



Opera Milestones

An annotated catalogue

Universal Edition

Milestones for Orchestra

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Giving the Theater What Belongs to the Theater

Opera, the "power plant of feelings," has often been declared dead due to its extreme artificiality – especially the operas composed in the 20th and 21st centuries. This catalog proves that the opposite is the case.

What held for the first works of the genre, the operas by Claudio Monteverdi, continues to hold to the present day: The moment a sound is heard, the curtain uncovering the world of imagination is raised. Unlike in former times, however, when the evocation of a realm of musical spirits caused quite a stir, in the past hundred years people have sought closeness to literature and demanded that opera be emancipated from its conventions.

The individual strands of the development of the opera genre (Mozart, Wagner) intersected as though in a focal point in Alban Berg's *Wozzeck*. Berg's sheer disarmingly simple basic principle was: "Give the theater what belongs to the theater." Berg was fascinated by the question of how music can develop autonomously from the structure of the text. The multitude of exciting, first-rate operas that arose in Berg's succession is genuinely impressive – all the way to Wolfgang Rihm's *Jakob Lenz* or Morton Feldman's *Neither*.

The examples of operas written prior to and parallel to Berg's, in which the national characters of the individual musical schools manifested themselves, is no less impressive.

Leoš Janáček (*Jenůfa*, *Káťa Kabanová*, *The Excursions of Mr. Brouček to the Moon and to the 15th Century*, *The Makropulos Affair*, *The Cunning Little Vixen*, *From the House of the Dead*) in the former Czechoslovakia, Bela Bartók (*Duke Bluebeard's Castle*) in Hungary; Karol Szymanowski (*King Roger*) in Poland; Franz Schreker (*The Distant Sound*, *The Branded*) in Germany - and many others. In addition, Kurt Weill (*The Threepenny Opera*, *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*) with his immortal operas paved the way to politically motivated works.

What a wealth of operas which have only to be staged!

Dem Theater geben, was des Theaters ist

Die Oper, das „Kraftwerk der Gefühle“, wurde aufgrund ihrer extremen Künstlichkeit schon oft tot gesagt. Gerade jene Werke, die im 20. oder 21. Jahrhundert geschrieben wurden. Dieser Katalog beweist das Gegenteil.

Was für die ersten Werke der Gattung galt, also die Opern von Claudio Monteverdi, gilt auch heute noch: sobald ein Ton erklingt, hebt sich der Vorhang, der die Welt der Phantasie freigibt. Doch anders als früher, als die Beschwörung eines musikalischen Geisterreichs die Gemüter entzückte, suchte man in den letzten hundert Jahren die Nähe zur Literatur, beförderte die Emanzipation der Oper von ihren Konventionen.

Die Fäden der Opernentwicklung (Mozart, Wagner) liefen wie in einem Brennpunkt in Alban Bergs *Wozzeck* zusammen. Bergs schier entwaffnend einfacher Grundsatz lautete: „Dem Theater zu geben, was des Theaters ist“. Berg faszinierte die Fragestellung, wie die Musik sich autonom aus der Struktur des Textes herausentwickeln kann. Die Vielzahl an spannenden, hochkarätigen Opern, die dann in Bergs Folge

entstanden, ist wahrhaft beeindruckend – bis hin zu Wolfgang Rihms *Jakob Lenz* oder Morton Feldmans *Neither*.

Die Beispiele der vor und parallel zu Berg entstandenen Opern, in denen sich der nationale Charakter der einzelnen musikalischen Schulen manifestierte, ist nicht minder beeindruckend.

Leoš Janáček (*Jenůfa*, *Káťa Kabanová*, *Die Ausflüge des Herrn Brouček*, *Die Sache Makropulos*, *Das schlaue Fuchslein*; *Aus einem Totenhaus*) in Tschechien, Bela Bartók (Herzog Blaubarts Burg) in Ungarn; Karol Szymanowski (*König Roger*) in Polen; Franz Schreker (*Der ferne Klang*, *Die Gezeichneten*) in Deutschland – und viele andere mehr. Dazu hat Kurt Weill (*Die Dreigroschenoper*, *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*) mit seinen unsterblichen Werken den Weg zum politisch motivierten Werk geebnet.

Was für eine Fülle, die nur noch auf die Bühne gebracht werden muss!

Donner au théâtre ce qui est au théâtre

L'opéra, « usine à sentiments », a été maintes fois déclaré mort en raison de son caractère extrêmement artificiel. En particulier dans les œuvres composées au XX^e et au XXI^e siècle. Ce catalogue se veut la preuve du contraire.

Ce qui était vrai des premières œuvres du genre, les opéras de Claudio Monteverdi, l'est encore aujourd'hui : dès le premier son, le rideau qui se lève ouvre grand la porte de l'imaginaire. Mais si, autrefois, l'évocation d'un royaume des esprits musical ravissait les esprits, le siècle écoulé a davantage recherché la proximité à la littérature et encouragé l'opéra à se libérer de ses conventions.

Les chemins de l'évolution de l'opéra (Mozart, Wagner) convergent comme en un point focal dans le *Wozzeck* d'Alban Berg. Le compositeur, dont le principe, d'une simplicité désarmante, était de « donner au théâtre ce qui est au théâtre », se passionnait pour la question de savoir comment la musique peut se développer de façon autonome à partir de la structure du texte. Le nombre d'excellents opéras créés après lui est impressionnant, jusqu'au *Jakob Lenz* de Wolfgang Rihm ou au *Neither* de Morton Feldman.

La liste des compositeurs antérieurs à Berg et contemporain, dont les œuvres manifestent le caractère des différentes écoles nationales, n'est pas moins imposante.

Leoš Janáček (*Jenůfa*, *Káťa Kabanová*, *Les voyages de Monsieur Brouček*, *L'affaire Makropoulos*, *La Petite Renarde rusée*; *De la maison des morts*) en Tchéquie, Bela Bartók (*Le Château de Barbe-Bleue*) en Hongrie, Karol Szymanowski (*Le Roi Roger*) en Pologne, Franz Schreker (*Le son lointain*, *Les Stigmatisés*) en Allemagne n'en sont que quelques exemples. Sans oublier Kurt Weill (*L'Opéra de Quat'sous*, *Grandeur et décadence de la ville de Mahagonny*), dont les œuvres immortelles ont ouvert la voie à une création politiquement engagée.

Et toute cette richesse n'attend qu'une chose : d'être portée à la scène !

Dare al teatro quello che appartiene al teatro

L'opera, la "centrale dei sentimenti", per la sua artificiosità estrema spesso è stata definita un genere morto. Proprio quel genere di produzioni scritte nel XX o XXI secolo. Questo catalogo dimostra il contrario.

Ciò che valeva per le prime opere del genere, ovvero le opere di Claudio Monteverdi, vale ancora oggi: non appena risuona una nota, si alza il sipario che mette in libertà il mondo della fantasia. Tuttavia, diversamente da quanto avveniva in passato, quando l'incantesimo di un regno degli spiriti della musica infiammava gli animi, negli ultimi cento anni si è cercata una vicinanza alla letteratura, si è favorita l'emancipazione dell'opera dalle convenzioni di genere.

I fili dello sviluppo dell'opera (Mozart, Wagner) convergono come verso un punto centrale nell'opera *Wozzeck* di Alban Berg. La massima di Berg, di una semplicità disarmante, era la seguente: "Dare al teatro quello che appartiene al teatro". Berg era affascinato dalla questione di come la musica potesse evolversi autonomamente rispetto alla struttura del testo. La pluralità di opere avvincenti e di grande caratura, nate successivamente a quelle di Berg, è veramente sorprendente – fino a giungere all'opera *Jakob Lenz* di Wolfgang Rihm oppure allo spettacolo *Neither* di Morton Feldman.

Gli esempi di opere sorte prima e parallelamente a quelle di Berg, nelle quali si manifestava il carattere nazionale delle singole scuole di musica, non sono meno impressionanti.

Leoš Janáček (*Jenůfa*, *Káťa Kabanová*, *Il viaggio del signor Brouček*, *L'affare Makropulos*, *La piccola volpe astuta*; *Da una casa di morti*) in Cechia, Bela Bartók (*Il castello di Barbablù*) in Ungheria; Karol Szymanowski (*Re Ruggero*) in Polonia; Franz Schreker (*Der ferne Klang [Il suono lontano]*, *Die Gezeichneten [I predestinati]*) in Germania – e molti altri. In aggiunta a ciò Kurt Weill con le sue opere immortali (*L'opera da tre soldi*, *Ascesa e caduta della città di Mahagonny*) ha spianato la strada a lavori politicamente motivati.

Che gran quantità di lavori deve essere ancora portata in scena!

Dar al teatro lo que es el teatro

La opera, „central generadora de sentimientos“, con frecuencia se ha dado por muerta a causa de su extrema artificiosidad. Incluso las obras escritas durante el siglo XX o XXI. Sin embargo, este catálogo demuestra todo lo contrario.

Lo que caracterizaba a las primeras obras de este género, las óperas de Claudio Monteverdi, sigue vigente hoy en día: en cuanto suena un tono, se abre el telón que abre las puertas a un mundo de fantasía. Sin embargo, a diferencia de lo que ocurría anteriormente, cuando la evocación de un mundo espiritual musical entusiasmaba al espíritu, durante los últimos cien años se ha buscado una mayor aproximación a la literatura, fomentando que la ópera se emancipe de sus convenciones.

Los hilos de la evolución de la ópera (Mozart, Wagner) convergieron como un foco en *Wozzeck* de Alban Berg. El principio simple y cautivador de Berg era el siguiente: „Dar al teatro lo que es el teatro“. A Berg le fascinaba cómo la música puede desarrollarse de forma autónoma de la estructura del texto. La multitud de óperas cautivadoras, de

primeira categoria, que surgieron después de Berg, es verdaderamente impresionante: hasta *Jakob Lenz* de Wolfgang Rihm o *Neither* de Morton Feldman.

Y los ejemplos de óperas surgidas antes y simultáneamente a Berg en las que se manifestaba el carácter nacional de las distintas escuelas musicales no es menos impresionante.

Leoš Janáček (*Jenůfa*, *Káťa Kabanová*, *Las excursiones del señor Brouček*, *El caso Makropulos*,; *De la casa de los muertos*) en la República Checa, Bela Bartók (*El castillo de Barbazul*) en Hungría; Karol Szymanowski (*El rey Roger*) en Polonia; Franz Schreker (*El sonido distante*, *Los condenados*) en Alemania – y muchos otros. Además, las obras inmortales de Kurt Weill (*La ópera de los tres centavos*, *Ascenso y caída de la ciudad de Mahagonny*) allanaron el camino a las creaciones de motivación política.

¡Y muchísimas más todavía están por llegar a los escenarios!

Dar ao teatro o que é do teatro

A ópera, “central geradora de sentimentos”, foi frequentemente dada como morta por ser extremamente artificiosa. Inclusive as obras escritas durante o século XX ou XXI. No entanto, este catálogo vem demonstrar precisamente o contrário.

O que caracterizava as primeiras obras deste gênero, as óperas de Claudio Monteverdi, continua vigente nos dias de hoje: assim que soa um tom, abre-se o pano, abrindo-se as portas para um mundo de fantasia. Contudo, ao contrário do que acontecia antes, quando a evocação de um mundo espiritual musical entusiasmava o espírito, durante os últimos cem anos tem-se procurado uma maior aproximação à literatura, originando que a ópera se emancipe das suas convenções.

As linhas da evolução da ópera (Mozart, Wagner) convergiram como um foco em *Wozzeck* de Alban Berg. O princípio simples e cativante de Berg era o seguinte: “dar ao teatro o que é do teatro”. A Berg fascinava-lhe como a música pode desenvolver-se de forma autónoma da estrutura do texto. A infinidade de óperas cativantes, de primeira categoria, que apareceram depois de Berg é verdadeiramente impressionante: até *Jakob Lenz*, de Wolfgang Rihm, ou *Neither*, de Morton Feldman.

E os exemplos de óperas surgidas antes e durante Berg em que se manifestava o carácter nacional das várias escolas musicais não é menos impressionante.

Leoš Janáček (*Jenůfa*, *Káťa Kabanová*, *As excursões do senhor Brouček*, *O caso Makropulos*, *Da casa dos mortos*) na República Checa; Bela Bartók (*O Castelo do Barba Azul*) na Hungria; Karol Szymanowski (*O rei Roger*) na Polónia; Franz Schreker (*O som distante*, *Os condenados*) na Alemanha – e muitos outros. Além disso, as obras imortais de Kurt Weill (*A ópera dos três vinténs*, *Ascensão e queda da cidade de Mahagonny*) abriram o caminho para as criações de motivação política.

E muitíssimas mais estão ainda por chegar aos palcos!

