allen, Arthur Davies, Helen Field, Dennis O'Neill, Bryn Terfel et Janice Watson.

Sir Charles Mackerras naquit en 1925 aux Etats-Unis de parents australiens et fit ses études à Sydney et Prague. Il fit ses débuts de chef lyrique au Sadler's Wells, où il contribua à la première britannique de *Káťa Kabanová* de Janáček, une création sensationnelle qui assura à Janáček de figurer au répertoire des troupes britanniques. Il fut Chef d'orchestre principal de l'Opéra de Hambourg (1966–1969) et directeur musical du Sadler's Wells Opera (qui deviendrait l'English National Opera) entre 1970 et 1977 et du Welsh National Opera entre 1987 et 1991, où ses productions remarquables de Janáček furent accueillies avec enthousiasme. La production et l'enregistrement d'*Osud* ont été financés par la Peter Moores Foundation, qui finança aussi l'enregistrement de *La Petite renarde rusée*. Il est chef d'orchestre honoraire du Scottish Chamber Orchestra et du Welsh National Opera, l'un des chefs réguliers de San Francisco Opera et, depuis la saison 1998–1999, directeur du Orchestra of St Luke's à New York.

Sir Charles Mackerras a fait des recherches poussées sur l'interprétation aux XVIII^e et XIX^e siècles qui ont profondément influencé la façon dont il aborde le répertoire aujourd'hui. Sa vaste discographie comprend un cycle primé des opéras de Janáček avec la Philharmonie de Vienne, *Gloriana* de Britten (primé par la

revue *Gramophone*), des Symphonies de Beethoven, Brahms et Mahler, et avec l'English National Opera *Julius Caesar* de Handel et *Maria Stuarda* de Donizetti (pour Chandos/Peter Moores Foundation).

Sir Charles Mackerras est "Commander of

the British Empire" (CBE) depuis 1974 et a été anobli en 1979 pour services rendus à la musique. Il s'est vu également décerner la Médaille du mérite de la République tchèque et le titre de "Companion of the Order of Australia".

Janáček: Osud

Janáček – “Destino”: la genesi del libretto

Sapete che sono alla ricerca di un libretto. Uno moderno...

Voglio che l'Atto I sia completamente realistico, tratto dalla vita in una stazione termale. Là c'è un'abbondanza di motivi! L'Atto II dovrà essere una vera e propria *allucinazione*. Non più realtà, ma la mente, provocata quasi al punto di un esaurimento nervoso, che sospinge l'azione ulteriormente fin quando è difficile dire se sia realtà o allucinazione, vaneggiamento.

Mentre l'Atto I dovrà essere ambientato nello splendido scenario di una stazione termale, l'Atto II rivelerà lo stravagante interno di boudoirs femminili, sullo sfondo di paesaggi meridionali.

L'Atto III sarà strano [...]

E' questo il primissimo canovaccio di *Destino*, contenuto in una lettera che Janáček scrisse nell'ottobre 1903 a Madame Kamila Urválková, conosciuta nell'estate alle terme di Luhačovice in Moravia, dove era andato a riprendersi dalla morte della figlia Olga nei primi mesi di quell'anno. *Jenůfa* era stata completata recentemente ed era in attesa della sua premiere a Brno; Janáček aveva la mente

sgombra e pronta a ricevere nuovi impulsi. Madame Urválková ne fornì uno: avendo saputo che Janáček era un compositore gli raccontò di aver incontrato, qualche tempo prima, un compositore, Ludvík Čelanský, il quale, per vendicarsi della fine di una loro relazione amorosa, troncata dai ricchi genitori di lei, l'aveva messa alla berlina in un'opera in un'atto, suggestivamente intitolata *Kamila* e messa in scena a Praga nel 1897. Janáček venne incoraggiato a scrivere un'altra opera in cui essa venisse messa in una luce più favorevole.

Gran parte di questa famosa e straordinaria storia deve essere speculata, data l'esistenza soltanto di alcuni commenti oltremodo criptici dello stesso Janáček nella sua autobiografia e poca altra evidenza esterna, anche se gran parte dei fatti calza ed è corroborata del primissimo libretto di *Destino*. Non c'è comunque prova che Janáček abbia mai contemplato un'opera “vendicatrice” (non c'è evidenza di alcuna “Kamila” nel suo primo canovaccio); egli fu invece ispirato dal fatto che una circostanza reale aveva dato vita alla *Kamila* di Čelanský. Si mise al lavoro immaginando un'opera che

sarebbe stata massimamente basata su lui stesso, “tratta dalla vita una stazione termale”. Qui un compositore, Živný, incontra Madame Míla Valková. Come Janáček, Živný ha una figlia che è morta di recente. Come Kamila Urválková, Míla Valková parla del suo amore per un compositore, dal quale è stata costretta a separarsi a causa dell'opposizione dei suoi genitori. Míla è infelicamente sposata e ha un figlio piccolo.

L'Atto II nel primo canovaccio di Janáček doveva portare ad una crisi che nel primissimo libretto era fornita del conflitto fra il marito di Míla e il compositore Živný che le aveva scritto delle lettere d'amore. Di nuovo il parallelo con la vita dello stesso Janáček balza agli occhi. Un'intensa corrispondenza fra Janáček e Madame Urválková si era sviluppata prima di essere portata rudemente a termine dal marito di lei. Nel primissimo libretto la fine è più drammatica: il marito di Míla spara a Živný ma ferisce mortalmente Míla.

Lo “strano” Atto III è l'atto più sviluppato nel primo canovaccio di Janáček e contiene molti elementi che sarebbero poi rimasti nella versione finale. E' ambientato nell'aula magna di un conservatorio di musica, con studenti che stanno radunandosi (“il solito brio studentesco”); su una parete è appesa la locandina di un'opera che sarà rappresentata

quella sera. Gli studenti discutono l'opera e pregano il loro professore, il compositore Živný, di dir loro qualcosa sul suo contenuto. Egli acconsente alacremenente – è, infatti, la storia della sua vita. La morte della moglie lo perseguita e l'opera che ha composto non è completa: è stata abbandonata in grande agitazione alla fine dell'Atto II.

Già da quando aveva scritto a Madame Urválková Janáček aveva trovato un librettista, una giovane maestra di scuola a nome Fedora Bartošová. La sua unica qualifica per questo incarico era di aver scritto un po' di poesia, e probabilmente Janáček la scelse perché era stata amica della sua molto amata e molto compianta figlia Olga. Bartošová insegnava in una città limitrofa, cosicché gran parte della loro collaborazione fu per corrispondenza, che è ben documentata. Janáček le mandò il suo canovaccio in prosa a scaglioni, l'ultimo atto l'8 dicembre. Bartošová lo mise in versi e fu finito a Natale del 1903, sebbene aggiunte e correzioni siano andate avanti per alcuni mesi. Una cosa che emerge dalla corrispondenza è come fluido e mutevole era il canovaccio di Janáček: metteva insieme gran parte della storia al tempo stesso in cui la scriveva.

Nella versione finale l'ambientazione dell'Atto I (la stazione termale) e quella

dell'Atto III (il conservatorio) rimasero, ma nell'Atto II "lo sfondo di paesaggi meridionali" (in seguito localizzato nella Riviera Dalmata) lasciò il passo allo studio del compositore, e con ciò mutò la natura della crisi cruciale. Improvvisamente, il 10 aprile 1904, Janáček propose una svolta completamente diversa all'incontro fortuito di Živný e Míla nell'Atto I. E come sarebbe – disse – se il figlio di Míla fosse figlio di Živný, frutto di una relazione antecedente? Perciò, nell'Atto II, abitano insieme, con il loro bambino cinquenne – non si scrivono semplicemente delle lettere. Il marito di Míla venne omissis. Subito dopo aver raggiunto questo stadio nello sviluppo del libretto Bartořová venne tranquillamente scartata, avendo contribuito un nuovo Atto II (che Janáček ignorò) ed un monologo per Živný ad apertura dell'Atto III che però venne adattato da Janáček a formare la spina del suo nuovo Atto II.

