

Musical Times

Reports

Source: *The Musical Times*, Vol. 129, No. 1742 (Apr., 1988), pp. 205-207

Published by: Musical Times Publications Ltd.

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/965328>

Accessed: 23-03-2021 19:48 UTC

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



JSTOR

Musical Times Publications Ltd. is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Musical Times*

Reports

CARDIFF

Igor Markevitch is best remembered as a conductor, especially of Stravinsky, but between the wars he enjoyed a consistent reputation as a composer. Two or three years ago the putative original version of his orchestral work *L'envol d'Icare* was discovered. Scored for two pianos and percussion (two players), it was linked with a letter by Bartók, now unfortunately lost, which expressed deep admiration for *L'envol*, and the suggestion was made that it was this original version that prompted Bartók to compose his sonata for the same forces. The European première of this version, with a performance of the Bartók, was given at one of the chamber music concerts organized by the Department of

Music, University College Cardiff (19 Jan). The performers were Martin Jones, Richard McMahon (pianos), Tristan Fry and James Holland (percussion).

The documentary evidence linking the two works is pretty tenuous and sceptics will wonder why more information was not forthcoming before Markevitch's death in 1983; after all, Bartók's sonata had long been established as a modern and popular masterpiece. From the evidence of the music there is little beyond the common forces to suggest any real influence. Bartók's work has always been admired for its imaginative exploration of the overlapping sonorities of the modern piano and modern percussion, but there

is little integration in Markevitch's. Apart from timpani, there is no tuned percussion, and the percussion writing is additive rather than essential; indeed the final impression is something akin to a piano rehearsal for the percussion section.

The influence of the Stravinsky of *The Rite of Spring* and *Les noces* is strong on *L'envol* with its sectional structure and ostinato rhythms but without the highly memorable melodic and harmonic writing. The scoring of *Les noces* could well have prompted Markevitch's piece; the Stravinsky of this and his neo-classical period is surely a much more fertile source for Bartók's sonata than Markevitch.

DAVID WYN JONES

NEW YORK

As the ultimate musical supermarket, New York successfully combines a dazzling variety of goods with a generally remarkable freshness of produce to the extent that very few weekdays pass by without some ten or a dozen events ranging over concerts, opera, recitals and ballet – marginally musical when, as with the recent Joffrey reconstruction of the original choreography for *The Rite of Spring* (see p. 171), a wider-based audience than usual attended – while the average Sunday proposes a choice of two dozen events in the usual categories, barring subversively sinful stage shows, but bolstered by numerous fine performances of church music ancient and modern, jazz and classical.

Perhaps an indefatigable peripatetic critic could shop around sufficiently to sample at least some of these offerings, but the best approach (as New Yorkers have already discovered) is to choose carefully ahead of time and so avoid the risk of aural indigestion. Temptation will however remain strong while so much of the choice lies within the space of ten city blocks, from Carnegie and Weill Hall up to the Lincoln Centre complex and the adjacent Tully Hall, Juilliard and Merkin, a name that the *New York Times* still circumambulates presumably on account of

its etymologically public rather than sociologically public overtones.

Although few of the halls boast acoustic perfection they offer comfort, good visibility and ancillary amenities resulting from careful planning. The recently refurbished Carnegie Hall does not satisfy all who knew and cherished its pristine sound, but it resonated sympathetically to the visiting ministrations of the Philadelphia Orchestra and their guest conductor Yuri Temirkanov, who gave a vivid account of the 1947 version of Stravinsky's *Petrushka* and what now seems to be the official Soviet version of Tchaikovsky's *Manfred* Symphony. Suitably balletic, athletic and aerobic in his gestures, Temirkanov made us wish that he and the Philadelphians could be on downstairs duty when this most poignant and colourful work is produced, for tonal richness and dynamic range of this order are understandably rare and greatly to be cherished.

In the Tchaikovsky, a firm grasp of the dramatic content through tempo and colour was offset in the finale by a lapse both of taste and logic, for the quiet ending which depicts the hero's death was replaced by a repetition of the closing pages from the first movement, thrusting Manfred back, Tantalus-like, upon his

tormenting despair. One begins to wonder what the conductor and his countrymen do with *Don Juan*, *Till Eulenspiegel*, *Falstaff* and *Romeo and Juliet*, whose eponymous leading characters expire to the sound of subdued cadences. There is, of course, the loud question of applause, and of the organ, which as far as Carnegie Hall is concerned may be fairly described as a permanent cipher. But in these days of sometimes painful pseudo-authenticity in performances of early music it might be helpful to seek after accuracy in the rendition of more recent repertory. 'Old man!', says Manfred to the Abbot of St Maurice, 'tis not so difficult to die'. But apparently it is very difficult for some people to respect Tchaikovsky's respect for Byron.

Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* stretched itself out comfortably in Alice Tully Hall in a bright and engaging interpretation by Thomas Wikman and Music of the Baroque, a fine ensemble from Chicago, making its first appearance in New York. Scholarly perception and sensitive musicianship joined forces in bringing to life a series of works that makes heavy demands on a chamber choir, sole source of all the soloists. They were evenly matched on the whole, and well supported by instrumentalists of the first rank, led by

Elliott Golub. The one borrowed stop was the trumpet, brilliantly played by Philip Smith of the New York Philharmonic.