赋予戏剧本应属于戏剧的一切

传说歌剧这一“情感发电厂”由于其艺术表现手法太过极端，已经渐渐消亡，还说恰恰是那些在20及21世纪诞生的歌剧遭受着同样的命运。然而，本目录却证明，事实恰恰相反。

从歌剧体裁的第一批作品，也就是从克劳迪奥·蒙特威尔第 (Claudio Monteverdi) 的歌剧开始，歌剧便拥有了一个惯例：只要音乐声响起，帷幕便渐渐拉开，为畅想的世界提供飞扬的空间。这个惯例一直沿袭到今天。然而，与以往不同的是，当我们的身心正感受音乐王国的召唤而震撼愉悦时，人们在过去的几百年中渐渐开始寻求回归文学，这个趋势促进了歌剧摆脱传统惯例的束缚，走向革新。

在阿尔班·贝尔格 (Alban Berg) 的歌剧《沃采克》(Wozzeck) 中，歌剧发展的几条主线 (莫扎特, 瓦格纳) 交织碰撞成剧中的一个焦点式情节。贝尔格推崇一条简单到大概没人会反驳的原则：“赋予戏剧本应属于戏剧的一切”。音乐如何能从文学剧本的自身结构中自主地发生并发展，这个问题让贝尔格十分着迷。贝尔格之后，情节跌宕、激动人心的歌剧大量涌现，一直到沃尔夫冈·里姆 (Wolfgang Rihm) 的《雅各布·伦茨》(Jakob Lenz) 及莫顿·费尔德曼 (Morton Feldman) 的《亦非此彼》(Neither)，这些歌剧无不震撼人心，确确实实给人留下了不可磨灭的印象。

贝尔格之前及与贝尔格同时代所诞生的、表现各个音乐流派在不同国家所具不同特色的歌剧也丝毫不逊色，同样扣人心弦。

捷克作曲家莱奥什·雅那切克 (Leoš Janáček) 的《颜奴花》(Jenůfa)、《卡嘉·卡芭诺娃》(Káťa Kabanová)、《布鲁柴克先生之旅》(Die Ausflüge des Herrn Brouček)、《马克罗普洛斯事件》(Die Sache Makropulos)、《狡猾的小狐狸》(Das schlaue Fuchslein) 以及《死屋手记》(Aus einem Totenhaus)；匈牙利作曲家巴托克·贝拉 (Bela Bartók) 的《蓝胡子公爵的城堡》(Herzog Blaubarts Burg)；波兰作曲家卡罗尔·席曼诺夫斯基 (Karol Szymanowski) 的《国王罗歇》(König Roger)；德国作曲家弗朗兹·施雷克尔 (Franz Schreker) 的《遥远的声音》(Der ferne Klang) 及《命中注定》(Die Gezeichneten)——这样的例子数不胜数。除此之外，库尔特·魏尔 (Kurt Weill) 以其包括《三分钱歌剧》(Die Dreigroschenoper) 及《马哈哥尼城的兴衰》(Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny) 在内的不朽作品为政治题材的歌剧铺平了道路。

这是何等丰富的内涵啊！如此丰盈的内容注定是要被搬上舞台的！

劇場には劇場に相応しいものを

“感情の源泉”とされるオペラは、極めて作為的であることから、しばしば過去のものとなされました。とくに20世紀や21世紀に書かれた作品がそうです。本カタログはその反対を証明するものになっています。

このジャンルの最初の作品、つまりクラウディオ・モンティヴェルディのオペラに該当したことは今日も変わりません。最初の音が鳴り響くやいなや幕が上がり、幻想の世界が繰り広げられます。しかしながら、音楽の精霊の世界の呪文が人々を魅了した以前とは異なり、この100年は文学の近くにその存在を求め、オペラを従来の形から解放しました。

オペラ発展の光の筋は（モーツァルトやワーグナー）は、あたかもアルバン・ベルクのヴォツェックが焦点かのようにこれに集結しました。ベルクの飾り気の全くないシンプルな信条は、「劇場には劇場に相応しいものを供する。」でした。ベルクは、音楽がどのようにテキストの構造から離れ、独自の発展を遂げられるのかという問いに魅了されていました。ベルクの後に誕生した数々のエキサイティングな際立つオペラは、ヴォルフガング・リームスの『ヤコブ・レンツ』やモートン・フェルドマンの『ナイザー』至るまで、まさに驚きの他ありません。

ベルク以前や同時期に生まれたオペラの例には、それぞれの楽派の民族的特徴が顕わで負けず劣らず印象的です。

チェコのレオシュ・ヤナーチェク（『イエヌーファ』, 『カーチャ・カバノヴァー』, 『プロウチェク氏の旅行』, 『マクロプロス事件』, 『利口な女狐の物語』, 『死者の家から』）、ハンガリーのベーラ・バルトーク（『青ひげ公の城』）、ポーランドのカロル・カロール・シマノフスキ（『ロゲル王』）、ドイツのフランツ・シュレーカー（『はるかなる響き』, 『烙印を押された人々』）をはじめとする多くの作曲家です。さらにクルト・ヴァイル（『三文オペラ』, 『マハゴニー市の興亡』）は、その不朽の名作で政治的な動機にもとづく作品への道を切拓きました。

上演されるべき作品は盛沢山です！

극장을 극장의 이름에 걸맞게 만들다

"감정 발전소"라고 부르는 오페라는 종종 너무 인위적이어서 이미 죽었다는 평가를 받기도 합니다. 심지어 20세기 또는 21세기에 쓰여진 작품조차도 그러합니다. 그러나 이 카탈로그는 그렇지 않다는 점을 보여줍니다.

이 장르의 초기 작품들에 유효했던 것들, 즉 클라우디오 몬테베르디의 오페라는 오늘날에도 여전히 살아 있습니다. 소리가 울리면서 커튼이 오르면 판타지의 세계가 열립니다. 그러나 음악적 정신 세계의 주문이 영혼을 사로잡았던 예전과 달리 지난 수백 년 동안 오페라는 문학에 접근해서 이와 접목하면서 오페라를 그들의 관습에서 해방시켰습니다.

오페라 발전의 흐름(모차르트, 바그너)은 알반 베르크의 *보체크*에서 그러하듯 하나의 초점으로 수렴합니다. 베르크는 이를 다음과 같은 간단한 원리로 설파합니다. "극장을 극장의 이름에 걸맞게 만들다." 텍스트의 구조에서 음악을 자연스럽게 흘러나오게 하려면 어떻게 해야 하나라는 질문이 베르크를 사로잡았습니다. 세간의 이목을 끌며 그 당시 베르크를 성공으로 이끈 재미있고 다양한 오페라는 매우 인상적이며, 이러한 추세는 볼프강 린스의 *야콥 렌츠* 또는 모든 펠드만의 *이도 저도 아닌*까지로 이어집니다.

베르크 이전 또는 그와 동시대에 탄생하여 국가마다 각 음악적 학파의 특색이 뚜렷한 오페라의 예들도 이에 못지 않게 인상적입니다.

체코의 레오시 야나체크(*예누파*, *카타 카바노바*, *브루체크씨의 여행*, *마크로폴로스 사건*, *영리한 새끼 암여우*; *죽음의 집에서*), 헝가리의 벨러 버르토크(*블루비어드 공작의 성*); 폴란드의 카롤 시마노프스키(*로게르 왕*); 독일의 프란츠 슈레커(*먼 곳으로부터의 소리*, *낙인 찍힌 사람들*) – 기타 등등. 이 밖에 쿠르트 바일은 불후의 역작들(*서푼짜리 오페라*, *마하고니 시의 흥망성쇠*)로 정치적 동기가 강한 작품 세계를 펼쳐 보였습니다.

무대에 올려졌을 때만 살아나는 바로 그 완전함!

Дать театру то, что принадлежит театру

Оперу, «электростанцию чувств», а именно произведения, созданные в XX или XXI веке, ввиду излишней вычурности принято считать изжившими себя. Этот каталог доказывает обратное.

Со времен появления первых произведений в этом жанре, например, опер Клаудио Монтеверди, не изменилась их внешняя форма: как только прозвенит последний звонок, занавес поднимается, открывая картину волшебного мира. Однако в отличие от более давних времен, когда загадочный мир музыки будоражил воображение многих людей, последние сто лет отличаются поиском близости к литературе и избавлением оперы от условностей.

Стиль традиционных оперных произведений (Моцарта, Вагнера) вылился, достигнув своего апогея, в оперу Альбана Берга «*Воццек*». Берг выразил свои убеждения в обезоруживающе простом принципе: «Дать театру то, что принадлежит театру». Он задавался вопросом, как можно создать музыку исключительно на основании структуры текста. Многочисленные захватывающие, блистательные оперы, возникшие под влиянием Берга, производят неизгладимое впечатление, например, оперы Вольфганга Рима «*Якоб Ленц*» или Мортон Фельдмана «*Neither*».

Примеры опер, возникших до работ Берга или одновременно с ними, в которых яркое отражение находит национальный характер отдельных музыкальных школ, заслуживают не меньшего внимания.

Леош Яначек («*Енуфа*», «*Катя Кабанова*», «*Путешествия г-на Броучека*», «*Средство Макропулоса*», «*Лисичка-плутовка*»; «*Из мертвого дома*») в Чехии, Бела Барток («*Замок герцога Синяя Борода*») в Венгрии, Кароль Шимановский («*Король Рогер*») в Польше, Франц Шрекер («*Далекий звон*», «*Меченые*») в Германии и многие другие. Также Курт Вайль («*Трехгрошовая опера*», «*Расцвет и падение города Махагони*») со своими бессмертными творениями проложил путь к произведениям с политическим смыслом.

Какое изобилие великолепных произведений, которые нужно лишь представить на суд зрителей!

Dać teatrowi to, co mu się należy

Opera „Kraftwerk der Gefühle” [„Elektrownia uczuć”] ze względu na swoją ekstremalną sztuczność już często uznawana była za obumarłą. Właśnie te dzieła, które powstały w XX lub XXI wieku. Ten katalog wykazuje coś wręcz przeciwnego.

To, co obowiązywało pierwsze dzieła należące do tego gatunku, to znaczy opery Claudia Monteverdiego, obowiązuje także jeszcze obecnie: jak tylko zabrzmie dźwięk, kurtyna idzie w górę otwierając przy tym drzwi do świata fantazji. Jednakże inaczej niż wówczas, kiedy wywoływanie muzycznego świata duchów wzbudzało emocje, w ciągu ostatnich stu lat dążono do bliskości do literatury, promowano emancypację opery poza jej konwencje.

Myśli przewodnie rozwoju opery (Mozart, Wagner) zbiegają się ze sobą jako punkt centralny w operze „Wozzeck” Albana Berga. Niemal rozbijającą prostą zasadą wyznawana przez Berga brzmiała następująco: „Dać teatrowi to, co mu się należy”. Berg był zafascynowany kwestią, w jaki sposób muzyka może wyodrębnić się w sposób autonomiczny ze struktury tekstu. Duża ilość interesujących, znakomitych oper, które powstały potem w następstwie dzieł Berga, jest naprawdę imponująca - aż po „Jakob Lenz” Wolfganga Rihma lub „Neither” Mortona Feldmana.

Przykłady oper powstałych przed i równocześnie do tych stworzonych przez Berga, w których ujawnił się narodowy charakter poszczególnych szkół muzycznych, są nie mniej imponujące.

Leoš Janáček (*Jenůfa, Káťa Kabanová, Wyprawy Pana Broučka, Sprawa Makropulos, Lisek Chytrusek, Z domu umarłych*) w Czechach, Bela Bartók (*Zamek Sinobrodego*) na Węgrzech; Karol Szymanowski (*Król Roger*) w Polsce; Franz Schreker (*Der ferne Klang [Odległy dźwięk], Die Gezeichneten [Naznaczeni]*) w Niemczech - i wiele innych. Ponadto Kurt Weill („*Opera za trzy grosze*”, „*Rozkwit i upadek miasta Mahagonny*”) poprzez swoje nieśmiertelne dzieła uutorował drogę dziełu o motywie politycznym.

Co za ogrom, który musi jeszcze tylko trafić na scenę!

Dát divadlu to, co divadlo je

Opera „Elektrárna pocitů” była z důvodu své extrémní umělosti už mnohokrát prohlášena za mrtvou. Jedná se právě o ona díla, která byla napsána ve 20. či 21. století. Tento katalog dokazuje opak.

To, co platilo pro první díla tohoto žánru, tedy opery Claudia Monteverdi, platí dodnes: po zaznění tónu se zvedne opona, která otevírá svět fantazie. Ale oproti dřívějšímu, kdy smysly uchvacovalo nadšení pro hudební říši duchů, byla v posledních letech vyhledávána blízkost k literatuře a podporována emancipace opery od konvencí.

Nitky vývoje opery (Mozart, Wagner) se setkávaly jakoby v jakémisi ohnisku v díle Albana Berga *Wozzeck*. Bergovo jednoduché téměř odzbrojující pravidlo znělo: „Dát divadlu to, co divadlo je.” Berga fascinovala otázka, jak se může hudba autonomně rozvíjet ze struktury textu. Množství poutavých a jedinečných oper, které po Bergovi následovaly, je

skutečně impozantní – až po operu *Jakob Lenz* od Wolfganga Rihmse či *Neither* od Mortona Feldmanse.

Příklady oper, které vznikly před Bergem a paralelně s ním, ve kterých byl manifestován národní charakter jednotlivých hudebních škol, není o nic méně impozantní.

Leoš Janáček (*Jenůfa*, *Káťa Kabanová*, *Výlety pana Broučka*, *Věc Makropulos*, *Liška Bystrouška*; *Z mrtvého domu*) v Česku, Bela Bartók (*Modrovousův hrad*) v Maďarsku; Karol Szymanowski (*Král Roger*) v Polsku; Franz Schreker (*Der ferne Klang*, *Die Gezeichneten*) v Německu – a mnoho dalších. Kurt Weill vyšlapal se svými nesmrtelnými díly (*Třigrošová opera*, *Vzestup a pád města Mahagonny*) cestu k politicky motivovaným dílům.

Co za bohatost, kterou už jen stačí uvést na jeviště!

Dať divadlu to, čo mu patří

Opera, „elektráreň pocitov“, bola kvôli svojej extrémnej umeleckosti neraz vyhlásená za mŕtvu. Ide práve o diela, ktoré boli napísané v 20. a 21. storočí. Tento katalóg chce upozorniť na pravý opak.

Čo platilo pre prvé diela žánru, teda opery Claudia Monteverdiho, platí ešte aj dnes: len čo zaznie tón, zdvihne sa opona, ktorá otvára svet fantázií. Ale oproti minulosti, kedy naše zmysly uchvacovalo nadšenie z duchovnej sféry hudby, bola za posledných sto rokov vyhľadávaná blízkosť k literatúre a podporovaná emancipácia opery od konvencií.

Nitky vývoja opery (Mozart, Wagner) sa zbíhali akoby do akéhosi ohniska v diele Albana Berga *Wozzeck*. Bergova jednoduchá takmer odzbrojujúca zásada znela: „Dať divadlu to, čo mu patrí“. Fascinovala ho otázka, ako sa mohla hudba autonómne vyvinúť zo štruktúry textu. Množstvo napínavých a jedinečných oper, ktoré po Bergovi nasledovali, je skutočne impozantné – až po operu *Jakob Lenz* od Wolfganga Rihma či operu *Neither* od Mortona Feldmana.

Příklady oper, ktoré vznikli pred Bergom alebo v paralelnej línii s jeho tvorbou, a v ktorých bol manifestovaný národný charakter jednotlivých hudobných škôl, nie sú o nič menej pôsobivé.

Leoš Janáček (*Jenůfa*, *Káťa Kabanová*, *Výlety pána Broučka*, *Vec Makropulos*, *Příhody lišky Bystroušky*, *Z mrtvého domu*) v Čechách, Béla Bartók (*Hrad kniežata Modrofúza*) v Maďarsku; Karol Szymanowski (*Král Roger*) v Polsku; Franz Schreker (*Ďaleký hlas*, *Označení*) v Nemecku – a mnohé iné. Kurt Weill naopak svojimi nesmrtelnými dielami (*Opera o troch grošoch*, *Vzostup a pád mesta Mahagonny*) vyšliapal cestu k politicky motivovaným dielam.