Janáček completò la sua partitura all'inizio del 1905, ma fino all'anno successivo vi apportò estese correzioni presentandola per l'esecuzione al teatro di Brno soltanto nell'autunno 1906. Durante questo tempo vi aggiunse un altro personaggio – la madre di Míla – la cui follia al pensiero della figlia che aveva sposato lo squattrinato compositore Živný ora forniva conflitto e crisi per l'Atto II.

A parte il suo drammatico ingresso alla fine dell'atto, buona parte del suo contributo all'Atto II viene cantato fuori scena; Janáček semplicemente inserì la sua parte, insieme a quella di Míla, contro il monologo di Bartořová per Živný.

Brno mostrò interesse ad eseguire la nuova opera di Janáček e si spinse sino ad istruire un regista ed uno scenografo ed a cominciare le prove con i solisti. Ma Janáček, avendo intravisto la possibilità di farsi una posizione nelle capitali, ritirò il lavoro da Brno e lo propose invece al Teatro Vinohrady che era stato da poco inaugurato a Praga. Malgrado un'ulteriore revisione, molta prevaricazione da parte del teatro e persino una cause civile (iniziata da Janáček ma inseguito ritratta), l'opera restò ineseguita in teatro fino al 1914, allorché Janáček chiese con amarezza che gli venisse restituita. In seguito, quando il successo di *Jenůfa* a Praga mutò la sua fortuna, Janáček pensò di revisionare il testo presentandolo ad esperti letterari come Jaroslav Kvapil, il librettista di *Rusalka* di Dvořák, e lo scrittore e traduttore Max Brod. Tutti scossero la testa e Janáček mise semplicemente da parte il lavoro e tirò avanti a comporre altre opere.

Entro le circostanze non c'è da meravigliarsi se il libretto talvolta tende all'incomprensibile.

La mancanza di focalizzazione nella concezione originale, unita ai curiosi mutamenti di direzione e di motivazione nelle numerose revisioni, viene scozzolata dall'inesperienza della Bartořová, dal fiorito stile Art Nouveau della dizione e dai successivi rattoppi di Janáček. I cecoslovacchi aspettarono fino al 1958 a mettere in scena l'opera per la prima volta. Persino allora fu eseguita in una variante in cui gli Atti I e II vennero inseriti nell'Atto III come un lungo flashback; versione di nuovo usata a Brno nell'allestimento del 1988. E' comunque innegabile che la musica è in molte parti così potente come qualsiasi altro lavoro di Janáček, con un lirismo appassionato che più tardi si affievolì. Anche se un allestimento intelligente ed impegnato come quello di David Pountney del 1984 per la English National Opera dimostra che l'opera può funzionare bene sulla scena, un'esecuzione in dischi è la maniera ideale di apprezzare gli aspetti più incandescenti della musica di Janáček.

La trama

Prima che inizi l'opera Míla e Živný, un compositore, hanno avuto una relazione. E' nato un bambino, Doubek. La madre di Míla ha fatto del suo meglio per troncare la relazione ed ha cercato di sposare Míla ad un

altro – ma Míla era incinta del figlio di Živný e il progetto è andato in fumo. Živný ha scritto un'opera in cui ha sublimato la sua amarezza al comportamento di Míla che – a suo modo di vedere – l'ha piantato.

Atto I

Una passeggiata in una stazione termale, di primo mattino, intorno al 1890.

E' una bella giornata in una stazione termale e la folla è a passeggio, a godersi il sole. Contro questo sfondo sociale Živný e Míla s'incontrano per caso: la loro compagnia nota che sembrano conoscersi e li lascia soli a conversare. Míla gli chiede se è venuto per il suo bambino. La loro conversazione è peraltro prontamente interrotta dalla maestra di scuola, Miss Stuhlá, che sta tentando di far provare un canto a cappella ad un gruppo di altre maestre, con grande divertimento degli astanti. Con l'aiuto del coro e di una cornamusa il Dottor Suda canta una ballata satirica sull'onniscienza del sole prima di portarsi dietro la comitiva in un'escursione improvvisata. Rimasti soli Živný e Míla rievocano il loro passato in un lirico duetto. Quando sentono tornare gli escursionisti decidono di andarsene insieme, con grande costernazione della madre di Míla che arriva troppo tardi per fermarli.

Atto II

Lo studio di Živný in una giornata d'inverno, quattro anni dopo.

Míla e Živný sono sposati e vivono insieme al loro bambino ed alla madre di Míla che ora ha perso la ragione a seguito della catastrofe della figlia sposata ad un compositore senza un soldo. Si sente di quando in quando la sua voce dietro la scena sopra la conversazione di Živný e Míla. Živný è tuttora ossessionato dalla sua opera incompiuta, con la sua amara descrizione del carattere di Míla. Suona frammenti della partitura al pianoforte e, preso dal rimorso, comincia a strapparne le pagine. Vengono interrotti dal piccolo Doubek che ha osservato i maneggi dei servitori e che innocentemente chiede "cos'è l'amore". La madre di Míla, sfuggita ai servitori che la sorvegliano, irrompe nella stanza e scimmietta una romanza d'amore dall'opera di Živný. Scappa quando Míla cerca di sopraffarla. Fuori scena ambedue precipitano dal balcone e muoiono. Živný vede l'accaduto come un fulmine a ciel sereno: un altro schiacciante intervento del "destino".

Atto III

La sala magna di un conservatorio di musica, undici anni dopo.

Gli studenti stanno provando un passaggio

(una scena di tempesta) da un'opera nuova composta dal loro professore Živný, che verrà prossimamente rappresentata per la prima volta. Dopo che gli studenti hanno inscenato una "tempesta" personale lo studente Verva entra e dà loro ulteriori spiegazioni del lavoro. Ritene che abbia una base autobiografica e che il compositore "Lensky" sia in effetti Živný e che l'opera, sebbene appaia completa, "manchi dell'ultimo atto". Verva canta una delle scene in duetto di Míla e Doubek (una ripetizione dell'incidente nell'Atto II in cui Doubek chiede cos'è l'amore), con imbarazzo di Doubek che ora è studente del conservatorio. Quando improvvisamente appare Živný gli studenti chiedono a lui qualcosa sull'opera. Lo fa con passione, descrivendo il personaggio principale Lensky e come si è innamorato. La carica emotiva di queste reminiscenze personali si fa troppo opprimente per lui e – sullo sfondo di una tempesta che fuori infuria – stramazza al suolo dopo avere visto una visione della moglie defunta. Viene chiamato un dottore (in effetti, chi arriva è l'avvocato Dott Suda). Con le sue ultime parole Živný afferma che l'ultimo atto dell'opera è ancora "nelle mani di Dio".