The Israeli pianist Ilan Rechtman, now in his mid-20s, plays with a sense of maturity, technical assurance and thoughtful artistry. His recital at the Kaufmann Concert Hall began with Bach's Partita in G, shaped with a fine feeling for classical forms, and went on to a rousing performance of Beethoven's *Appassionata* and Liszt's Faustian B minor Sonata. These tests of pianistic strength and subtlety were passed with flying colours. Mr Rechtman also played four of his own compositions, a quasi-improvisatory set of Preludes (here given their first performance) in memory of the Chinese pianist Li Zen.

At the Metropolitan Opera, which continues its astounding schedule of six performances a week throughout the season, the principles may vary in quality but the chorus and orchestra maintain a pleasingly and admirably high standard. Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, ably conducted by Marek Janowski, gave us Gösta Winbergh as a vocally persuasive Belmonte, well served by Heinz Zednik's characterful Pedrillo. Zdzislaw Donat

dealt lightly and flexibly with the demanding fioriture of Constanze's part, to which she lent an air of charming insouciance. Most memorable of all, however, was the Osmin of Matti Salminen, who sang with conviction, humour and musicality all in perfect balance.

A revival of *Turandot* in Zeffirelli's stunning production was less star-treked than last year's, but there was praiseworthy singing (and, thank heavens, acting) from Ghena Dimitrova who provided lyricism as well as edge in the title role, Aprile Millo who sang Liù with great insight and passion, and Ermanno Mauro as Calaf, portrayed with dignity, power and beauty of tone. Nello Santi conducted with a fine perception of balance in this most challenging of Puccini's scores, and the contribution of the chorus, so essential to the drama, was outstanding both in subtlety and sonority. Most impressive of all was the feeling of unity and the convincing interaction of movement and music in the crowd scenes. For sight and sound, one would have to go a long way to equal, let alone surpass, this brilliant collaboration of masterminds.

The Pennsylvania-born composer William Thomas McKinley, a member of

the jazz and composition faculties at the New England Conservatory, made a three-pronged concert foray into New York in early January. One concert, given by the lively and versatile American Symphony Orchestra at Carnegie Hall, featured five soloists, four concertos and two conductors – Robert Black and JoAnn Falletta. The occasion was something of a marathon, offering New York premières of the Viola Concerto no.2 (Sol Greitzer), *American Blues* (Gary Burton, vibraphone, and Richard Stolzman, clarinet), the world première of the Piano Concerto no.2 (David Buechner) and a year-old *Poem* (Robert Stallman, flute). The composer, who believes himself to be an 'American Romantic', certainly made his point in the successful welding together of what might otherwise be considered disparate styles, for the improvisatory elements are neatly clothed in formal attire, with acknowledgments to the colourful and rhythmic characteristics of jazz. The soloists distinguished themselves and the accompaniments were remarkably well done, with the sole exception of the Viola Concerto, in which the scoring was too thick and heavy for the non-penetrating tone

LAKE DISTRICT SUMMER MUSIC INTERNATIONAL SUMMER SCHOOL AND FESTIVAL

Ambleside Cumbria



6–20 August 1988 In Association with **TELECOM**
RESIDENTIAL CHAMBER MUSIC COURSE for String
Players and Pianists.

ARTISTS/TUTORS IN RESIDENCE include: Schubert Quartet of Vienna, Joaquin Achucarro, Renna Kellaway, Nina Milkina, Eli Goren, Richard Ireland, Siegmund Nissel, Christopher Rowland, John Tunnell, Roger Chase, Simon Rowland-Jones, Alexander Baillie, Marius May, Rodney Slatford, Eleanor Warren.

GUEST ARTISTS: Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Richard Rodney Bennett and Marion Montgomery.

CHILDREN'S WORKSHOPS – non-residential – for young String Players directed by Wendy Max.

CONCERTS, EXHIBITIONS, TALKS, FORSYTH MUSIC SHOP, INSTRUMENTS REPAIRS *Further information from Mrs. Alison Godlee, The Grange, Clay Lane, Handforth, Cheshire SK9 3NR.* Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope.

879



Patron
HRH The Duke
of Kent

TRINITY COLLEGE OF MUSIC LONDON

FOR TEACHERS

A Summer Vacation Course in
Central London
25–29 July incl. 1988

The Teaching of Music A CREATIVE APPROACH

In learning to develop *their own* imaginative ability by improvising and composing, teachers gain increased confidence with the creative approach required for

● MUSIC IN THE GCSE ●

Hostel accommodation and practice studios available.
Evenings free for concerts and theatres.

*Enquiries to: The Registrar of the Junior Department
Trinity College of Music,
Mandeville Place, London W1M 6AQ
Tel: 01-935 5773*

*Applications: for COURSE AND HOSTEL BY 3 May
for COURSE only by 20 June 1988*

956