Čo za množstvo oper musí byť ešte prinesené na javisko!

OPERA MILESTONES

Béla Bartók
[Bluebeard's Castle](#)

Alban Berg
[Wozzeck](#)
[Lulu](#)

Luciano Berio
[Un re in ascolto](#)

Harrison Birtwistle
[Gawain](#)

Max Brand
[Maschinist Hopkins](#)

Walter Braunfels
[Die Vögel \(The Birds\)](#)

Friedrich Cerha
[Baal](#)

Luigi Dallapiccola
[Volo di notte](#)

Gaetano Donizetti
[Viva la Mamma!](#)

Gottfried von Einem
[Dantons Tod](#)

Morton Feldman
[Neither](#)

Georg Friedrich Haas
[Morgen und Abend](#)

Leoš Janáček
[The Cunning Little Vixen](#)
[From the House of the Dead](#)
[Jenůfa](#)
[Káťa Kabanová](#)
[The Makropulos Affair](#)

Ernst Krenek
[Jonny spielt auf](#)

Frank Martin
[Le Vin herbé](#)
[The Tempest](#)

Bohuslav Martinů
[The Greek Passion](#)

Giacomo Puccini
[La Rondine](#)

Wolfgang Rihm
[Die Eroberung von Mexico](#)
[Jakob Lenz](#)

Arnold Schönberg
[Erwartung](#)

Dmitri Schostakowitsch
[Die Nase \(The Nose\)](#)

Franz Schreker
[Der ferne Klang \(The Distant Sound\)](#)
[Die Gezeichneten \(The Stigmatized\)](#)

Karol Szymanowski
[Krol Roger \(King Roger\)](#)

Kurt Weill
[Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny](#)
[The Threepenny Opera](#)

Alexander Zemlinsky
[A Florentine Tragedy](#)
[Der Zwerg \(The Dwarf\)](#)

REDISCOVERED

These are operas which may not have received a good deal of attention when they were initially produced, or were disregarded due to controversy, but over time have warranted a second look, and are worthy of addition to a well-stocked repertoire.

Harrison Birtwistle
[*The Mask of Orpheus*](#)

Boris Blacher
[*Romeo and Juliet*](#)

Josef Bohuslav Foerster
[*Eva*](#)

Hans Gál
[*Das Lied der Nacht*](#)
[*Die heilige Ente \(The Sacred Duck\)*](#)

Manfred Gurlitt
[*Wozzeck*](#)

Roman Haubenstock-Ramati
[*Amerika*](#)

Leoš Janáček
[*Šárka*](#)
[*The Excursion of Mr. Broucek*](#)
[*-to the Moon*](#)
[*-to the 15th Century*](#)

Zoltán Kodály
[*Háry János*](#)

Hans Krása
[*Verlobung im Traum*](#)
[*\(Betrothal in a dream\)*](#)

Ernst Krenek
[*Das geheime Königreich*](#)
[*\(The Secret Kingdom\)*](#)
[*Der Diktator*](#)
[*Karl V.*](#)
[*Pallas Athene weint*](#)
[*Schwergewicht, oder Die Ehre der Nation*](#)
[*\(Heavyweight, or the Glory of The Nation\)*](#)

Darius Milhaud
[*Christoph Colomb*](#)

Henri Pousseur
[*Votre Faust*](#)

Emil Nikolaus von Reznicek
[*Donna Diana*](#)

Peter Ronnefeld
[*Nachtausgabe*](#)

Othmar Schoeck
[*Das Schloss Dürande*](#)

Franz Schreker
[*Der Schatzgräber \(The Treasure Hunter\)*](#)
[*Irrelohe*](#)

Karol Szymanowski
[*Hagith*](#)

Max von Schillings
[*Mona Lisa*](#)

Kurt Weill
[*Happy End*](#)
[*Der Jasager \(The Yes-Sayer\)*](#)
[*The Tsar has his photograph taken*](#)
[*Royal Palace*](#)
[*Street Scene*](#)

TO DISCOVER

Operas in this section are contemporary works, new versions, or critical editions. All are worth being discovered and have the potential to become Milestones.

Luke Bedford

[*Through His Teeth*](#)

Harrison Birtwistle

[*The Second Mrs. Kong*](#)

Victoria Borisova-Ollas

[*Dracula*](#)

Christoph Willibald Gluck

[*Orpheus and Eurydice*](#)

Georg Friedrich Haas

[*Melancholia*](#)

Cristóbal Halffter

[*Schachnovelle \(Chess Story\)*](#)

Claudio Monteverdi

[*Il Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda*](#)

Nigel Osborne

[*The Electrification of the Soviet Union*](#)

Wolfgang Rihm

[*Das Gehege*](#)

[*Die Hamletmaschine*](#)

[*Dionysos*](#)

David Sawer

[*From Morning to Midnight*](#)

Johannes Maria Staud

[*Die Antilope*](#)

Richard Wagner

[*The Ring Cycle \(for medium-sized orchestra\):*](#)

[*Das Rheingold*](#)

[*Die Walküre \(in preparation\)*](#)

[*Siegfried \(in preparation\)*](#)

[*Götterdämmerung \(in preparation\)*](#)

OPERA MILESTONES



What interested Béla Bartók most about the historical material relating to Bluebeard was arguably the contrast between the impenetrable soul of the man and the curiosity of the woman. At the same time, Bluebeard is a metaphor for the loneliness of the artist, with which Bartók felt he could identify.

When Bartók composed his only opera, he was still under the influence of contemporary composers such as Richard Strauss and Claude Debussy, but was clearly also inspired by elements of Hungarian folk music. One of the most defining factors is the purely musical depiction of the torture chambers, ever-increasing in expression and dynamism, creating magnificent impressionistic visions in sound.

Judith has followed Bluebeard to his castle, having left her parents and her fiancé for him. She wants to light up the dark ruins with her love. She demands to have the keys to the seven locked doors that she finds there, which Bluebeard gives to her one after the other with increasing reluctance. Behind the first two doors, she discovers the torture chamber and storehouse of weapons. And, sure enough, it gets lighter in the castle. The other doors show the storehouse of riches, the garden and Bluebeard's lands. It is now completely bright, but blood was also visible behind all the doors. Bluebeard warns Judith about the last two doors, but she is compelled to open them: a sea of tears appears behind the sixth door as the light fades again, and emerging from the seventh are Bluebeard's three former wives, embodying dawn, midday and dusk. Judith must complete the quartet as night and join them behind the seventh door. Bluebeard remains in the castle, which has returned to darkness.

The estrangement of Judith and Bluebeard was often felt to express the incompatibility of the sexes.

Bluebeard's Castle (1911)

Opera in 1 act | op. 11

final version 1921 | 60'

Libretto: Béla Balázs

4 3 3 4 - 4 4 4 1 - timp(2), perc(3), hp(2), cel, org, str - stage music: tpt(4), alto tbn(4)

world première: 24.05.1918 Budapest (H), Royal Hungarian Opera House, Egisto Tango

Available in Hungarian, German, English, and French

Roles:

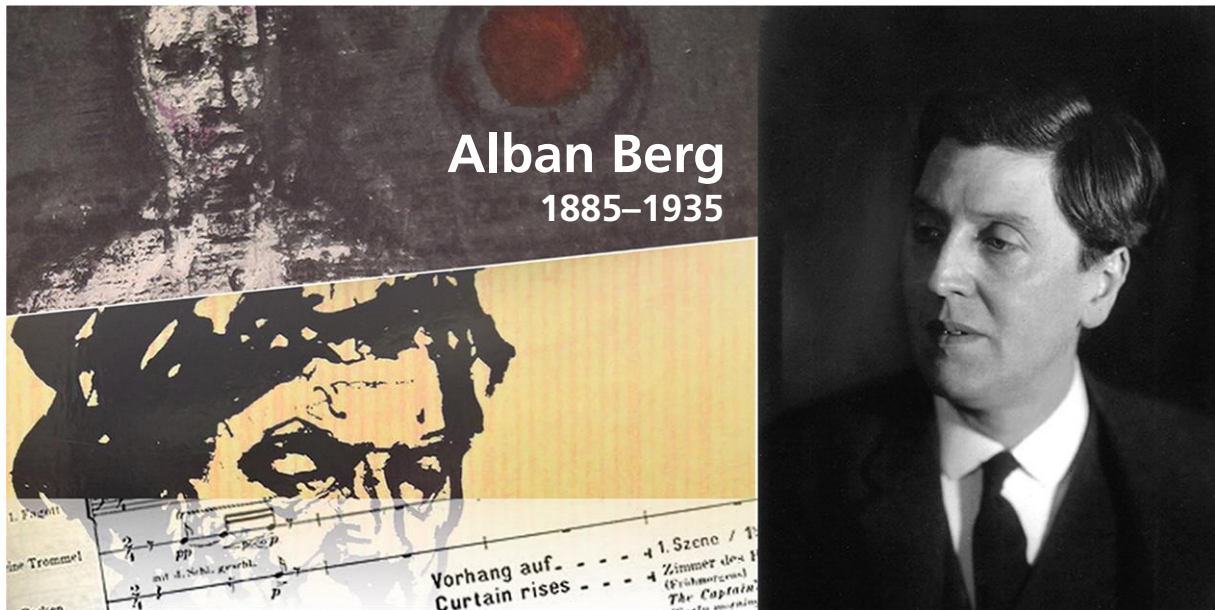
Herzog Bluebeard, Bar

Judith, MS

The earlier women, silent

Prologue, speaking role

Reduced versions in preparation



In May 1914, Alban Berg attended the premiere of Georg Büchner's "Woyzeck" at the Residenztheater in Vienna. Berg, having long been searching for an opera subject, was immediately determined to compose the piece. Shortly afterwards, the First World War broke out and Berg was called up, but he retained his identification with the soldier Wozzeck throughout these years. As he wrote to his wife Helene in 1918: "There is a little bit of me in his character, since I have been spending these war years just as dependent on people I hate, have been in chains, sick, captive, resigned, in fact, humiliated".

The war had left Berg as an aesthete with an acute social conscience. The opera is fabricated with social outcasts like Wozzeck and his Marie, who gave him a child "without the blessing of the Church", and a text that levels unveiled criticism at representatives of power - the Captain, the Doctor and the dashing Drum Major.

Everything about this music appeared new yet with a solid structural and emotional foundation. The treatment of voice parts and orchestra was aligned with the dramatic plot with naturalistic faithfulness. Recitative, arioso and *Sprechgesang* in the spirit of Schönberg's "Pierrot lunaire" found their logical place in the dramatic structure. Berg had selected fifteen of Büchner's scenes and divided them up into three acts consisting of five scenes each. Each act was composed as a whole, made up of traditional forms. Berg's musical language combines tonal, polytonal and atonal devices. This meant that his revolutionary new music was firmly rooted in tradition.

Berg was never to know the ultimate triumph of his *Wozzeck*. The 1925 premiere at Berlin's Lindenoper, conducted by Erich Kleiber, was still highly controversial. Today, this profoundly humane opera – which, in its own way, is also a form of passion music – has long since established itself in the repertoire as a masterpiece of the 20th century.

Wozzeck (1917–1922)

Opera in 3 acts (15 scenes) | op. 7 | 90'

4 4 5 4 - 4 4 4 1 - timp(2), perc(4), cel, hp, str, stage: "Heurigenmusik" - fiddle (2-4), cl, acc, guit, bass tuba, military band - 3 2 2 2 - 2 2 3 1 - perc, pno, chamber orch - 1 2 3 2 - 2 0 0 0 - str(1 1 1 1)

world première: 14.12.1925 Berlin (D), Staatsoper Unter den Linden, Erich Kleiber

Available in German and English

Roles:

Wozzeck, Bar and speaker

Drum major, T

Andres, T and speaker

Captain, T

Doctor, B

1st craft lad, B and speaker

2nd craft lad, Bar

The fool, T

Marie, S

Margret, A

Mary's boy, vocal

A soldier, T

Choir:

Soldiers and boys, T 1 & 2, Bar 1 & 2, B 1 & 2; Maids and prostitutes, S and A (duet);

Children (unanimously)

Reduced versions available

Opera Milestones

Alban Berg had seen a private performance of the play *Die Büchse der Pandora* – banned by the censors of the time – which Karl Kraus had staged in Vienna's Trianontheater in 1905. In 1928, he worked on the setting of the tragedy *Lulu*, and the composition of the short score was largely finished by the spring of 1934. Deeply affected by the death of Manon Gropius, Berg interrupted his work in order to compose his violin concerto in her honour. Following this, he was diagnosed with blood poisoning from which he eventually died on 24 December 1935, without being able to recommence work on *Lulu*.

At this point in time, the first and second acts of the opera were available as fully orchestrated scores. Of the third act, the short score of which contains 1326 bars, the first 268 bars have been orchestrated. The version of the third act produced by Friedrich Cerha was premiered by Pierre Boulez in Paris in 1979.

Berg had hardly made any changes to the author's wording. Wedekind describes the social rise of a young woman until the man she loves most is murdered, and then her downfall, ending her days working as a prostitute until she is murdered by her last lover. The opera's cast is deliberately symmetrical. The first three lovers and husbands – the Doctor, the Painter and Dr. Schön – are followed by three clients: the Professor (= Doctor), the Negro (= Painter) and her final client Jack the Ripper (= Dr. Schön). The men in Lulu's orbit suffer and die, as does a lesbian Countess who has succumbed to her charms and even changes places with her in the hospital, ultimately to be killed by Lulu's murderer as well.

There is no doubt that *Lulu* is one of the great operas of the 20th century.