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Traduzione: Marcella Barzetti

Il soprano **Helen Field** ha studiato al Royal Northern College of Music e al Royal College of Music di Londra. I suoi numerosi ruoli per compagnie liriche britanniche hanno incluso Mimì, Musetta, Gilda, Marenka, Tatyana, la Volpe, Jenůfa, Desdemona e Cio-Cio San per la Welsh National Opera, Susanna, Daphne, Manon e Magda (*La rondine*) per Opera North; Violetta, Donna Anna, Pamina e Marguerite (*Faust*) per l'English National Opera; ruoli nell'opera di Tippett *New Year* e *The Second Mrs Kong* di Birtwistle al Festival di Glyndebourne. Fra le sue recenti interpretazioni vi sono La Governante (*The Turn of the Screw*), Salome, Aithra (*Die ägyptische Helena*) e la parte di protagonista in *Ines de Castro* di James MacMillan.

Un'intensa attività internazionale ha portato Helen Field a Théâtre royal de la Monnaie, Deutsche Oper, The Metropolitan Opera e De Nederlandse Opera, ed a Colonia, Dresda, Montpellier, Ludwigshafen e Bonn.

Per la BBC è apparsa in *Fidelio* (nella parte di Marzelline) e in *Otello*, *L'astuta piccola volpe* e *New Year*. La sua discografia include *La Passione greca* (Martinů), *A Village Romeo and Juliet* (Delius) con Sir Charles Mackerras e *Rigoletto* (nella parte di Gilda) con Mark Elder e l'orchestra e coro dell'English National Opera.

Educato alla Royal Academy of Music il tenore **Philip Langridge** è uno dei più insigni cantanti del mondo. Ha inciso numerosi dischi e vinto due premi *Grammy Awards* (per *Moses und Aron* e per *Peter Grimes*), un *Gramophone Award* (*War Requiem* di Britten) ed un premio *Classic CD Award* per *The Turn of the Screw*.

Philip Langridge appare regolarmente ai Festivals internazionali di Salisburgo, Edimburgo e Glyndebourne, e al Metropolitan Opera, Teatro alla Scala, Bayerische Staatsoper, Royal Opera Covent Garden e English National Opera. È stato particolarmente lodato per le sue interpretazioni di *Death in Venice*, *Boris Godunov*, *The Midsummer Marriage*, *The Rake's Progress*, *Idomeneo*, *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, *Semele* e *The Mask of Orpheus* e *The Second Mrs Wong* di Sir Harrison Birtwistle. Molte sue interpretazioni sono state registrate in video, fra queste *Oberon* di Weber e *Oedipus Rex* di Strawinsky. Ha vinto un *Olivier Award* per la sua interpretazione di *Osud*.

Prossimi ingaggi includono *Das Rheingold* ed una ripresa di *Moses und Aron* al Metropolitan Opera; nuovi allestimenti de *La clemenza di Tito* a Monaco di Baviera, *Peter Grimes* a Milano e a Los Angeles, riprese di *Billy Budd* a Barcellona e Parigi, e *Palestrina* alla Royal Opera Covent Garden.

Philip Langridge è stato insignito dell'ordine di Commendatore (CBE) nel 1994.

Il soprano **Kathryn Harries** ha studiato canto e pianoforte alla Royal Academy of Music; ha debuttato alla Royal Festival Hall nel 1977. Il suo primo ruolo operistico è stato quello di Leonora (*Fidelio*) per la Welsh National Opera nel 1983. I suoi numerosi ruoli per compagnie liriche britanniche hanno incluso Adalgisa (*Norma*), Donna Anna (*Il convitato di pietra* di Dargomizhsky), Irene (*Rienzi*), Sieglinde, Kundry, Katya Kabanova, Emilia Marty (*Il caso Makropulos*), il Compositore (*Ariadne auf Naxos*), Clairon (*Capriccio*), Judith (*Il castello di Barbablù*) e la Contessa Geschwitz (*Lulu*).

Dopo il suo notevole debutto americano nella parte di Kundry al Metropolitan Opera nel 1986 vi è tornata nel ruolo di Gudrun ed ha poi cantato a Chicago, per Lyric Opera, nella parte di Marie (*Wozzeck*) e del Protagonista (*Un re in ascolto* di Berio). Kathryn Harries ha inoltre cantato con compagnie liriche a Lione, Nizza, Ginevra, Linz e Bamberg, e con l'Opéra national de Paris-Bastille, Châtelet théâtre musical, De Nederlandse Opera, Staatstheater di Stuttgart e con la New Israeli Opera a Tel Aviv. I suoi ruoli hanno incluso Donna Elvira (*Les Troyens*), Gertrude (*Hamlet*), Senta, Carmen, Giulietta (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*),

Kostelnicka (*Jenůfa*), Santuzza, Begbick (*Mahagonny*) e le parti di protagonista in *Ariane et Barbe-bleue* e in *Lady Macbeth dei macelli*.

La società ora conosciuta come **Welsh National Opera** (Opera nazionale del Galles), ha eseguito i suoi primi spettacoli pubblici al teatro Prince of Wales a Cardiff nell'aprile 1946. Il successo di questi spettacoli ha condotto ad una rapida espansione del Coro, che sebbene costituito per lo più da dilettanti, rapidamente si distinse per le sue ottime qualità musicali, divenne completamente professionale solo nel 1973. Durante le sue prime decadi di attività, il Coro era accompagnato da varie orchestre professionali. Tuttavia nel 1970 venne fondata un'orchestra permanente che nel 1979 venne chiamata l'Orchestra of Welsh National Opera.

Negli anni Settanta, sotto la direzione musicale di Richard Armstrong, la società si impose nel mondo operistico con tournée in Gran Bretagna e con comparse ospite in altre città europee, tra cui, Lisbona, Wiesbaden, Dresda e Lipsia. I direttori musicali Sir Charles Mackerras (1987–1991, rimane Direttore Emerito) e Carlo Rizzi (dal 1992) hanno condotto la società a livello di fama mondiale portando in tournée spettacoli comunemente e

criticamente applauditi a New York, Milano, Parigi e Tokyo.

La società ha lanciato le carriere di alcuni dei migliori cantanti britannici, tra cui Thomas Allen, Arthur Davies, Helen Field, Dennis O'Neill, Bryn Terfel e Janice Watson.

Sir Charles Mackerras è nato nel 1925 negli Stati Uniti da genitori australiani ed ha studiato a Sydney e a Praga. In opera ha debuttato come direttore al Sadler's Wells Theatre dove diresse la sensazionale prima esecuzione britannica della *Kát'a Kabanová* di Janáček, rappresentazione che inserì Janáček nel corrente repertorio britannico. È stato direttore stabile dell'opera di Amburgo dal 1966 al 1969 e direttore artistico del Sadler's Wells (poi English National Opera) dal 1970 al 1977 e della Welsh National Opera dal 1987 al 1991 per la quale diresse, fra l'altro, di nuovo Janáček con grande successo. L'allestimento e la registrazione di *Osud* vennero sponsorizzati dalla Peter Moores Foundation così come il disco de *L'astuta piccola volpe*. Sir Charles

Mackerras è direttore ad honoris della Scottish Chamber Orchestra, direttore emeritus della Welsh National Opera, direttore principale della San Francisco Opera e dalla stagione 1998/99 direttore artistico dell'Orchestra of St. Luke's di New York.

Sir Charles Mackerras ha intrapreso estese ricerche nella pratica esecutiva della musica del Settecento e Ottocento esercitando profonda influenza nell'interpretazione dei nostri giorni. La sua vasta discografia include un assai premiato ciclo di opere di Janáček con l'Orchestra Filarmonica di Vienna, *Gloriana* di Britten (che ha vinto un premio *Gramophone*) e con la English National Opera il *Julius Caesar* di Handel e *Maria Stuarda* di Donizetti (per la Chandos/Peter Moores Foundation).