Lulu (1927–1935)

Opera in 2 acts | including 'Variations and Adagio' | 120'

3 3 4 3 - 4 3 3 1 - timp, perc(6), hp, pno, alto sax, str, stage music: 2 cl, alto sax, t.sax, 4 jazztpt, 2 jazztbn, sousaphon, jazz drum set, pno, bjo, 3 vln, cb
world première: 02.06.1937 Zürich (CH), Stadttheater Zürich

Lulu | 3rd act (1927–1935)

only together with opera in 2 acts available | 60'

Arranged (1978) by Friedrich Cerha

3 3 4 3 - 4 3 3 1 - timp, perc(8), hp, pno, alto sax, str, stage music: 2 fl, 4 cl, alto sax, t.sax, cbsn, 4 jazztpt, 2 jazztbn, sousaphon, jazz drum set(3), pno, bjo, 3 vln, cb
world première: 24.02.1979 Paris (F), Opera Garnier, Pierre Boulez

Lulu

3rd act | only together with opera in 2 acts | 60'

Arranged (2008) by Eberhard Kloke

3 3 4 3 - 4 3 3 1 - timp, perc(6), hp, acc, pno, alto sax(Eb), str
world première: 15.10.2010 Copenhagen (DK), New Operahouse Copenhagen. Det Kongelige Kapel, Michael Boder

Available in German and English

Roles:

Lulu, S
Countess Geschwitz, MS
Theater dresser, A
A schoolboy, A
Bob, a Valet, A
Dr. Goll, speaker
The Banker, B
The professor, silent
Walter Schwarz, T
A negro, T
Dr. Schön, Bar
Jack the Ripper, Bar
Alwa, T
Schigolch, an old man, B
Pet Tamer, B
Rodrigo, an athlete, B
The prince, T
A manservant, T
Marquis, T
The theatre manager, B
A clown, silent
Stagehand, silent
Police Commissioner, vocal
A fifteen-year-old girl, S
Her Mother, A
A woman artist, MS
A journalist, Bar
A manservant, Bar

Reduced version available



Luciano Berio
1925–2003

“No one who has heard this chord will ever forget it. A stationary sound made up of eight tones, a rough-edged sound that soon reveals its beauty and captivates the listener with magical force. This is the chord with which *Un re in ascolto* begins.” This is what Michael Schaefer wrote when the work was performed at Staatsoper Kassel in 2015.

By describing the work in the subtitle as an “azione musicale” – i.e. a “musical action by Luciano Berio and Italo Calvino” – Berio consciously avoids the traditional designations of music theatre. *Un re in ascolto* is the result of an ongoing dialogue of the imagination: a dialogue between, on the one hand, a composer with exceptionally expressive and virtuosic possibilities and strong intellectual commitment and, on the other, an author who by tapping into the poetry of the absurd, the unreal and the grotesque has understood more than others how to document the angsts and conflicts of our time.

There is no background story, no web of tales or storyline driven by events and emotions expressed by people addressing moral conflicts in song – just the bare analysis of a situation and the depiction of a farewell.

Attempt at a synopsis: Prospero, the theatre director, is sitting alone in his office as rehearsals for a new musical performance of Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* are being held on the adjacent stage. The atmosphere is chaotic, fraught with problems. The director dreams of another theatre. He is taken ill and, in his delirium, his memories close in on him. He dies – alone on an empty stage.

Un re in ascolto (1979–1983)

Azione musicale in 2 parti | 90'

Libretto: Italo Calvino

Choir: SATB

3 3 4 3 - 3 3 3 1 - perc(2), acc, pno(2 players), t.sax, keyb, str

world première: 07.08.1984 Salzburg (A). Wiener Philharmoniker, Lorin Mazel

Available in Italian and German

Roles:

Prosper, Bar

Director, T

Friday, actor

Protagonist, S

Soprano 1 & 2

Mezzo-soprano

3 Singers: T, Bar, B

Some small roles

ballet



In summer 2013, Salzburg Festival presented a work that had not been heard since it was last performed in London in 2000: Sir Harrison Birtwistle's opera *Gawain*. At the time, the opera had been one of the greatest triumphs of the British composer's career to date. The three versions of *Gawain* written in the 1990s have since been replaced with the 2013 version which is valid today.

The opera's storyline is borrowed from Arthurian legend. David Harsent wrote the libretto for Birtwistle's opera based on the 14th century Middle English romance *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, the work of an unknown author. The central themes of the work are ritual behaviour, different periods of time taking place synonymously and in two different hemispheres – the supposedly virtuous inner world of the Christian knights, represented by the court of King Arthur in the first act and Bercilak de Hautedesert's castle in the second, and the heathenish, untamed outer world full of peril.

During the Christmas feast in King Arthur's court, an uninvited guest is announced by a loud knock on the door. It is the Green Knight, who issues a challenge to those present: whoever dares to cut his head off with an axe can face the same fate in a year and a day. Arthur's nephew Gawain accepts the challenge and beheads the Green Knight. However, rather than dying, the latter stands up, holding his severed head under his arm. This means that Gawain must keep his promise and set off for the Green Chapel, where his destiny awaits him. His journey takes him across bleak and barren terrain and ultimately to a castle where he is not only awaited by a woman who wishes to secretly seduce him, but also by the master of the house in person, who is not all he pretends to be...

Gawain (1990–2013)

Opera in 2 acts | Version 2013 | 150'

Libretto: David Harsent

Choir: SATB

3 3 3 3 - 4 3 3 3 - timp, perc, vib, hp, mar, cimb, vln(24), vla(9), vc(9), cb(9)

world première (Version 2013): 16.05.2014 London (GB), Barbican London. BBC

Symphony Orchestra, BBC Singers, Martyn Brabbins

Available in English

Roles:

Morgan le Fay, S

Lady de Hautdesert, MS

Arthur, T

Guinevere, MS

Fool, T

Agravain, Bar

Ywain, T

Gawain, Bar

Bishop Baldwin, T

The Green Knight / Bertilak, Bar



With *Maschinist Hopkins*, (composed in 1927-1928, premiered in Duisburg in 1929), Max Brand had his finger firmly on the pulse of his time. The opera is a mixture of thriller and jealous tragedy, with industrial romanticism and the glamour of stage revues combined with corporate capriciousness and unemployment. And there is even room for a love story.

In the libretto, which was written by the composer himself, work is celebrated as the most important thing in the world. The protagonists are in a sense unimportant. The motivation and source of all events is the spirit of the machines, personified by the machinist Hopkins.

It is not that the machine should serve man, giving him a respectable and honourable existence, but rather that man is simply part of the machine. He serves it, and by doing so helps advance the idea of work towards its goal. This is why Bill, who wants to use the machines for his own ends, must die. Hopkins himself has no human qualities; he is merely the executive organ of the notion of the machine – he has become a machine himself.

This ideology corresponds to the futurism movement of the time, an aesthetic current that regarded technology and civilisation as the greatest advances of all and scorned all other values.

The music of this “first German factory opera” alternates between grand opera, jazz and sounds of the industrial world (thunder and wind machines, thunder sheet with iron balls).

By 1933, *Maschinist Hopkins* had been performed over 200 times in 37 different productions, establishing itself as a modern classic. The worldwide economic crisis and the rise of the Nazis drove Max Brand to emigrate in 1937, first to Prague, and then to Geneva, Rio de Janeiro and finally New York. Needless to say, *Maschinist Hopkins* remains as relevant as ever in today's world.

Maschinist Hopkins (1928)

Opera in 1 prologue and 3 acts | op. 11 | 135'

Choir: SATB

2 2 2 2 - 4 3 3 1 - timp, perc, glock, xyl, hp, cel, pno, alto sax, t.sax, str - on stage:
retuned (electric) piano, low tam-tam, siren, thunder- and wind-machine, thunder wheel
with iron balls

world première: 13.04.1929 Duisburg (D), Stadttheater Duisburg

Available in German

Roles:

Jim, B

Nell, S

Bill, T

Hopkins, Bar

Commission, speaker

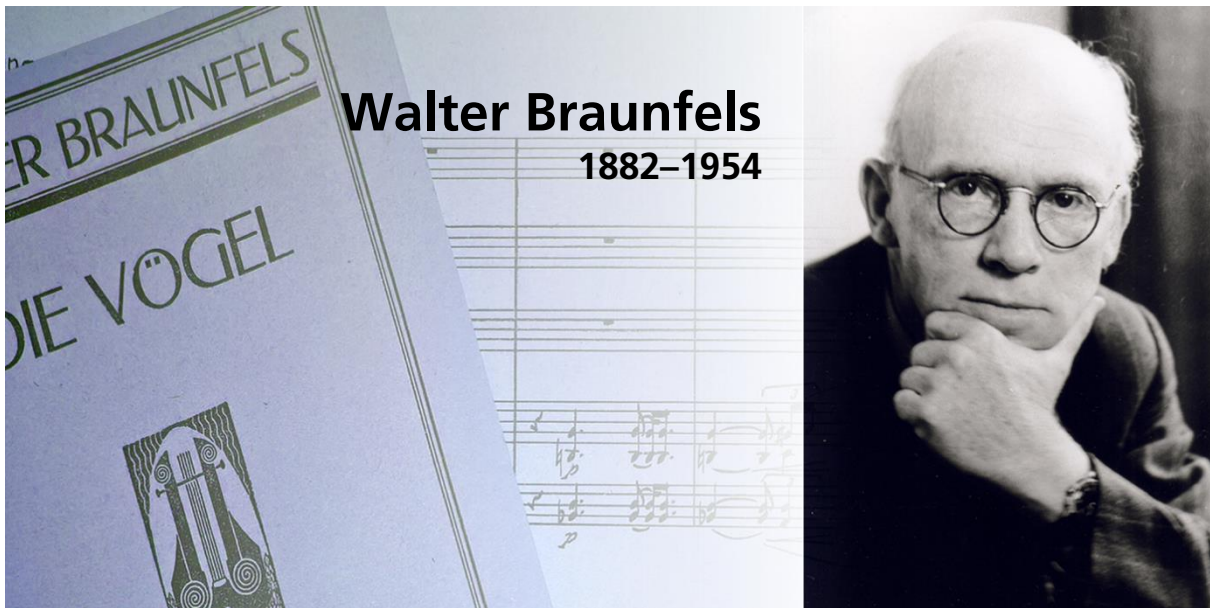
Conservative, speaker

Official, silent role

6 Entertainers: 2 T, 4 B

various smaller roles — ballet

Reduced version available



In 1913, Walter Braunfels began his opera *Die Vögel* which was premiered by Bruno Walter in Munich with great success in 1920. The timeframe alone speaks volumes about the work: these years saw the First World War, Braunfels' conscription into the army in 1915, and his wounding and conversion to Catholicism in 1918. It is likely that Braunfels' draft text was completed before the war, with a very personal departure from Aristophanes' model, which actually culminated in a war between the birds and Zeus. Their hybrid cloud cuckoo land with which they challenge the Greek gods is destroyed in divine thunder and lightning. Ratefreund (Loyal Friend) and Hoffegut (Good Hope), the two human heroes of the opera, who had sought an ideal alternative world in the kingdom of the birds and had ultimately driven them to a farcical war, return full of remorse.

"The key to Braunfels' treatment of the subject lies in the depiction of three levels of reality: the world of men, the world of the birds (or that of the imagination) and the world of the gods. The humans aggravate the birds into rebelling against the realm of the gods. Whereas Aristophanes has the people of the ancient world succeed in their rebellion against their gods, Braunfels has Zeus, father of the gods, punish man for his arrogance. After the city of the birds has been destroyed by the forces of heaven, the birds pay homage in a pious hymn to the power and greatness of the gods." (Frithjof Haas)

Following the premiere, musicologist Alfred Einstein enthused: "I do not believe such a complete work of art has ever before been performed on the German operatic stage. There is an imperative at work here which calls for comparison with the Mastersingers and Pfitzner's Palestrina." This conviction arguably owes much to the work's carefree melodic quality and its almost impressionistic sense of inner turmoil.

Die Vögel (The Birds) (1913–1919)

A lyrical-fantasy play in 2 acts | op. 30 | 120'

Based on text by: Aristophanes

Choir: SATB

3 2 2 2 - 4 2 3 1 - timp, perc(2), hp(2), cel, str; flute behind the scene

world première: 30.11.1920 München (D), Nationaltheater, Bruno Walter

Available in German

Roles:

Hoffegut and Rätefreund, T, B

Voice of Zeus, Bar

Prometheus, Bar

Wiedhopf, Bar

Nightingale, S

Wren, S

Eagle, B

Raven, B

Flamingo, T

1st Thrush, S

2nd Thrush, S

3 swallows, 2 tits, S

4 wrynecks, T

2 peewits, B

ballet



“Baal’s art of life suffers the same fate as all other arts under capitalism: it is attacked. He is antisocial, but in an antisocial society”, wrote Bertolt Brecht about his early work *Baal*.

Although Brecht had fashioned *Baal* as an autobiographical sketch, Friedrich Cerha’s libretto opted to focus on a perceived dualism. On the one hand, it pursues a need for identification: Baal as a human being who wants to have a little luck, just like you and I; as one of the last individuals to retain their fear of the administration of people by other people; as an escapist existence that only becomes human when it feels at one with nature; as the relentless asker of questions – does society have a right to a person? What is it that makes a person a person? To how much in the way of surroundings or living space can they lay claim?

On the other hand: Baal cannot opt out of this human society because he never opted in, he was never able to do so. Baal’s claim on his own happiness conflicts with the needs of others. Baal needs that very environment whose understanding embrace he is resisting – a Parsifal and young Siegfried rolled into one. He asserts himself with brutal force, a broken existence.

“The Baal in the opera is by no means still just a force of nature, devouring alcohol and women and provoking anyone he encounters. He is also a balladeer that packs a potent lyrical punch”, wrote *Die Zeit* in Hamburg following the work’s premiere at Salzburg Festival in 1981, which paved the way for Cerha’s reputation as an eminent music dramatist.

Baal (1974–1980)

Opera in 2 acts | 195'

Based on text by: Berthold Brecht

2 3 3 3 - 4 3 4 1 - timp, perc(2), hp(2), cel, str; flute behind the scene: picc(2), cl(2), bass
cl, alto sax, cbsn, jazz tpt, tbn, perc(1), acc, org, cb

world première: 07.08.1981 Salzburg (A), Kleines Festspielhaus. Wiener Philharmoniker,
Christoph von Dohnányi

Available in German

Roles:

Baal, Bar

Ekart, B

Johannes, T

Emilie, MS

Johanna, S

Sophie, S

several small roles: S, A, 2 T, 2 Bar, 2 B, 2 speakers



In autumn 1938, the premiere of *Volo di notte* was offered to Braunschweig Opera on the recommendation of Alfred Schlee at Universal Edition. The opera house accepted this idea with great enthusiasm. Half a year later, however, the tide turned: the Third Reich's Propaganda Ministry had not approved the premiere, particularly since "such music with excessive atonal tendencies would be rejected by the German theatregoing public". As a result, the premiere took place in 1940 in the Teatro della Pergola in Florence.

Volo di notte is based on the novel *Vol de nuit* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. Luigi Dallapiccola, who wrote the libretto himself, composed this early single-act work using the twelve-tone technique, albeit without applying it strictly.

Dallapiccola: "The music of *Volo di notte* should not appear too difficult to anyone who listens with attention and, if possible, without too many prejudices. The human ear has made great progress in recent decades: the notion of dissonance is no longer as limited as it was at the beginning of our century, and I firmly believe that the time will come when dissonance – i.e. the movement (*moto*) – is recognised by everybody and is justified in the art of music, which after all is first and foremost the art of movement."

Synopsis: The scene is an airport in South America in the 1930s. The director of the airport, Rivière, has only commercial profit in his sights when he decides to schedule flights at night as well. Without any hesitation, he sends out his pilots at night and in all weathers. The intervention of a pilot's wife and one of his own staff only serves to reinforce his views, allowing irrationality and greed to claim their first victim. With scant regard for the consequences, he sends a night courier to Europe in the firm belief that he should stick to his guns to avoid endangering the idea of night flights.

Volo di notte (1937–1939)

Opera in 1 act | 60'

Based on text by: Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

Choir: SATB

4 3 4 3 - 4 4 3 1 - timp, perc(4), xyl, hp(2), cel, pno, alto sax, t.sax, str - on stage: 0 0 2 0

- 0 2 1 0 - perc(2), vib, pno, sop.sax(Bb), alto sax(Eb), t.sax(Bb), vln(3), cb(2)

world première: 18.05.1940 Florence (I), Teatro della Pergola

Available in Italian, German, and French

Roles:

Rivière, Bar

Robineau, B

Pellerin, T

Radiotelegrapher, T

Leroux, B

Four employees: 2 T, Bar, B

Mrs Fabien, S

Voice behind the scene, S

Reduced version available



Le Convenienze ed Inconvenienze Teatrali was originally a one-act *farsa* when it was premiered at the Teatro Nuovo in Naples on 21 November 1827. Later on, Donizetti expanded it into a full-length opera buffa which was performed for the first time in Milan in 1831. Performances in German-speaking countries used a German translation and revision by Horst Goerges and Karlheinz Gutheim – based on Vito Frazzi's original version for the Accademia Musicale Chigiana – through which the many gags in this parody of operatic life hit their mark more effectively. The work disappeared from repertoires as of the mid-19th century and was only rediscovered for the opera stage in the 1960s.

In his opera, the libretto of which is based on two single-act works by Antonio Sografi, Donizetti pokes fun at operatic life and all its intrigues, collisions and petty jealousies. The piece centres on the quarrelling among the members of an opera company which is preparing the Italian opera seria *Romolo ed Ersilia* with the intention of performing it in a provincial backwater. The audience experiences first-hand how the female singers fight amongst themselves and how the brash "Mamma" wants to secure as glamorous a role as possible for her daughter Luisa, the *seconda donna*. As fate would have it, this "Mamma Agata" ends up treading the hallowed boards herself as a singer, feeling for all intents and purposes like the new star of Italian opera. All of a sudden, however, the opera company gets word that the town requires a deposit from them before the performance is allowed to go ahead. Good advice is needed, as the company's management is unable to come up with the sum in question. Mamma Agata donates her family jewels so that the financially beleaguered opera company can go ahead with its performance of *Romolo ed Ersilia*. All's well that ends well! It turns out to be a remarkable stroke of luck to have Mamma Agata in the ensemble.

Le Convenienze ed Inconvenienze Teatrali (1827–1831)

Comedy in 2 acts | 90'

Arranged by Vito Frazzi

Libretto by Gaetano Donizetti, after two comedies by Antonio Simeone Sografi

Choir: TB

2 2 2 2 - 2 2 3 0 - timp, perc(2), str

world première: 21.11.1827 Naples (I), Teatro Nuovo

Viva la Mamma! (1827–1831)*

Opera in 2 acts | 90'

Arranged by Vito Frazzi

New German version of libretto arranged by Horst Georges and Karlheinz Gutheim

Choir: TB

2 2 2 2 - 4 2 3 0 - timp, perc(3), str

world première: 18.02.1963 München (D), Cuvilliés-Theater

Available in Italian, except * (available in German and English only)

Roles:

Corilla Sartinecchi, S

Stefano, Bar

Luigia Boschi, S

Agatha, B

Dorotea Caccini, MS

Guglielmo Antolstoinolonoff, T

Vincenzo Biscroma, Bar

Orazio Prospero, B

The Impresario, Bar



In 1939, at the age of 21, Gottfried von Einem came across the first play written by 22-year-old Georg Büchner – and was overwhelmed. The result of this encounter, *Dantons Tod*, was the first opera by a living composer to be premiered at Salzburg Festival, in 1947. The importance of the work was immediately recognised and there soon followed performances in Vienna, Hamburg, Berlin, Hanover, Stuttgart, Paris, Brussels and New York. Translated into six languages, Gottfried von Einem's opera took the world's stages by storm. Unlike in Büchner's play, the people – the revolution – have one of the leading roles and the chorus scenes are among the most effective in von Einem's basically tonal score. In the opera, the crowd scenes – but also Danton's vindication before the revolutionary tribunal – bring forth a kind of melodramatic pathos that is entirely alien to Büchner and which is additionally fuelled by von Einem's striking musical language. The work has maintained its important role in the opera to this day.

The subject of *Dantons Tod* is based on Georg Büchner's drama, which appeared in 1835; the libretto was written by Boris Blacher together with the composer. The work takes place in 1794 against the backdrop of the French Revolution and centres on George Danton who – unlike Maximilien Robespierre – wishes to establish a republic by non-violent means, but ends up being a victim of this himself. While Robespierre pursues his goals at all costs and ultimately has Danton condemned to death, the latter – once a charismatic revolutionary leader who had rallied the masses behind him – gives up hope. To his disillusionment, he observes that the events of the revolution have in no way led to the state for which he had hoped, while the nascent feelings of guilt about his own wrongdoings in implementing revolutionary ideas ultimately drain him of his energy. In the drama, it becomes clear that the revolution against the absolutist monarchy and nobility had used terror and violence to midwife a different system – that of tyranny. Anyone who opposed Robespierre and his followers (the Jacobins) or had a different notion of a republic was declared an enemy of the people and sentenced to death. In other words, one ruler was replaced by another.

Dantons Tod (1944–1946)

Opera in 2 acts | 135'

Libretto: Boris Blacher and Gottfried von Einem

Choir: SATB

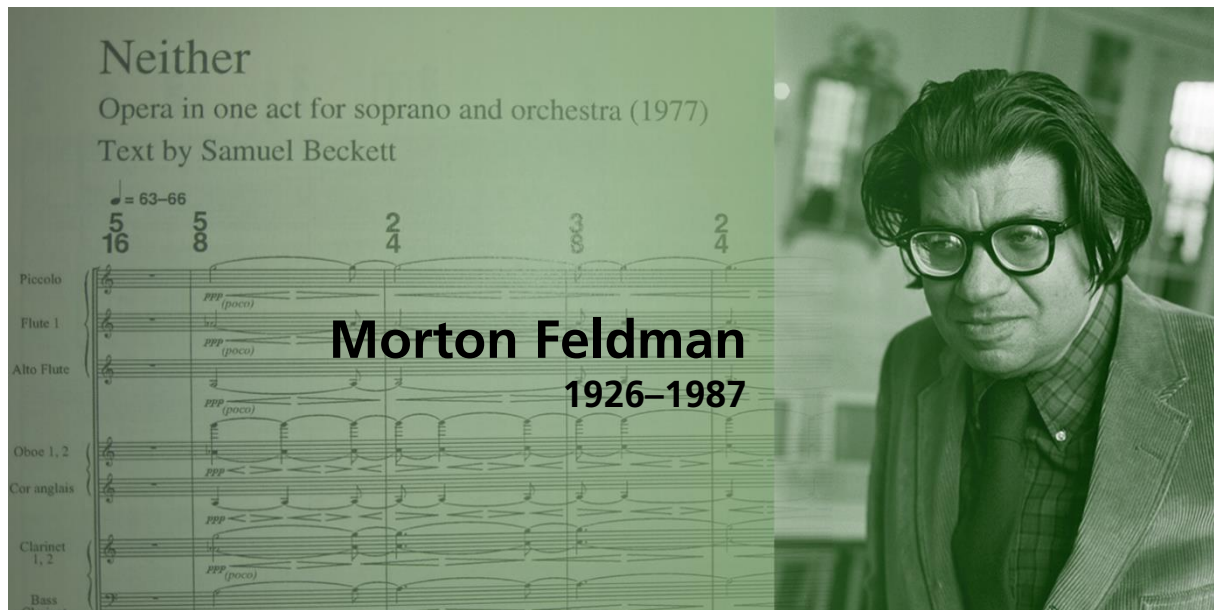
4 2 2 2 - 4 3 3 1 - timp, perc, str

world première: 06.08.1947 Salzburg (A), Salzburger Festspiele. Wiener Philharmoniker,
Ferencs Fricsay

Available in German

Roles:

Georges Danton, Bar
Camille Desmoulins, T
Hérault de Séchelles, T
Robespierre, T
Saint-just, B
Herrmann, Bar
Simon, B
A young man, T
Two executioners, T, B
Julie, MS
Lucile, S
A lady, S
A woman, A



“I am concerned with shadows. And this is what the Beckett opera is about as well. The theme of the opera is that our lives are surrounded by shadows on all sides. We cannot see into the shadows. But because we cannot see into the shadows, our existence only reaches to that point and we oscillate between the shadows of life and those of death.”

This is how Morton Feldman described the undertone of *Neither*, the genesis of which is a mixture of absurd theatre and slapstick. Feldman, a corpulent American, met the gaunt Irishman Samuel Beckett at a theatre rehearsal in Berlin. As the auditorium was dark, the extremely short-sighted Feldman made to shake Beckett’s hand, only met his thumb and promptly slipped and fell to the floor. Beckett did not like opera, and essentially Feldman did not either – after a few weeks, the American received Beckett’s 16-line libretto by post.

An extremely high floating soprano recites Beckett’s libretto: an inner monologue about the meaning of life, 87 bare words on the futility of all deeds.

As Feldman explains: “The richness (the beauty) of *Neither*’s special sound figures comes mainly from the varied interplay of extremely personal, often deliberately extreme choices of instrumentation techniques; from combinations of dynamics and register that are essentially incongruous, yet in a pictorial way fit the purpose of the music.”

While some of Feldman’s chamber music pieces unfold slowly and quietly over four or five hours, the opera *Neither* runs to just 50 dense minutes.

Neither (1977)

Opera in 1 act | 55'

Libretto: Samuel Beckett

3 3 3 4 - 3 3 3 1 - perc(4), hp(2), pno, str

world première: 13.05.1977 Rome (I), Teatro dell'Opera Roma, Marcello Panni

Available in English

Roles:

Solo soprano

Morgen und Abend
Oper (2014/2015)
Libretto von Jan Fosse
in der deutschen Übersetzung von Hinrich Schmidt-Henkel

Georg Friedrich Haas

*1953



The seventh music theatre work by Georg Friedrich Haas, who was born in the Austrian city of Graz in 1953, is based on the novel *Morgen und Abend* by Jan Fosse, a lethargic yet hopeful and religiously unbound series of scenes about life and death with a heavy reliance on soliloquies in the beginning. The first section of this continuous 90-minute piece of music theatre confronts the public with the “morning” of a life: painted in broad melodramatic strokes and with associative reflections on the part of fisherman Olai, the father, Haas’ sounds convey the birth of Johannes.

The rest of the dramatic work devotes itself to the “evening” of Johannes’ life – surprisingly, from the man’s own perspective. He encounters Erna, his wife. It is only after some time that the audience realises that Erna is no longer alive. The discrepancy between appearance and reality becomes clearer when Johannes’ daughter speaks to him in his bed even though he is no longer there. Johannes’ friend Peter, also long since dead, comes to join Johannes as he sails out to sea in search of fish.

“In traditional operas, we always see death from the perspective of the voyeur who is looking in from outside. However, in my operas I would like listeners to automatically see themselves as the central person, in this case Johannes. Nobody in the audience identifies with the dying Commendatore in Mozart’s *Don Giovanni*, for example – if they identify with anybody, it is Don Giovanni himself, but not the person who has died. It’s like that whenever anybody dies in an opera. In *Morgen und Abend*, however, you suddenly notice that you are putting yourself in the role of the dead person. This creates a very deep and intense underlying emotional situation.” (GF Haas)

Morgen und Abend (2014–2015)

Opera | for soli, choir and orchestra | 90'

Libretto: Jon Fosse

Choir: SATB

3 3 3 3 - 4 2 2 1 - str, timp, perc(2), acc

world première: 13.11.2015 London (GB), Royal Opera House. Royal Opera House
Orchestra and Chorus, Michael Boder

Available in German

Roles:

Olai, actor

The midwife*, S

John, Bar

Erna, A

Signe*, S

Peter, T

*The midwife and Signe must be sung by the same singer.



The tale of the free-thinking and crafty vixen Bystrouška from Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen* goes back to the 1890s. In the beginning were the tiny sketches of distinguished landscape artist Stanislav Lolek (1873–1936). The story of Bystrouška was serialized in *Lidové noviny* from 7 April to 23 June 1920 and had a huge success. The merry and immediately accessible drawings with a witty and topical text found a readership throughout the entire social spectrum. Janáček began considering composing an opera on this theme since he acquired cuttings of all the episodes. According to the autograph Janáček began composing in January 1922. The reception of the celebrated world première was tremendous and the composer himself was happy with the staging by Ota Zitek and the set design by Eduard Milén.

The setting of the opera is moved to the woods. Jolted from his sleep, the Forester sees a young vixen, catches her and ties her up in his home. The vixen dreams of freedom and love and attempts to incite the hens to attack the cock. When they show no interest in doing so, she kills the cock herself. Managing to free herself, she escapes back to the woods. Here, she drives away a badger from its sett and moves in herself. She meets a young fox and they fall in love immediately. All of the forest animals attend the foxes' wedding and soon there is the patter of tiny paws. The vixen, still as wild as ever, provokes the Poacher Harašta by stealing a bag of his chickens and is shot and killed by him. In the final scene, the Forester dozes off again, at one with himself and nature.

New critical edition by Jiří Zahrádka (2010)

This edition of *The Cunning Little Vixen* has been made by comparing all of the relevant surviving sources and establishing a version of the work that comes nearest to the composer's intention. It is based, above all, on the version given at the première in Brno in 1924, including František Neumann's (the conductor) fully elaborated, detailed dynamics. In cases where several minor changes in the Prague version appear to be justified, they were considered in this new edition, which includes the full score and complete orchestra material, as well as the piano vocal score and choir score.