Sir Charles Mackerras ha ricevuto l'onorificenza di Commendatore (CBE) nel 1974 e il titolo di Sir per la sua attività di musicista nel 1979. Gli è stata inoltre conferita la medaglia al merito della Repubblica Ceca ed è stato nominato "Companion of the Order in Australia".

OSUD (FATE)

Act I

[1] *Fifteen years ago. The spa of Lubačovice, Moravia. From upstage centre an avenue stretches into the distance. On the right, an imposing spa hotel, with a salon and a verandah with a light blue glass roof. A row of tables. On the left the Amantka well and behind it an elaborate bandstand. Paths wind through the dark, and rustic steps lead to the forest.*

[2] *Music from the bandstand. Spa attendants at the well. A poet and two ladies promenade. Old Slovak woman, Major's wife and her child, Mařenka, priests, academics, civil servants, schoolteachers and young girls. The sound of spa visitors' conversation rises and falls. Ladies open their sunshades. Greetings are exchanged. Lhotský, Konečný and Dr Suda in a group. Živný is alone, deep in thought. He is dressed in the height of fashion.*

Poet (walking with two ladies)

Free as a bird I bask in the sunshine, bright sunshine!

First lady (affectedly)

Heavenly, the sun filtering down through the treetops; it's just like a shower of golden butterflies!

Poet

See my spirit soar up to heaven; it longs for sunlight like flowers that blossom in the springtime, their petals shyly opening.

(Some students and schoolgirls are standing on the bridge, trying out an echo. Priests, civil servants, etc. promenading on paths in the park.)

Second lady

It awakens us to love and laughter and brings us to life again.

Students and Schoolgirls

Sunlight, shine on us!

Echo

Shine on us!

First lady

With its radiance, with its golden glow, it fills up our hearts with love again.

Students and Schoolgirls

Sunlight! Shine on us!

Echo

Shine on us!

Old Slovak woman (entering along path)

The sunshine warms my poor old bones, and even I feel young again,

(She takes off her jacket.)

Major's wife (with her child)

Up we come! Upsy-daisy!

Child

Mummy! Mummy!

Councillor's wife

Where's your daddy then? Isn't he with you?

Major's wife (baby talk)

Bye-bye! Wave bye-bye to Papa!

(They leave.)

Chorus

Shine on us, sunlight, warm on us to life and bring us laughter. Shine on us! Hey!

(With a gracious step, Mila Valková enters. She is in an elegant, dark, English-style ensemble with a long boa. On her golden hair is a little straw hat.

Lhotský, part of a fashionable group of young men with Dr Suda and Konečný, comes up to Mila and offers her a bouquet of red roses.)

Lhotský

On this glorious summer morning, please accept these flowers, dear lady, as a token of admiration.

Mila (thoughtfully, taking the flowers)

What interrupted melodies lie hidden in these flowers. It is as if one's whole life were hidden in them. My thanks, my thanks.

(She admires the bouquet.)

Dr Suda

Other flowers grow pale before their scarlet brilliance.

Mila

Really? What memories they bring back to me in their beauty. Bitter memories!

(The group walks on a little. The musicians leave the bandstand.)

(Mila goes to the well and drinks a cup of water,

gazing round as she lifts her veil. Lhotský holds her bouquet. She stiffens when she sees Živný, talking to a group in the distance.)

Mila (to herself)

[3] Heavens, it's him!

(aloud, pulling herself together)

Mister Živný, isn't it?

Dr Suda (noticing Mila's disturbed state of mind)

Why should that upset you so much?

(Mila takes the bouquet from Lhotský and takes a few steps towards Živný. She stops and controls herself.)

Lhotský

Looks an arty type, a composer perhaps.

Dr Suda

He's recently composed a bitter post-mortem on youthful passion, on love unrequited. His?

Someone else's? I've no idea and don't wish to know.

Konečný (with interest)

He's from the town where I was born. His music breathes the landscape there; he's always been inspired by nature.

Mila (troubled, aside)

When the autumn leaves are blown in circles, then who knows where they'll come to rest?

(aloud)

Do you mind if we walk a little further?

(Živný detaches himself from his group and

approaches Míla, Konečný and their party from a distance. His manner both conceals and betrays his confused state; he has seen Míla in the party that includes Konečný, whom he knows.

Živný's and Míla's steps falter. Her eyes seem filled with questions, but they are steadily fixed on Živný. In Živný's face can be seen the question: 'Why are you here?' Živný stops. He has no alternative but to greet the party. They introduce themselves.)

Lhotský (*sarcastically*)

Pardon us if we stand in your way.

Živný (*bowing*)

I've no wish to intrude on you.

(*to the men*)

May I present myself?

Konečný (*introducing Živný to Míla*)

Well, my dear lady, pray allow me...

Míla

There's no need to, we are acquainted...

Konečný (*turning to the others*)

Živný, the composer.

Dr Suda (*bowing*)

Dr Suda.

Lhotský

My name is Lhotský.

Živný (*correcting Konečný*)

The composer perhaps.

Lhotský

Perhaps? Why perhaps? What do you mean by that?

Živný (*sarcastically*)

Isn't a composer's function 'to write post-mortems on youthful passion'?

Konečný

Youthful passion?

Dr Suda

On youthful passion.

Živný (*pointedly*)

In anger, bitterness, in the face of an abject betrayal?

Míla (*drawing closer to Živný*)

Youthful passion?

You mean his youthful passion!

Živný (*to Míla, pointedly*)

You ought to know.

(*Míla turns away from the group as if wishing to walk alone with Živný.*)

Lhotský (*softly to Dr Suda*)

I fancy that these two know each other rather well. Why pry on them? Leave them to it.

Konečný (*to Míla*)

I'll take my leave, if you'll permit me.

Dr Suda

We'll take our leave, if you'll allow us.

(*They withdraw politely. Míla takes several steps towards Živný.*)

Míla (*urgently*)

4 Is it your child you've come for?
Tell me... for our baby?

Živný (*uneasily*)

I am here to seek an echo of the cry that exposed my spirit's emptiness. I come to seek that baby's cry, the cry that filled me with terror.

(*coming closer to Míla*)

The cry that bore witness to my transgression but also to my obligation, and I seek it, since its tears and its laughter join to proclaim my undying right to my son and his mother.

Míla

That right is yours if you claim it.

Živný

And I defend it both now and always.

(*Schoolmistresses gather on the promenade and gaze inquisitively at Živný and Míla, who move slowly away.*)

Živný (*almost in a whisper*)

See how our souls are reaching out to us, calling to us from the darkness, from that insane abyss where the hopes that once we had are lying, drowning in bitterness.

(*Miss Stuhlá, an elderly schoolmistress, starts to summon her brood, searching amongst the promenaders. Students and schoolgirls enter, dressed for tennis.*)

Miss Stuhlá (*through her nose*)

It's time, dear ladies, for rehearsal.

Students (*mocking her*)

'It's time, dear ladies, for rehearsal!'

Dear ladies, your rehearsal!

Schoolgirls

Super! Super!

Miss Pcovská

Are you ready? We're having an excursion.

It's time, dear ladies, for rehearsal!

Schoolgirls (*merrily*)

Yes, we're ready.

Miss Stuhlá

We're late already.

(*Schoolmistresses gather by the salon.*)

Where have you been? Late again!

Schoolmistresses (*gathering, severally*)

Here I am! Here we are!

Miss Stuhlá

There's still some more.

We're not all here yet. Go, tell the others hurry up.