The Cunning Little Vixen (1922–1923)

Opera in 3 acts | 110'

Choir: mixed (SATB) and children's choir (SA)

4 3 3 3 - 4 3 3 1 - timp, perc(2), hp, cel, str

world première: 06.11.1924 Brno (CZ), National Theatre Brno, František Neumann

The Cunning Little Vixen (1922–1923)

Opera in 3 acts | New Critical Edition | 110'

Revised version by Jiří Zahrádka (2010)

Choir: women's choir (SA), mixed choir (SAATTBB) and children's choir

4 3 3 3 - 4 3 3 1 - timp, perc(2), hp, cel, str

world première: 06.11.2008 Brno (CZ), National Theatre Brno, Janáček Opera Ensemble and Orchestra of the National Theatre Brno, Tomáš Hanus

Available in Czech, German, and English

Roles:

Vixen Bystrouška, S

Fox Zlatohřbíték, S

Forester, Bar

Forester's wife (Owl), A

Schoolmaster, T

Parson (Badger), B

Harašta (vagabond), B

Pásek (innkeeper), T

Mrs. Pásek, S

The young vixen, children's soprano

Franzl and Sepl, S

Dog, MS

Cock, S

Headhen, S

Cricket, Grasshopper, Frog, Fly, children's voices (S)

Dragonfly, Hedgehog, Squirrel, Forest animals, Ballet

Woodpecker, A

Mosquito, T

Jay, S

Reduced version available

Janáček based *From the House of the Dead*, his last opera, on Dostoyevsky's depictions of his time in a Siberian concentration camp after he was arrested and sentenced to death in 1849, but then exiled for four years instead. Without a narrative thread, main character or notable female role – or, indeed, a proper beginning or ending – the opera consists of a loose juxtaposition of episodes depicting the life of the prisoners individually and collectively. The opera centres on the arrival of political prisoner Gorjančikov, who befriends the young prisoner Alyeya, and the former's surprising release at the end of the opera. In the meantime, the audience learns about the individual fates of the other prisoners in a series of longer and shorter monologues, experiences the brutality shown by the guards towards the prisoners, witnesses Easter celebrations and a theatrical play in the camp and comes to realise why the only option open to some of the inmates is to go insane. A brutal-sounding march calls the prisoners back to work at the end of the opera, bringing the work to a close on an irreconcilable note.

Historical version – ending arranged by Břetislav Bakala / Osvald Chlubna / Otakar Zitek (1930) – Original ending by Leoš Janáček in appendix

Z mrtvého domu [From the House of the Dead] was first heard at Brno in 1930, in a version made by Břetislav Bakala and Osvald Chlubna, two of Janáček's pupils who, perhaps misled by the sketch-like notation of the autograph and the sparse orchestration, decided that changes needed to be made. They filled out and changed the orchestration. The laconic text and stage directions were amplified by the producer Otakar Zitek, who also translated many of the Russian and Ukrainian expressions which Janáček had left in the text into Czech for local colour. Finally, an "optimistic" apotheosis ending was added, based on the "Svoboda, svobodička" [Freedom] chorus. This historical version was published by Universal Edition in 1930 in full score and piano-vocal score with Janáček's original ending in the appendix.

New critical edition edited by John Tyrrell, with performance suggestions by Sir Charles Mackerras (2017)

Janáček did not live to see his final opera *Z mrtvého domu* [From the House of the Dead] performed. The work was different from his previous operas in its often chamber-like orchestration and lack of an apotheosis ending. This is why his pupils took it upon themselves to 'revise' it for its premiere in Brno in 1930, re-orchestrated it and, most notoriously, rewrote the ending. Ever since the shortcomings of the original published edition became apparent, there have been several attempts to return to what Janáček left at his death. The new critical edition of 2017 by John Tyrrell (with performance suggestions by Sir Charles Mackerras) supplants the Mackerras-Tyrrell 'critical-practical version' (1990) with a thorough revision based on the score made by Janáček's copyists under his direct supervision and corrected by him. In his previous operas Janáček had the opportunity of making minor corrections to the score during rehearsals. Because of his death, extensive tidying up of many inconsistencies was necessary. All such editorial interventions are shown as such and are described in the Critical Report.

Janáček wrote his own libretto translating from the original Russian into Czech as he went along and left in many untranslated words and phrases. Previous editions replaced these with a revised text in standard Czech. With the possibility today of surtitles (which can provide the sense of what is sung on stage) the new edition prints Janáček's original text, whose departures from standard Czech constitute an important part of the sound image of the opera. All non-standard words or phrases (whether Russian, Ukrainian, Moravian dialect, etc.) are marked with asterisks and are explained, usually with reference to Dostoyevsky's original Russian, in an extensive appendix printed at the back of the score.

This version will be fully available from 2018. Until then the critical-practical edition from 1990, edited by Sir Charles Mackerras and John Tyrrell, can be used.

From the House of the Dead (1927–1928)

Opera in 3 acts | historical version (contains original ending) | 85'

Based on text by: Dostoevsky

Arranged (1930) by Břetislav Bakala and Osvald Chlubna

Choir: TB

4 3 3 3 - 4 3 3 1 - timp, perc(5), hp, cel, str

world première: 12.04.1930 Brno (CZ), National Theatre of Brno. Orchestra of the National Theatre Brno, Břetislav Bakala

From the House of the Dead (1927–1928)*

Opera in 3 acts | New Critical Edition | 85'

Based on text by: Dostoevsky

New critical edition 2017 edited by John Tyrrell, with performance suggestions by Sir Charles Mackerras

Choir: TB

4 3 3 3 - 4 3 3 1 - timp, perc(4), hp, cel, t.tuba(Bb), str

world première: 08.10.2017 Cardiff, Wales (GB), Welsh National Opera. Welsh National Orchestra and Chorus, Tomáš Hanus

Available in Czech, German, English, and Italian, except * (available in Czech, German, and English only)

Roles:

Alexandr Petrovič Gorjančikov, Bar

Aljeja, a young Tartar, MS

Luka Kuzmič (Filka Morozov), T

Prison Governor, Bar

Skuratov, T

Čekunov, Bar

Šiškov, Bar

a number of smaller roles and silent roles

With his third opera *Jenůfa*, Janáček succeeded in making his breakthrough as an operatic composer. Since the premiere of this moving story about the fate of the sexton and her stepdaughter Jenůfa at the Brno National Theatre in 1904, it has become one of the composer's most frequently performed works. Janáček was the first to succeed in transforming everyday speech directly into music. His method of using speech-melodic motives is clearly distinctive. It is known that the composer preserved everyday conversations in the form of little musical sketches: "*Jotting down genuine speech melody is, as it were, music's life class,*" he said.

The story takes place in a small Moravian village. The orphan Jenůfa lives in the house of her stepmother, the sexton Buryjovka, who is highly regarded in the village as the provider of sacristan services. Jenůfa is pregnant by Števa Buryja. His stepbrother Laca loves her, even though she constantly rejects him. The sexton hides Jenůfa until the child is born, and then drowns it while she is asleep as Števa did not heed her request to marry her stepdaughter and an illegitimate birth would ruin Jenůfa's reputation in the village. Jenůfa accepts Laca's proposal of marriage. On the day of the wedding, a baby is found under the ice in the river. Jenůfa recognises it as her own. The sexton admits her crime but Jenůfa forgives her because she had acted out of love. At the same time, she recognises the genuine love of Laca, who remains faithfully by her side.

Original version of 1904 edited by Mark Audus (2008)

Originally performed by the tiny forces of the Brno National Theatre, the 1904 version of *Jenůfa* is ideal for productions in small and medium-sized theatres as well as larger opera houses. Although the opera's basic narrative remains the same, and most of the music is clearly recognisable, many fascinating differences are revealed. There are increased vocal demands on the four major roles, and the orchestration is more redolent of the late 19th century. Several passages were extensively cut, including the Act 1 ensembles, which in the 1904 version approach something like the traditional *pezzo concertato* of Italian opera. And Laca's declaration of love for Jenůfa near the end of Act 2 was originally an extended set-piece, subsequently cut by Janáček to just a handful of bars in later revisions. These are just two of the more obvious examples from a version full of surprises: Janáček's own revisions to the opera left no page of the score – from the opening xylophone solo to the glorious closing bars — untouched. *Jenůfa* in its 1904 version formed the basis for all performances of the work in its first two years of stage history. As such, it fills a crucial gap in our understanding of the emergence of one of 20th-century opera's greatest figures. It allows audiences once again to experience the thrill of the new, the rawness of emotion that places this work much more closely in the context of turn-of-the-century *verismo*. And it permits us a glimpse, for the first time, of the youthful face of a much-loved friend.

Brno version of 1908 edited by Sir Charles Mackerras and John Tyrrell (1996)

In the 1970s Charles Mackerras initiated the long process of restoring Janáček's original score. Mackerras' first version (recorded in 1982) was based on the copy made of the Brno score by Kovařovic's copyist, into which Kovařovic's changes were added in red ink. While the red ink provides a reasonable guide to the re-orchestration, the score does not tell the whole story of the cuts made by Kovařovic since he omitted some passages before the copyist got to work. A painstaking process of reconstruction was needed, based on the original Brno parts, the revised Štross full score (under the final layer of Kovařovic's changes) and the 1908 piano-vocal score. The aim of the editors was to produce a full score corresponding largely to the published 1908 piano-vocal score but also including Janáček's final revisions. In 1996, the study score (in Czech, German and English) was published, causing experts and connoisseurs to take note. In autumn 2000, the piano reduction (also in three languages) appeared, and was awarded the 2001 Deutscher Musikeditions-Preis for its exemplary production.

Prague version of 1916 edited by Johannes Martin Dürr (1969)

Up to 1913 *Jenůfa* had been performed only by the small Brno theatre company. The Prague National Theatre, headed by the conductor and composer Karel Kovařovic, had refused to accept the work for production, hence effectively condemning it to provincial obscurity. Only a determined campaign by Janáček's admirers and the changing circumstances of the First World War brought about a change of heart. Kovařovic, who had previously adapted both Smetana's *Má vlast* and Dvořák's *Dimitrij*, accepted Janáček's opera only on the condition that he could revise it. Janáček was then 61 and was anxious to have the work performed at any cost and thus agreed. Kovařovic went ahead and produced a re-orchestrated and cut version that conformed to the tastes of the time and which ensured its rapid acceptance in Prague and in the German-speaking world beyond (with Max Brod's translation). The score was published by Universal Edition, naturally in Kovařovic's version, in both full score and piano-vocal score (a new piano arrangement was made). Janáček made no written comment on Kovařovic's version until 1923. Outraged that Kovařovic's widow was getting royalties on the work from the Prague National Theatre, he attempted to suppress Kovařovic's version, though was unable to enforce this ban.

Jenůfa (1894–1903)

Opera in 3 acts from Moravian peasant life | original version of 1904 | 120'

Edited by Mark Audus (2008)

Libretto: Gabriela Preissová

SATTBB - village folk, recruits, musicians, servants, village girls

3 3 3 3 - 4 3 3 1 - timp, perc, hp, str; stage music: xyl, hn(2), bells, str(1 1 1 1 1)

world première: 21.01.1904 Brno (CZ), National Theatre Brno. Orchestra of the National Theatre Brno, Cyril Metoděj Hrazdira

Jenůfa (1894–1903/1908)

Opera in 3 acts from Moravian peasant life | Brno version, critical edition | 120'

Edited by Sir Charles Mackerras and John Tyrell (1996)

Libretto: Gabriela Preissová

SATTBB - village folk, recruits, musicians, servants, village girls

3 3 3 3 - 4 2 3 1 - timp, perc(2), bells, hp, str; stage music: hn(2), toy tpt, xyl, bells, str(1 1 1 1 1)

world première: 27.10.1996 Nantes (F), Opéra de Nantes. Orchestre Philharmonique des Pays de la Loire, Choeurs de l'Opéra de Nantes, Guido Johannes Rumstadt

Jenůfa (1894–1903/1916)*

Opera in 3 acts from Moravian peasant life | Prague version | 120'

Arranged by Joannes Martin Dürr (1969)

Libretto: Gabriela Preissová

SATTBB - village folk, recruits, musicians, servants, village girls

3 3 3 3 - 4 2 3 1 - timp, perc(3), hp, str; stage music: hn(2), toy tpt, bells, str(2 1 1 1 1)

world première: 26.05.1916 Prague (CZ), National Theatre Prague. Orchestra of the Prague Theatre, Karel Kovařovic

Available in Czech, German, and English, except * (available in Czech, German, English, and French)

Roles:

Jenůfa, S

Laca Klemeň, T

Števa Buryja, T

Kostelnička Buryjovka, S

Grandmother Buryjovka, A

Stárek, Mill Foreman, Bar

Mayor, B

Mayor's wife, MS

Karolka, MS

Herdswoman, MS

Barena, S

Jano, S

Aunt, A

Chorus: *Recruits, servants, girls, villagers, musicians*

Reduced version available

In early 1919, Janáček decided to set Alexander Ostrovsky's *The Storm* to music. Once a few questions regarding Vincenc Červinka's translation had been cleared up, Janáček set about adapting the entire piece himself, seeking advice from Max Brod in places. After the resounding success of the Brno premiere conducted by František Neumann, almost a year went by until *Káťa Kabanová* was staged for the second time at the National Theatre in Prague. While critics saw the "key weakness of the opera" as its "lack of a flowing narrative", it was nonetheless a great success. In 1927, Janáček decided to change the transitions between the individual scenes in the first and second act by inserting brief interludes. These serve to link the individual scenes, allowing changes to be made to the stage set without interrupting the musical flow. The interludes were rediscovered by Sir Charles Mackerras and included in a new score, which was published in 1992.

The story is set circa 1860 in the Russian town of Kalinov on the shores of the Volga river. Káťa is unhappily married to the weak-willed merchant Tichon Kabanov, who is wholly under the influence of his insidious and hypocritical mother, Kabanicha. However, Káťa is secretly in love with Boris. Her friend Barbara gives her a key to the garden gate and arranges a meeting between the two. While Kabanicha receives a visit from the rich merchant Dikoj, Káťa – driven by the forces of fate – falls into the arms of the waiting Boris. During a thunderstorm, Káťa and Kabanicha happen to run into one another in a dilapidated church. Káťa openly confesses her adultery. As a consequence, Boris is drafted to Siberia. Rejected by her family and abandoned by her lover, Káťa throws herself into the Volga.

Káťa Kabanová is an intimate and lyrical portrait of a lonely woman and a personal tragedy, without resorting to empty or melodramatic gestures. With this opera, Janáček created one of the most forceful musical tragedies of the 20th century.