(*The rest eventually arrive. Dr Suda and Lhotský, accompanied by a bagpiper, enter in a merry mood. Dr Suda has an umbrella turned inside out.*)

Schoolgirls (*severally*)

Oh, doctor, dear doctor! Won't you join our excursion?

Dr Suda

Maybe. Why not!

Schoolgirls and Students

Won't you lead the way? Oh, please do!

Dr Suda

Maybe.

(*brandishing the umbrella*)
I've found a flag, our standard!
(*He gives it to Miss Pacovská.*)

Schoolgirls

Decorate it with ribbons, ribbons. Make it beautiful. With red ones, and white ones, and blue ones.

(*They sit on the promenade and decorate the umbrella. The bagpiper plays.*)

Dr Suda

Hey, Lhotský, find some musicians!

Lhotský

But first we must eat! To keep our strength up.

(*He joins the diners at the tables, where waiters are hovering.*)

First guest

The set lunch, quickly!

Second guest

And for me.

Waiter

Just two of you?

(*to Lhotský*)

Or you as well, sir?

Students

We've got a pole, to fly our standard!

Schoolgirls

Our standard! To fly our standard!

(*Miss Stuhlá and the schoolmistresses are by the*

piano in the salon. The students and schoolgirls are at the window.)

Schoolmistresses

'Scarlet poppies in the grass...'

Miss Stuhlá

No! No! Stop! Once more please, and together.

One, two, one, two!

Schoolmistresses

'Scarlet poppies in the grass...'

Miss Stuhlá

First sopranos, you continue:

'Call out when the reapers pass.' Now!

Schoolmistresses

'Call out when the reapers pass...'

Miss Stuhlá

The altos next, you have the tune.

Now both parts sing together.

Dr Suda

This must be stopped.

Lhotský

This must be stopped.

Schoolmistresses

'Call out when the reapers pass.

From your sickle spare us.'

Miss Stuhlá

Stop!

Dr Suda, Lhotský, Students and Schoolgirls

(*mocking*)

Spare us, spare us, spare us!

Miss Stuhlá (*angrily, at the window*)

Your manners, really, are disgraceful!

Behave yourselves; be your age!

(*turning to her choir*)

Now! One, two!

Schoolmistresses

'Scarlet poppies in the grass...'

Students and Schoolgirls

Ha, ha, ha, ha!

Miss Stuhlá and the Schoolmistresses (*exploding*)

What shocking manners!

Míla's mother (*searching for Míla, to Lhotský*)

Where is my Míla? Have you seen my Míla?

Lhotský (*shrugging his shoulders, turning away*)

How should I know?

Councillor's wife

Where's Mr Živný? Where did he go?

Dr Suda (*closing the window*)

Now we'll sing our own song, to see us on our way. Sing and off we go!

Students

Be quiet, quiet!

Lhotský

Waiter, the menu!

Schoolmistresses

What shocking manners!

(*The bagpipe player strikes up.*)

Dr Suda

☐ 'Sun in the heavens up on high,
Though you have only got one eye,
You can see in our hearts.'

Lhotský and Students

Oh, yes, you can see in our hearts.

Schoolgirls

Wonderful, wonderful!

Dr Suda

'Sun in the heavens up above,
You can get all you want of love,
Though you have got no heart.'

Lhotský and Students

Oh, yes, though you have got no heart.

Dr Suda

'Sun up above descend to us,
Down from on high and send to us,
Love to inflame our hearts.'

Lhotský, Students

Oh, yes, send love to inflame our hearts.

Schoolgirls

Wonderful, wonderful!

Lhotský

Are we all ready? Off we go!

Students

Off we go!

(*They fall in line behind the improvised flag and set off gaily.*)

'Sun up above descend to us...'

(The stage grows empty, save for a few waiters and spa guests. Miss Stuhlá comes out of the salon with her choir.)

Students *(from a distance)*
'Hearts...'

Miss Stuhlá *(angrily)*
What a disgrace! What shocking manners!

(Miss Stuhlá and the schoolmistresses leave. Míla's mother wanders off in the same direction as the excursion, searching for her daughter.)
(The sun shines brightly. A spa guest or two take advantage of the shade in the colonnade. Míla and Živný enter from the avenue of trees.)

Živný
[6] We're back too late, we've missed your friends.

Míla
Whatever shall we say to them?

Živný *(quietly)*
Say to them? Say to them that we both have started to retrace the steps that lie behind us, in the past.
(They go to the end table outside the hotel and sit.)
Let's sit awhile.
(to the waiter)
Bring us the menu.

Míla
Only if you choose for me.

Živný
No, it's for you to choose.

Míla
Choose it for me.

Živný
As if the two of us had any choice...

Míla
Do go on...

Živný
The past, the past, with what longing I relive it, the past. Silent and passionate glances illumined our empty existence, and filled it with a blazing light that no-one, that nothing could extinguish. We did not heed the outside world, whose darkness only made the light brighter, light that no-one, that nothing could extinguish. Sometimes desire fed on those glances; at other times, how it longed for more to feed on. For when we were apart, suspicion made our lips ask secretly, where were those glances turning to? Yet whenever we met, silently those lips needed words that were never enough – no lips, no words were ever enough. Oh how glorious the harmony of human passion, when two spirits seek and find each other. Was there not beauty and honesty in the way we expressed our love? Yet something conspired to threaten us each day we spent together.
(passionately)
Everything round us assumed new warmth and colour; flowers, and people shuffling about their daily business glowed in our love and shared its glory. We lived in a world of our own creation

made of dreams. 'Dreamers, romantics and parasites!'
(bitterly)

That was the way your mother once described us. How could she understand that passion is the spring of creation and is my only source of inspiration.

(Míla rises uneasily. The afternoon sun, which has been beating down warmly, disappears.)

Míla
[7] The sun's vanished.

(sadly)
I need its heat to burn my sorrow.
(resuming her story)

They forced me to receive a suitor, assuming I'd agree. He was elegant, perhaps even handsome. Yet, every time, no sooner had he left me, I ran to be with my secret love, just to catch a glimpse, just to see your face, longing to speak a word with you, so you, you could see in my eyes my misery at all I had lost: a life in ruins, my life in ruins.

And once, in the opera house, I remember clearly as if it were today, I watched you conducting your latest opera, and willed you to turn and look at me. In the applause that followed, you were lost to me. But how I drank you in! Oh, it's so clear, as if it were today. It all came back just now with my bouquet, when you leant down to smell the scarlet roses.

Then came the moment when it all seemed over, like an unfinished novel. Yet at first it was

painless, though I thought we would not ever meet again. But later, when they took me from Prague, to help me forget you, and sent me away to the country, how I missed you!

(despairingly)
You were in Prague, so far away from me!
(She sits near the chair where the bouquet is lying. Živný sits in the chair next to her and gazes into the distance.)

Until that physical separation, I lived so near you in a world of dreams, and felt you through the bustle of the city. Sometimes I imagined that we met, and we walked through the trees by the river's edge. And when I gazed into the silent water, seeing your reflection next to mine, I lost myself within a misty dream-world, in an idyll of never-ending pleasure.

Živný *(half to himself)*
To think I believed what the slanderers said of you...

(Míla lowers her head to the flowers, heavily self-absorbed.)

Míla *(recovering herself)*
What did they say?

Živný
Oh, nothing. You'll learn soon enough.

Míla
And in the end I bore it all alone. Once more my life was empty and routine; but then, here beneath my heart, something stirred within me. The emptiness within me was filled by life

awakening, filled by the life of our baby, who cried within my womb for his absent father!

Živný

The life of our baby!

(The excursion starts to return.)

Míla *(hurriedly)*

Listen! They are back again.