***Káťa Kabanová* (1921)**

Opera in 3 acts | 105'

Edited by Sir Charles Mackerras and Karl Heinz Füssl (1992)

Choir: male and female

4 3 3 3 - 4 3 3 1 - timp, perc(2), hp, cel, vla.d'a, str

world première: 23.11.1921 Brno (CZ), National Theatre Brno, František Neumann

Available in Czech, German, and English

Roles:

Savěl Prokofjevič Dikój, B

Boris Grigorjevič, T

Marfa Ignatěvna Kabanová (Kabanicha), A

Tichon Ivanyč Kabanov, T

Káťa (Kateřina), S

Váňa Kudrjaš, T

Varvara, MS

Kuligin, Bar

Glaša, MS

Fekluša, MS

Late-night passer-by, silent

Woman from the crowd, A

Reduced version in preparation

“A 300-year-old beauty – and eternally young – but with only burnt-out feelings within her! Brrrrr! As cold as ice! I am going to write an opera about her”, Janáček wrote in a letter to Kamila Stösslová in 1923. *The Makropulos Affair*, Janáček’s penultimate opera, is considered to be one of the pinnacles of music theatre in the 20th century. The opera is based on the drama of the same name by Karel Čapek that Janáček saw in Brno in January 1923. The world premiere production with director Otakar Zítko and conductor František Neumann was met with great success. Its modernity and exclusive setting, where people use cars and telephones, with the mystery and tension of a well-constructed detective story, continues to fascinate today. Janáček’s musical speech is based on very short, even aphoristic motifs put in layers and attacking us in a terse, turbulent movement in connection with the dynamics of the acting characters.

The opera takes place in the relatively modern settings of Prague in the 1820s. The Gregor and Prus families have been squabbling for decades about the land and holdings of Baron Josef Ferdinand Prus, who died in 1827 without children of his own. The intricacies of the past only seem to be clarified with the arrival of mysterious singer Emilia Marty, who has information about the whereabouts of a will. The persona of Emilia Marty conceals the 337-year-old Elina Makropulos who, in her youth, drank a potion that granted her prolonged life. Over the centuries, she assumed different identities, always with the initials E.M. When Marty senses that the potion is wearing off, she goes in search of the lost recipe. She is utterly ruthless in pursuit of this goal, riding roughshod over the feelings of many people and stopping at nothing. But when Emilia finally has the recipe in her hands, she realises that life is only valuable because it is finite.

New critical edition by Jiří Zahrádka (2015)

In this new version of *The Makropulos Affair*, the performance material has been completely reworked on the basis of all the preserved sources. The revision of the score involved a comparison of the autograph score with three copies that originated during the composer's lifetime. The new critical edition therefore presents the work in a form that corresponds to the greatest possible extent to the ideas of the composer. In addition, the new edition includes valuable notes, by the renowned Janáček conductor Sir Charles Mackerras, on practical performance.

The Makropulos Affair (1925)

Opera in 3 acts | 120'

Choir: Men's choir (TTBB)

4 3 3 3 - 4 3 3 1 - timp, perc(3), hp, cel, str - stage music: hn(2), tpt(2), timp

world première: 18.12.1926 Brno (CZ), National Theatre Brno. Orchestra of the National Theatre Brno, František Neumann

The Makropulos Affair (1925)*

Opera in 3 acts | New Critical Edition | 120'

Edited by Jiří Zahrádka (2015)

Choir: Men's choir (TTBB)

4 3 4 3 - 4 3 3 1 - 1st horn in F (Banda interna), 2nd horn in F (Banda interna), 1st trumpet in F (Banda interna), 2nd trumpet in F (Banda interna), timp (Banda interna), timp, perc(3), hp, cel, str

world première: 21.11.2014 Brno (CZ), Janáček-Theater. Janáček Opera Ensemble and Orchestra of the National Theatre Brno, Marko Ivanović

Available in Czech, German, English, and French, except * (available in Czech, German, and English only)

Roles:

Emilia Marty, S

Albert Gregor, T

Dr Kolenatý, Bar

Vítek, T

Kristína, MS

Baron Jaroslav Prus, Bar

Janek, his son, T

Stage Technician, Bar

Cleaning Woman, A

Count Hauk-Šendorf, T

Hotel Maid, A

Doctor, silent



After Kurt Weill's and Bertolt Brecht's *The Threepenny Opera*, Ernst Krenek's *Jonny spielt auf* was the most successful stage play of the Weimar Republic era. Virtually overnight, the piece became a *succès de scandale* and a massive box office hit. The premiere was followed by 421 performances in 45 different cities in the 1927/1928 season alone. *Jonny* was on the programme in virtually every German opera house as well as being taken to stages in France, Finland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Yugoslavia and the New York Metropolitan Opera. In Berlin and Vienna alone, there were more than 50 performances of the opera, overshadowing new works by Strauss and Puccini and, for a time, even edging Strauss' *Fledermaus* from the New Year's programmes at opera houses. However, Krenek's fame and *Jonny's* success were short-lived. When the Nazis came to power, the opera – often incorrectly referred to as a “jazz opera” because it contained popular forms like foxtrot and tango – was banned from stages by opponents of modern music. A poster of *Jonny*, upon which the black, saxophone-playing musician sported a Star of David, was even featured in the Nazis' “Degenerate Music” exhibition, which afforded Krenek his own entry in the *Encyclopaedia of Jews in Music* even though he had no Jewish ancestry at all. In 1938, Krenek emigrated to the USA where he remained for the rest of his years.

Wholly in keeping with the *Zeitoper* genre, Krenek made full use of the latest technical advances in stage machinery in *Jonny spielt auf*, calling for an on-stage car chase, a moving railway train, a singing glacier, an on-stage radio broadcast and the ultimate transformation of the railway station into an allegorical world-globe upon which Jonny is enthroned, violin in hand. After the surprising success of his opera, Krenek returned to the musical drawing board and rethought his entire compositional technique. He was one of the first to align himself with the Schönberg school and the twelve-tone principle, which he perfected in his opera *Karl V*.

Composer Max and violin virtuoso Daniello are in love with opera singer Anita who cannot decide between the two of them. In the confusion that ensues, American musician Jonny steals Daniello's violin and hides it in Anita's luggage. She sets off to visit Max the following morning, unaware that she has the violin. Jonny follows her and takes the violin again. Daniello recognises the sound of his violin on a radio broadcast and informs the police. At the railway station, Jonny happens to meet Max and slips the violin into his luggage, leading to his arrest. After further chaos, the instrument finds its way into Jonny's hands again and he escapes in a police car.

Jonny spielt auf (1925–1926)

Opera in 2 acts | op. 45 | 120'

Choir: SATB

2 2 3 2 - 2 3 3 1 - timp, perc(4), cel, pno, str - on stage: alto sax(Eb), t.sax(Bb), tpt(C),
tbn, perc, pno, bjo, strQuint, solo vln - behind stage: Glasharmonika or harm, pno
world première: 10.02.1927 Leipzig (D), Neues Theater Leipzig. Gewandhausorchester,
Gustav Brecher

Available in German, English, and French

Roles:

The composer Max, T

The singer Anita, S

The Negro Jonny, Bar

The violinist Daniello, Bar

The chambermaids of Yvonne, S

The Manager, B

The hotel Director, T

A railway employee, T

1st policeman, T

2nd policeman, Bar

3rd policeman, B

Silent roles: a maid, a groom, a night watchman in hotel, a police officer, 2 drivers, a shop girl, a luggage carrier,
hotel guests, travelers and audience



“A Tristan with a difference” – that was how the critic of the *Neues Österreich* newspaper described Frank Martin’s *Le Vin herbé* (The Magic Potion) after the first staged performance of this secular oratorio at the 1948 Salzburg Festival. The concert version had already been premiered six years previously in Zurich. In its more than 60-year history, *Le Vin herbé* has enjoyed countless concert performances and many staged productions.

In 1938, Frank Martin was commissioned by the Zurich Madrigal Choir to compose a work for chamber choir. Martin used this commission to fulfil a long-held wish: to set to music a chapter from Joseph Bédier’s novel telling the story of Tristan and Isolde. Martin was not daunted by the undeniably imposing shadow cast by Richard Wagner’s music drama – this is because he had always intended to take a less dramatic and more epic and lyrical approach to the work. Such a notion was not only suggested by Bédier’s text but limiting the work to a relatively small ensemble also ruled out Wagneresque dimensions from the outset. Martin’s score added seven string parts and piano accompaniment to the Zurich Madrigal Choir, a 12-singer ensemble. While the composer decided upon the genre of the secular oratorio, he largely forgoes large-scale effects in this work, preferring to emphasise the chamber music characteristics of the composition.

Synopsis: Isolde has been promised as a bride to King Mark and Tristan is to take her to him. Having drunk a love potion by accident, Tristan and Isolde fall madly in love with another. Isolde still marries Mark, but absconds with Tristan. They are tracked down by King Mark, experience profound guilt and decide to end their relationship on the grounds that it is wrong.

After years of separation, Tristan is wounded with a poisoned lance and yearns to see Isolde once again. However, he dies before Isolde arrives. She finds him there and dies of a broken heart.

Le Vin herbé (1938/1941)

Secular oratorio | for 12 voices, 7 strings and piano | 90'

Choir: Chamber choir

1. vln, 2. vln, 1. vla, 2. vla, 1. vc, 2. vc, cb, pno

world première: 28.03.1942 Zürich (CH), Robert Blum

Available in German and French

Roles:

The mother of Isot, A

Isot blonde, S

Brangäne, MS

Isot Weißhändige, A

Tristan, T

Kaherdin, T

Brand, Bar

2 small roles

silent roles

Opera Milestones

In the early 1940s, Frank Martin – already over 50 years of age – felt that he had finally shorted himself out as a composer. It was the breakthrough to a truly personal style, a synthesis of his penchant for expressive music and his need for rigid, abstract structures. From this point onwards, one masterpiece followed the next and he rose to international fame.

Martin had dreamt of a new form in which words and music would form a close bond and felt that Shakespeare's *The Tempest* was eminently suitable for such an experiment. From the outset, the work was conceived in German based on the famous translation by August Wilhelm von Schlegel. On approaching Martin's opera, the listener's experience is akin to that of a shipwrecked traveller entering Prospero's realm: they come face-to-face with a complex and mysterious work, the delights of which only reveal themselves very slowly.

There are two versions of "The Tempest". The original one has the figure of Ariel choreographed whereas the text is sung from behind the wings by a chorus.

Frank Martin then decided to entrust the dancer with the text which has to be spoken in keeping with the music – in other words, one needs a dancer with exceptional musical talents.

Der Sturm was the first work of contemporary music to be included in the Vienna Opera House's repertoire when it reopened in 1955.

Synopsis: With the aid of his magician servant Ariel, Prospero – the rightful Duke of Milan – conjures up a storm to entice his enemies to his island so that he can exact his revenge upon them and pair off his daughter Miranda with the Prince. In the end, Prospero returns to his duchy.

The Tempest (1952/1955)

Magic comedy | 150'

Choir: TB, mixed Chamber choir behind the scenes

3 3 3 3 - 4 3 3 1 - windmachine, flute stage music, 1. horn stage music, 2. horn stage music, trumpet in C stage music, Jazz-percussion stage music, Violine I stage music, Violine II stage music, Viola stage music, Violoncello stage music, doublebass stage music, timp(2), perc(4), hp, cel, cemb, pno, t.sax(Bb), str
world première: 17.06.1956 Vienna (A), Vienna State Opera, Ernest Ansermet

Available in German and French

Roles:

King Alonso, B

Sebastian, B

Prospero, Bar

Antonio, T

Ferdinand, T

Gonzalo, Bar

Adrian, T

Caliban, B

Trinculo, T

Stephano, Bar

Boatman, Bar

Miranda, S

Ariel, dancer with rhythmic speech

A ship's patron, spoken

IRIS, Ceres, Juno, nymphs, reapers, Ballet Group

Sailors, male choir



Bohuslav Martinů's opera *The Greek Passion* is based on the novel *Christ Recrucified* by Nikos Kazantzakis. The opera takes the Christian doctrine of "love thy neighbour" to absurd lengths, as a group of refugees arrives in a Greek village just as the villagers are putting on a Passion Play for Holy Week. The work centres on the general question of humanity. The Passion story is robbed of its uniqueness and revealed as a mere precedent for eternal tragedy. Martinů, who was forced to emigrate from the south of France to the USA in 1940 when Paris fell to the Nazis, had first-hand experience of a refugee's plight. *The Greek Passion* is considered one of his most coherent and mature scores. For this exciting and disturbing work, Martinů developed a tonal language that combined his early musical experiences with elements of Greek folklore, Greek Orthodox liturgy and dance music.

The opera tells the story of the prosperous Greek village of Lykovrissi, which puts on a Passion Play every seven years. The roles are assigned one year beforehand: the apostles Peter, James, John and Judas, Mary Magdalene and Christ. While the young shepherd Manolis is to play the part of Christ, the pretty, vivacious widow Katerina – a great favourite with the men of the village – plays the role of the repentant sinner, while Panait the blacksmith is chosen to play Judas. When the roles for the Passion Play have been allocated, a group of refugees arrives. Having been driven from their village by the Turks, they ask for protection and shelter. The response from the village community is divided: while most of them want to turn away the refugees, the passion players feel more and more solidarity with them, particularly the shepherd Manolis. He fights for the village to show compassion and provokes the displeasure of the villagers, particularly Grigoris the priest, because Manolis urges them to share their wealth with the refugees. Grigoris excommunicates Manolis and incites the villagers against him, leading to a tumult in which Panait murders Manolis with his bare hands.

On the two versions

Two versions of Martinů's legacy work exist. The first version – the "London version" – was written between 1954 and 1957. *The Greek Passion* was to be premiered at the city's Royal Opera House with Rafael Kubelík at the helm, but Covent Garden scuppered the project. Encouraged and financially supported by Swiss music patron Paul Sacher, Martinů reworked the original version extensively until his death in 1959. He recomposed many parts of the opera, reducing spoken-word dialogue, *Sprechgesang* and recitative to a minimum and increasing the cantabile quality of the work throughout. The rough edges, inconsistencies and contrastive idiom of the original were smoothed out, softened, moderated. The second version of *The Greek Passion* was premiered in Zurich's Stadttheater on 9 June 1961. It would take more than

40 years for belated justice to be done to the rejected London version. Following the premiere of the original version of *The Greek Passion* in Bregenz in 1999, there are now two fully fledged versions of the opera in existence.