(She gives Živný the roses and adjusts her hair and hat.)

Živný *(hurriedly taking the flowers)*

Can you bear seeing them after this?

Míla

No let's avoid them.

(They start to leave. It is growing dark. A young widow and an engineer drift back with the excursion.)

Engineer

8 Never will I forget this fleeting moment! Tomorrow!

Young widow

After dark?

Engineer

After dark?

(They leave.)

Konečný *(reading a love poem to a young excursionist)*

'Love lingers on your lips and turns them into a scarlet flower, ripe for plucking, while in your eyes...'

(They leave. Some young gentlemen returning notice Živný and Míla.)

First young gentleman

Good heavens, Živný!

Second young gentleman

Looks as though we'd better leave them to it.

Lhotský *(to Míla)*

I've spent the day admiring you revelling in the sun.

Two young gentlemen

Revelling in the sun.

Lhotský

Revelling in the sun.

Míla

How kind of you.

Councillor's wife *(to the Major's wife)*

Why ever didn't Míla join the party, I wonder?

Major's wife

Who knows? Why not go and ask?

(They both watch Živný and Míla with curiosity.)

Míla *(to Živný)*

Oh, take me away!

Živný

There's no hurry. Since prying eyes never find much pleasure from an open book.

Míla

From an open book?

(with sudden passion)

Let them see all, yes all! I am yours! I and the child are yours!

Two young gentlemen *(watching from the verandah)*

Let them be.

Živný

You are mine! You and the child are mine!

(They start to leave.)

Míla *(turning round, pausing)*

Yet even as I say it, I'm still frightened. Just think how our meeting here will affect my mother.

Živný *(following Míla)*

Well, that's settled then.

Dr Suda *(entering with students, carrying the flag)*

Indoors for the grand finale!

Students

Grand finale!

Dr Suda *(to Míla)*

Won't you join us for the grand finale?

Students

Grand finale!

(Dr Suda goes into the hotel.)

Míla's mother *(to Lhotský)*

Have you seen my Míla?

Lhotský *(trying to avoid her, gesturing that he hasn't)*

Not for ages.

Major's wife

She was here just now, but she left with Živný.

Míla's mother

Oh, no! That's not true! Not with Živný!

(The remaining excursionists have gone into the hotel. Míla's mother stops and looks at the lighted windows. The electric lights on the promenade are switched off. It is dark.)

A student *(softly)*

Fanča! Let me kiss you once again!

Fanča

Never! Never!

Student

If not, I'll tell what you did just now. You'll catch it then!

Fanča

What I did just now? Let me go!

(She escapes.)

Míla's mother *(distraught)*

Have you seen my Míla?

Dr Suda, Lhotský and Konečný

Romance! Just a summer romance!

Míla's mother *(exploding with grief)*

Gone with Živný!

Student *(from the distance)*

Fanča!

Míla's mother

Oh, God! A disastrous blow!

Quick curtain.

Act II

⁹ *Four years later. About 6 o'clock on a winter evening. Light from a standard lamp in Živný's study. A piano to the left with a sofa; a balcony with pillars supporting it is seen through the window. Upstage a door leading to a passage which in turn leads to stairs up to the balcony. A door, right, leads to other rooms. A potted palm in the curve of the piano. Živný sits at the piano. Mila is in a rocking-chair, from which she can see the music. Doubek, their four-year-old son, is pulling music out of a cabinet and examining it.*

Živný (*picking up the score of his opera*)
Slumber on undisturbed in the shadow, bitter memories, sleep. You who bear the burden of our past sorrow... when, oh when will you take flight and release your victims?

How sweetly you come to charm us, promise our hearts the love and certainty that we both long for. Yet you bear witness to the lingering doubts from out of our past.

Must I leave you to reproach me in silence, denied to your public, the victim of your creator's conscience? Dare I awaken you? Or must it be that you remain here in silence? Yet this is the music I wrote when first we fell in love.

I wrote the whole of this opera, and only the last act remains incomplete.

(*lightly*)

A funny way to put it, come to think of it.

Mila (*smiling*)

A funny way to put it! To have completed an opera with no ending!

Živný

We must let these notes sound at least once, to exorcise their power to haunt us, to silence them, to leave not even an echo.

Mila (*gently*)

You regret having written these notes?

Živný

Regret them?

Mila

You play them so often, these tunes that still accuse me.

Živný (*approaching Mila, full of love*)

May we not hear them just once without recrimination?

(*There are indistinct screams from Mila's deranged mother off-stage. Živný affects not to hear them.*)

Mila's mother (*off-stage*)

What are those people saying? My daughter, and Živný?

Mila

That ghastly gibbering...

Živný

Do you still remember what I wrote in my first letter?

¹⁰ *He starts to play softly.*

Mila (*plainly shaken*)

I do, I do!

(*to Doubek*)

Little Doubek, go to Nanny.

(*She hugs him. Doubek potters off with a book.*)

Živný

'I saw the beauty of your eyes,

(*Mila stirs uncomfortably.*)

dimmed by the long hours of weeping.

(*Mila rises in fear.*)

What have I done to cause you pain, why is your soul racked with suffering?

Why are you unhappy?

Mila's mother (*off-stage*)

God be my witness, what those two did was sinful.

Mila (*to herself*)

Oh, these memories, why revive them?

Živný

And you replied: 'Unspoken thoughts go far beyond words, silently winging between us; but our thoughts are elusive, they can't speak for both of us. I have surrendered my will to your will. Our hearts are conflicting echoes; my heart is full of uncertainty, yours is always demanding; my heart is never free from anguish, yours is calling me, "Come, oh come to me, Destiny!"'

Mila

For heaven's sake, stop it!

Mila's mother (*her voice heard from off-stage*)

'Destiny! Our hearts are conflicting echoes; my

heart is full of uncertainty, yours is always demanding; my heart is never free from anguish, yours is calling me, "Come, oh come to me, Destiny!"'

Živný

Always that answering echo!

Mila

All these years of harrassment, never relenting.

Živný (*tenderly, calmly*)

¹¹ We're married now; why are you crying, when none can harm you? To protect you was my one desire, but I failed in protecting you from myself. Perhaps because I saw in you, saw in the flower of our passion, all I needed to inspire me. (*He flicks rapidly through the pages of the score.*) Oh, cruelty, such cruelty! (*glancing at the score*)

This is how I took revenge. I wanted to tear out the heart from your body, and reveal your wounds in public, drowning your death knell howling with laughter.

I wanted to bathe in the tears you shed, and strike at your breast with a knife, hacking you till I'd killed you. Bring you to judgement, show you for a lying harlot! Lay bare your pretences, and tear off the mask that concealed your debauchery! To anyone and everyone you gave both your heart and soul as well, you gave them all your body!

(*He goes to the piano, seizes the score, tears pages from it and hurls it to the floor.*)

Deceit, deceit, a lie, born of my own suspicion
and nurtured on jealousy!

*(Mila pulls herself together and goes to the fallen
score.)*

*(The door flies open, revealing the passage and the
steps to the balcony.)*

Doubek *(running in)*

^[12] Mummy, Mummy!

Mila

What is it, little one?

Doubek

Mummy, do you know what love is?

Mila

Darling, I do, I do.

Doubek

No you don't, no you don't.

Mila

Oh, yes I do, I do.

Doubek

No you don't, no you don't. Because you don't
behave like John and Nanny.

Mila

What do you mean, John and Nanny?

*(John and Nanny peer nervously through the door.
Mila picks up the score and walks towards Živný.)*

Mila

All the same, it is true that I did wrong, and guilt
will not be silenced.

Doubek *(turning to John and Nanny, whom he sees
at the door)*

John and Nanny!

Mila *(turning to Doubek and seeing John and
Nanny.)*

Nanny, where's the mother?

(She hurries from the room with John and Nanny.)

Quick! Can't you see her room is empty? Where's
my mother? Where's my mother?

(Doubek is about to follow them.)

Živný

Stay here with me, Doubek. Stay with Daddy.

*(Having found her, John, Nanny and Mila gently
try to lead Mila's mother into the room. She is
clutching her jewel box.)*

Mila *(in the hall)*

Mother dear, come and sit in here with us.

Mila's mother

Don't come near me, I'm not crazy!

*(She sees Živný and runs to him with outstretched
arms.)*

^[13] 'Unspoken thoughts go far beyond words,
silently winging between us, but our thoughts
are elusive, can't speak for both of us.'

I know you! You have seduced my daughter!

(with grotesquely amorous movements)

'Oh! My heart is full of uncertainty, yours is
always demanding; my heart is never free from
anguish, yours is calling me, "Come, oh come to
me, Destiny!"'

Živný

Silence her!

Mila's mother

She always came when you called to her. Ha, ha,
Destiny!

(slyly, as she backs towards the door)

But the songbird fell to the earth. You will see
what I mean, after I'm dead and gone, you will
see what I mean.

*(She gets closer to the door, trying to conceal her
jewel box. Mila keeps close to her.)*

You'll not get anything! I'll take my jewellery!

You'll not inherit it! I'll get away from you
vultures.

(in surprise to those crowding around her)

Who are these mad people? What do they want
of me?

*(In a flash, she runs through the door to the flight of
steps. Mila hurries after her, and in the course of a
struggle is pulled over the balcony as her mother
throws herself off.)*

Živný *(running to the stairs)*

God almighty!

Doubek *(alone on stage, his eyes fixed on the door,
which is now closed)*

Where's my mummy? Where's my mummy?

(Živný enters, carrying Mila's corpse.)

Mummy! Mummy!

Živný *(laying the body on the sofa)*

Silence, silence! Silence, silence, and a blast from
a clear sky. With nothing to warn us of lightning,

to warn us of it. Why was there no thunder?

Why was there no thunder?

*(He sees the others carrying Mila's mother upstairs
and falls to the floor at Mila's side.)*

Curtain.

Act III

^[14] *Eleven years later – the present. The Great Hall of
the Conservatory. On the left a huge organ with
silver pipes; two doors at the rear. Sofas and chairs
line the walls. Paintings on the walls. A chandelier
converted to electricity. In the centre a concert grand
piano. Students enter severally to attend a lecture. A
group of eight or ten is gathered round the piano,
following a score which Verva is playing. A group of
girl students, led by Hrazda and Kosinská, enters
and forms a group upstage.*

Students *(round the piano)*

'Listen to the thunder over the horizon.

Farmland and field deserted, as though death lay
in waiting; roads to the villages empty and silent,
fearful at the anger of God's own messenger.

'See, the cockerel hurries homeward, tail feathers
blown in the wind, until at last he is safe,

underneath the rafters roosting; and even
humans cower in terror.

'See now a bolt of lightning strikes at the old oak
tree and splits the trunk from top to bottom,
shattering its age-old beauty.'

Hrazda *(singing the tenor solo from the score)*

^[15] 'Endless the pain I must suffer; in the stormwind

I see you so clearly, my silver flower.
And always that unforeseen lightning, that bolt
from a cloudless sky, strikes from the very height
of heaven.'

Students

'Unforeseen lightning, striking from heaven,
spent at last in the cold earth.'

Verva

That's it, that's how the opera ends.

Součková

Where's the thunderstorm?

Students

Funny ending!

No more thunderstorm?

No thunder? Funny ending!

Součková

It's up to us to improvise the thunder!

(Součková seats herself at the organ and plays loudly.)

Students

Improvise the thunder!

(They tune their instruments noisily.)

Hrazda

Shut up! Stop it!

^[16] *(The girl students dance.)*

Verva *(sits at the piano again)*

Enough of that! That bloody awful racketing will
fetch the roof down. Stop that noise!
(They stop dancing and quieten down.)

How many of you are going to the premiere?

Students *(affectedly)*

We must all go!

Hrazda

Oh, yes, we'll all go.

(They gather round the piano.)

Verva

I've been backstage in rehearsal.

Students

All go.

Součková *(sarcastically)*

Oh what a lot you'll have seen there!

Verva

Yes, indeed, you learn a lot in rehearsal.

(He points to the score from which he is playing, subdued, serious.)

Živný came with his score to the theatre for the
first rehearsal, saying he'd brought the whole of
the opera except for the incomplete finale, which
was still in God's hands and there it would stay.

Students *(to themselves)*

'Still in God's hands and there it would stay...'

A funny way to put it! He has completed an
opera with no ending.

Verva *(looking at the score again)*

There's more to it. Lenský, he must be Živný
himself.

Students

Lenský is Živný?

Verva

He must be writing about his own suffering.
Every note cries out his name, and her name also,
and the child can only be Doubek.

(Doubek enters. Verva whispers something to Hrazda.)

Girl students *(sotto voce)*

Do you think it's true? Does Doubek know?

(Součková starts to play the organ.)

One way to find out, that's by going to Živný
and asking him.

Hrazda *(sarcastically)*

Go and ask, go and ask. He will be certain to tell
you, certain!

Girl students

Come on, come on, leave them alone with their
secrets. Come on Doubek, leave them to it.

Verva *(sits at the piano again)*

Don't go. Listen to this extraordinary little
passage scored for treble; surely there's something
for you here.

(imitating a child's voice)

^[17] 'Mummy, Mummy! Do you know what love is?'

'Darling, I do, I do.'

'No you don't, no you don't.'

'Oh, yes I do, I do.'

'No you don't, no you don't. Because you don't
behave like John and Nanny.'

'What do you mean, John and Nanny?'

Students *(mocking)*

'Do you know what love is?'

'John and Nanny!' Very pretty!

Hrazda

Verva!

Kosinská

Součková!

(They all burst out laughing.)

Součková *(jumping up from the organ)*

Watch out!

(Živný has entered unobserved. Verva gets up from the piano.)

Živný

Why this unusual silence?

Verva *(smiling shyly)*

We were preparing for this evening's premiere.

Kosinská

And we were going to ask you to tell us all about
your opera, about the man called Lenský.

Živný

For my opera's premiere?

Lenský? You could say I know him intimately.
Short-tempered, and a lonely man.

(He goes to the piano and sits, as if to lecture them. They gather round. Doubek watches his father solicitously.)

Music flowed from his imagination, poured out
in a golden stream, although he led a solitary,
private existence.

(half aside)

Must I revive these memories?

(aloud)

Most of his music reflected his loneliness, and in

its intensity it failed to please the public taste.
But something happened to change that.
(*He gets up and walks to the window.*)

[18] People said it must have been his falling in love.

Kosinská (*half to herself, half to Součková*)
Falling in love! Oh, how wonderful that must be!

Živný
Please could you switch the lights on? It's getting dark outside.

Součková (*tartly*)
As if she didn't know.

(*Živný turns round; there are signs of a storm outside. He sits again.*)

Živný
How happy he was then! He felt that God was smiling on him. Confidence blossomed within him; no longer lonely, his passion embraced all humanity.
And from the breath of love, what inspiration came to him, what spontaneous melody flowed from his soul that seemed born again, and, reflected in her beauty, music assumed perfection of form.
And when in time their love came to an end, memories sufficed to feed a spirit always hungry for new stimulus. Soon his libretto sprang to life, and he conveyed so well his laughter and joy, his pain, his pain.

Verva (*to Součková*)
Don't you see now? He is describing his own pain.

Součková
And how much pain it gives him!

Živný (*disjointedly*)
Where once their spirit shared a life of perfect unison, now their existence was always threatened by strident rhythms and by hysteria. Crashing and beating down on them, in the end, strings that had bound them snapped in two.
(*Doubek goes to his father in alarm. Živný looks round in surprise.*)

Why are you silent?

Students
We're so frightened. Please don't go on with it, don't you see we are afraid for you?

Živný
Now you understand why these memories make me so bitter?

Doubek (*pleadingly, warning*)
Father!

Živný (*agitated*)
[19] Bitter memories! Separated from her Lenský, she became a ghostly shadow, aimlessly wandering, cowering and timorous, a broken reed blown helplessly hither and thither. And Lenský? Like dead wood severed from live branches, hacked off and heedlessly cast aside, battered by the fierce winds, thinking he had been defeated.
In revenge he made his score an attack on her, and hoped that her guilt would shame her into loving him again. Could the winds that blew the broken reed bring her back to him again, bring

her to the dead wood still battered by the storms? Who knows... maybe they were right to say it was chance when Lenský and Míla met at the spa. Doubek, would you fetch me a glass of water?
(*Exit Doubek.*)

Who would have recognised Lenský when they met again? Full of love and deeply happy, both of them drowning in pleasure. How could they have realized that love so gentle and harmonious would soon be silenced by the nearness of death?
(*with great pain*)
How could he forget, how could he forget?

Listening to her last breath, listening to her last sigh?
(*with a spasm of pain*)
An interrupted melody, torn from her, torn from her dying lips!

Verva and Students
Do you start to understand him?

(*A wind rises outside.*)

Živný
From then on no sound came to him save for the menacing rumble of thunder. Ever louder and louder still, it hurtled around in his head. He tried to challenge that music, to silence it for ever through his will. He stood by trees in storms to watch them shake in terror, waiting for God's own messenger.
(*A great clap of thunder; flashes of lightning criss-cross; the lights in the hall flash on and off.*)
There in the lightning's flash he saw the gates of

eternity. In his surprise he stood and gazed at the blinding gleam of silver light; he knew that dark clouds meant the storm was near.

(*More lightning. The students back away and crouch in fear.*)

Students
Oh, dreadful! Oh, dreadful!

Živný
Why do you shake like leaves in a storm?
(*Doubek returns with the glass of water.*)

[20] It seems to be so clear, where the silver lightning shatters into fragments. There is a white face, so pale and so sad!
(*The students crouch behind the organ. Doubek turns from Živný and looks at the lightning outside in alarm.*)

Now I see you once more, ah, once more, see you so clearly once more... your heavenly face, your golden hair that falls around your brow, and your shining eyes smile at me...

Doubek (*crying out and dropping the glass of water*)
My mother!

(*Thunder and lightning; the lights go out; darkness on stage; Živný falls in a faint.*)

Students
Jesus!

(*The lights come on again; students still by the organ; Živný lies unconscious.*)

Verva (*the first to pull himself together*)
Run and get help for him! Get a doctor! Hurry up!
(*Hrazda and the others raise Živný. Součková runs for a doctor.*)

Živný (*raising himself slightly*)
Can't you hear it too? That terrible sound! Can't you hear it too?

(*He intones wordlessly.*)

Verva
Oh, please be calm, I beg you.

Kosinská
One of you fetch some water, fetch him some water. Send for help!

Živný (*intoning again, expressively, passionately*)
Listen now! That is her weeping.
Can't you hear it too?

Verva (*to students*)
Could that be the music for the final scene?

Živný (*hearing him and raising himself briskly*)
Music for the final scene? That is still in God's hands, and there it will stay!

(*He clings to Doubek, who supports him with difficulty.*)

Dr Suda (*entering*)
What is the matter now?

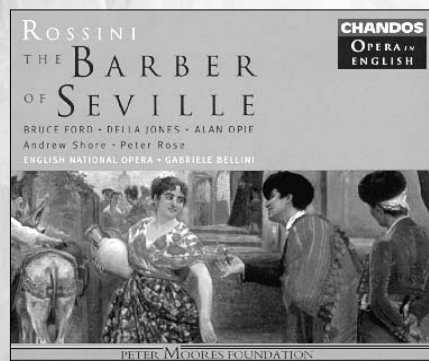
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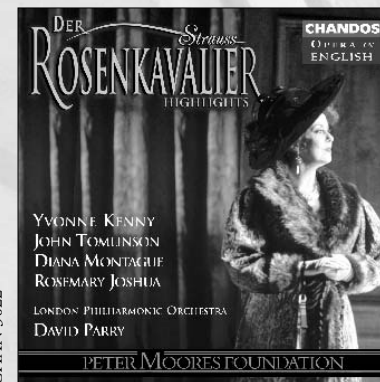
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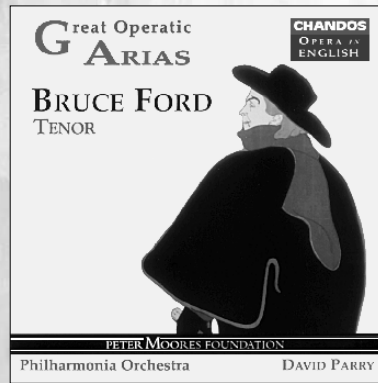
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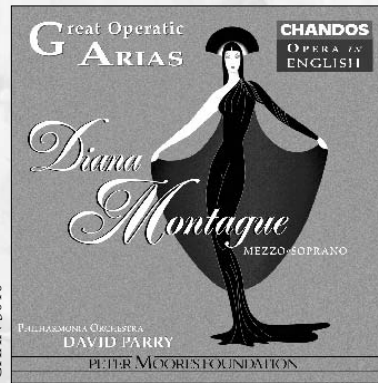
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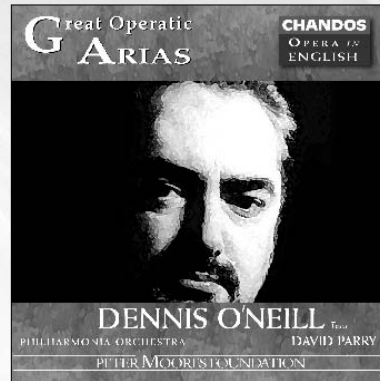
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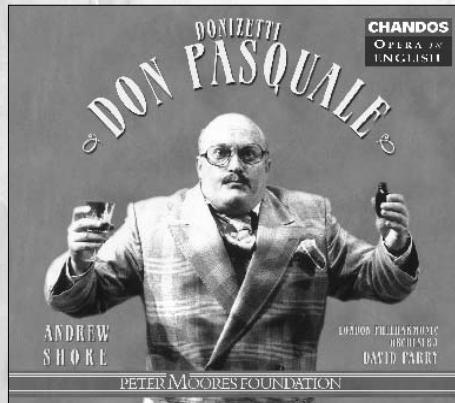
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Osud (Fate)

Opera in three acts

Libretto by Leoš Janáček and Fedora Bartošová

English translation by Rodney Blumer

Míla Valková	Helen Field
Živný, a composer	Philip Langridge
Míla's mother	Kathryn Harries

Orchestra and Chorus of Welsh National Opera

Andrew Greenwood chorus master

Sir Charles Mackerras

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