The Greek Passion* (1957)

Music drama in 4 acts | 1st version (London version) | 130'

Edited by Aleš Březina (1998)

3 3 3 3 - 4 3 3 1 - timp(2), perc(3), hp, cemb, str; on the stage: rec, cl, acc, vln(1)

world première: 20.07.1999 Bregenz (A), Festspielhaus Bregenz. Wiener Symphoniker, Moscow Chamber Choir, Ulf Schirmer

***The Greek Passion* (1957–1959)**

Opera in 4 acts | 2nd version (Zürich version) | 107'

Choir: SATB, boys choir

3 3 3 3 - 4 3 3 1 - timp, perc, hp, pno, acc, str

world première: 09.06.1961 Zürich (CH), Zürich Opera, Paul Sacher

Available in French, English, and German

Roles:

Priest of Grigoris, Bar

Patriarcheas, Bar

Michelis, T

Kostandis, Bar

Yannakos, T

Manolios, T

Panait, T

The widow Kateřina, S

Lenio, S

Priest of Fotis, Bar

5 smaller roles

1 vocal role

Giacomo Puccini

1858–1924

CHARACTERS		PERSONAGGI
Magda	Soprano	Magda
Lisette	Soprano	Lisette
Ruggero	Tenor	Ruggero
Prunier	Tenor	Prunier
Rambaldo	Baritone	Rambaldo
Périchaud	Baritone or Bass	Périchaud
Gobin	Tenor	Gobin
Crébillon	Bass or Baritone	Crébillon
Ivette	Soprano	Ivette
Bianca	Soprano	Bianca
Suzy	Mezzo-Soprano	Suzy



The three-act opera *La Rondine* (*The Swallow*) was originally commissioned for the Carltheater in Vienna but, owing to the outbreak of the First World War, was only premiered in Monte Carlo in 1917. The libretto was written by Giuseppe Adami based on the German *Die Schwalbe* by Alfred Maria Willner and Heinz Reichert. Puccini revised the work a number of times, particularly the end of the second act, meaning that there are now three distinct versions. In the original version (1917), Magda leaves Ruggero because she believes that her dubious past does not permit her to marry him. In the second version (1920), her wish to return to the demimonde is what ultimately triggers her actions. In the third version (1921), Ruggero finds out about Magda’s past through an anonymous letter and leaves her. In spite of these differences in the storyline, the music hardly changed at all.

The setting is Paris during the Second Empire. We find Magda in the house of her wealthy patron Rambaldo, conversing with friends about love. One of the party reads her palm and tells her that one day she will fly like a swallow across the sea for love. Ruggero, a young man from the provinces, arrives in Paris for the first time. Magda’s friends suggest that he sample the nightlife in a dance club. Although irked by his conventional notions of eternal love, Magda falls for him. She parts company with her patron in order to live with Ruggero on the Riviera. However, no sooner has Ruggero had obtained consent from his parents to marry Magda, she explains to him about her old life and leaves him.

1st version

The 1st version corresponds to the 1st edition of 1917 and was the only edition available before 1994.

2nd version

The opera is most frequently performed in its original version dating from 1917, with the addition of Ruggero’s aria *Parigi! È la città dei desideri* in the first act. Puccini included this aria in the 2nd edition of 1920, but eliminated it again in the 3rd edition of 1921.

3rd version, with additions by Lorenzo Ferrero published in 1994

The 3rd edition, conceived in 1921–22, was not performed during Puccini’s lifetime. A fire at the Casa Sonzogno in Milan during the Second World War destroyed the score, which was restored on the basis of the surviving vocal-piano reduction by the Italian composer Lorenzo Ferrero at the request of the Teatro Regio di Torino and subsequently performed there in 1994 with the following ending: Ruggero discovers who Magda once was from an anonymous letter and

decides to abandon her, since she is not worthy of his love. Despairing, Magda is left alone with her maid Lisette. Some missing pages were orchestrated by Lorenzo Ferrero (part of the *Prelude*, *Vendeuses terzetto*, *Duet Magda-Rambaldo*) since the original full score was not complete.

4th version (Bonner/Domingo version of 1994)

The director Marta Domingo, wife of Plácido Domingo, staged the opera in her own adaptation of all three preserved versions, and appended a tragic ending: Magda's suicide. She first presented it in Bonn in 1995. She also included Ruggero's aria *Parigi! È la città dei desideri* in the first act of this version.

***La Rondine* (1914–1915)**

Opera in 3 acts | 1st version (Edition 1917) | 110'

Choir : SATB

3 3 3 2 - 4 3 3 1 - timp, perc(4), hp, cel, str, stage music: picc, perc, pno

world première: 27.03.1917 Monte Carlo (MC), Grand Théâtre de Monte Carlo, Gino Marinuzzi

La Rondine* (1914–1915/1920)

Opera in 3 acts | 2nd version (Edition 1920) | 110'

3 3 3 2 - 4 3 3 1 - timp, perc(4), hp, cel, str, stage music: picc, perc, pno

world première: 1920 Palermo (I), Teatro Massimo

La Rondine* (1914–1915/1920)

Opera in 3 acts | 3rd (Torino- or Ferrero) version

[edition 1921 & Lorenzo Ferrero-Additions (1994)] | 110'

3 3 3 2 - 4 3 3 1 - timp, perc(4), hp, cel, str, stage music: picc, perc, pno

La Rondine* (1914–1915/1920)

Opera in 3 acts | 4th version (Bonn- or Marta Domingo version of 1994) | 110'

3 3 3 2 - 4 3 3 1 - timp, perc(4), hp, cel, str, stage music: picc, perc, pno

world première: 13.12.1995 Bonn (D), Oper der Bundesstadt Bonn

Available in Italian, German, and English, except * (available in Italian only)

Roles:

Magda, S

Lisette, S

Ruggero, T

Prunier, T

Rambaldo, Bar

Périchaud, Bar or B

Gobin, T

Crébillon, B or Bar

Evette, S

Bianca, S

Suzy, MS

a Steward, B

Rabonier, Bar

a singer, S

Grisette, S

Adolfo (T) and 2 girls from the choir

Reduced version available



Jakob Lenz
Kammeroper (1977/1978)
Text von Michael Fröhling
frei nach Georg Büchners „Lenz“

Wolfgang Rihm
*1952

1. Bild
Lenz hetzt durchs Gebirge
♩ = 60-80 (alle Metronomangaben sind als die jeweils schnellsten Wahrscheinlichkeiten)

PARISOTTE
LENZ
OBER
KAUFMANN
6 STIMMEN (2 Soprane, 2 Alte, 2 Bässe)
2 oder 4 KINDER

The theme of Wolfgang Rihm's opera *Die Eroberung von Mexiko* is the fundamental confrontation of two cultures. The encounter between Spanish conqueror Hernán Cortéz and Aztec ruler Montezuma in 1519 is presented as a clash between male and female, between intellect and emotion, and between lust for power and magic. Accordingly, the role of Cortéz is played by a man and that of Montezuma by a woman. Writing the libretto himself, Rihm boldly sources the poetic material from four texts – including Artaud's draft play, Aztec poetry and the poem "The Root of Man" by Mexican poet Octavio Paz – and dispenses with all manner of exotic folklore, his opera resembling a giant prism that conjures together the fragments of text, imagery and music on a higher level of sound and thought: expressive vocal melodies, speaking and whispering choruses, rapturous rhythms and ground-breaking concentrations of sound.

The music plays with the space, pulling the audience into the sound, just as Artaud wanted his audience to be "engulfed and physically affected". The audience is surrounded by a sound sculpture with manifold percussion instruments placed at its furthest edges. Engaging all the senses, this work of art shows myth and struggle alike – a battle epic that most recently inspired exciting ideas for stage scenery at Salzburg Festival while still allowing its oratorio-like clarity to weave its magic. A late 20th-century classic, the subject matter of which remains worryingly topical: colliding cultures that damage and even annihilate one another.

***Die Eroberung von Mexiko* (1987–1991)**

Opera | 120'

Choir : Movement Choir (as Spanish, Aztec, animal and human... Doubles...), and SATB (also chanting, whispering choir) from tape

3 4 4 1 - 3 3 3 1 - timp, perc(5), hp, pno, e.org, e.bass(2), vln(2), vla(2), vc(6), cb(4) - wind machine

world première: 09.02.1992 Hamburg (D). Philharmonisches Staatsorchester Hamburg, Ingo Metzmacher

Available in German

Roles:

Montezuma, S

Cortez, Bar

A screaming man

Malinche, the interpreter, silent, dancing

in the orchestra: 1 very high S, 1 A, 2 speakers

Jakob Lenz is one of the most successful chamber operas of recent decades. It consists of 13 scenes. Michael Fröhling's libretto draws on situations and dialogues from Georg Büchner's novella "Lenz", but also on poems by Lenz himself and excerpts from letters written by Lenz' friends and from Büchner's main source, Pastor Oberlin's progress report. Lenz stayed with him for three weeks in the Vosges to treat his schizophrenia but ultimately to no avail. The shifting and fragmented nature of the text conveys Lenz' split personality in a truly compelling way.

With a comparatively small apparatus, Rihm's music creates fascinating soundscapes: three singers – the poet Lenz, his host Oberlin and their mutual literary friend Kaufmann, a six-part vocal ensemble, heard only by Lenz, and eleven instrumentalists. Rihm blends together the diverse musical worlds of Bach, Schumann and even Berg's *Wozzeck* into an extremely physical and sensual musical language that is very much his own.

It is almost as if everything is being "drawn inwards", that the instrumental gestalt is the means of transporting the hopeless mental situation: "Extreme chamber music, always bound for the main character. Although Lenz acts on many levels – or tries to or believes he is – he has no room to manoeuvre. That is why he is also tightly interwoven in his sonic surroundings." (Rihm).

A nagging pain hangs over the entire work: hallucinations of a ruined creature, sound obsessions, truths from the exposed unconscious. As a whole, the dramatic structure of the work follows that of a Passion. In spite of the small ensemble, Rihm unfolds a dynamic spectrum that predestines the opera for the world's greatest stages.

Jakob Lenz (1977–1978)

Chamber opera | for soli and chamber ensemble | 75'

Libretto: Michael Fröhling

0 2 1 1 - 0 1 1 0 - perc(1), hpsd, vc(3)

world première: 08.03.1979 Hamburg (D), Staatsoper Hamburg. Members of the Philharmonischen Staatsorchester Hamburg, Klauspeter Seibel

Available in German

Roles:

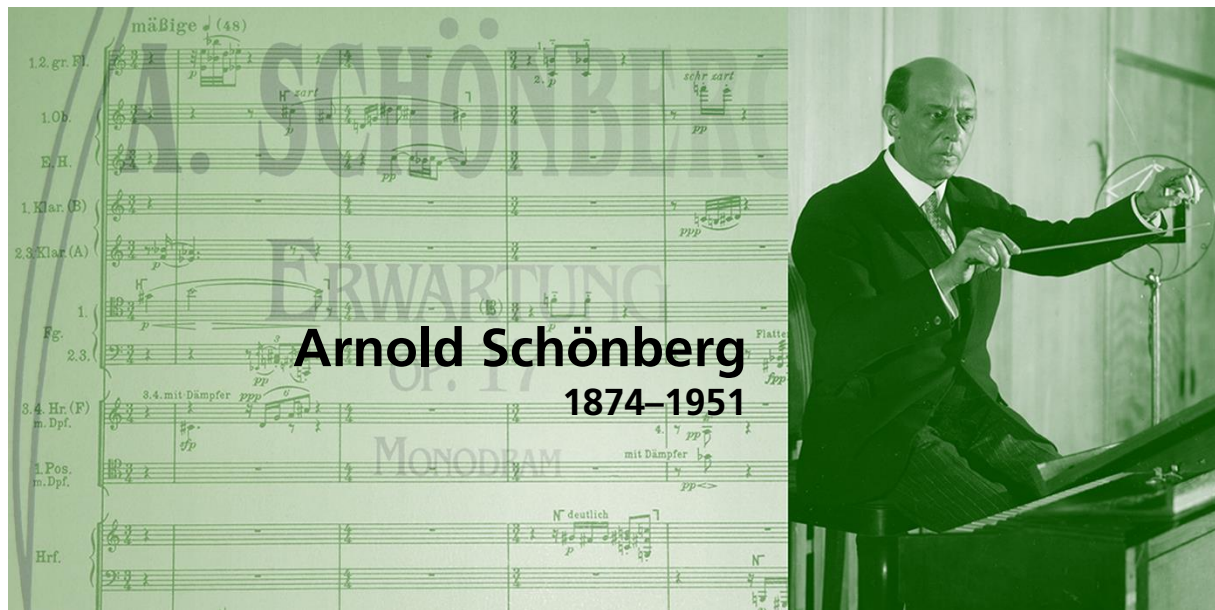
Lenz, Bar

Oberlin, B

Kaufmann, T

6 voices: SSAABB

2 or 4 children



Throughout his life, Arnold Schönberg was interested in the unconscious and the visions and problems associated with this. Accordingly, it comes as no surprise that his first stage work should take the form of a psychoanalytical dream protocol. Schönberg painted numerous expressionist pictures between 1908 and 1911. *Erwartung* endeavours to transfer the visions of his paintings into sound.

In searching for suitable material, he turned to Viennese medical student Marie Pappenheim, who proposed the monodramatic text and worked on it together with Schönberg.

The setting: It is nighttime. Three paths are visible in the moonlight, surrounded by high, dense trees. We see a young woman lost in the woods, desperately looking for her lover. This experience leads her through the gamut of human emotion, fear and hope following each other in quick succession. When her foot comes into contact with a body on the ground, she discovers to her horror that it is that of her lover.

In this time, Schönberg was striving for a free tonality, the archaic, animalistic character of which tied in perfectly with the subject of the lonely, lost protagonist. Seismographically, the music traces the helplessness and loneliness of the woman, pointing to a fundamental experience of modern life. With *Erwartung*, Schönberg composed what can be considered to be the first Freudian music drama. Similar to the literary "inner monologue" that James Joyce developed in his *Ulysses* shortly afterwards, *Erwartung* unfolds its story as if it were held beneath a concave mirror of suspended time. Schönberg stated that his intention had been "to represent in slow motion everything that occurs during a single second of maximum spiritual excitement, stretching it out to half an hour".

***Erwartung (Expectation)* (1909)**

Monodram in 1 act | for soprano and orchestra | 30'

Libretto: Marie Pappenheim

4 4 5 4 - 4 3 4 1 - timp, perc(3), xyl, glock, hp, cel, str

world première: 06.06.1924 Prague (CZ), Deutsches Theater Prag, Alexander Zemlinsky, conductor

Available in German and English

Reduced versions available



With his first opera *The Nose*, 22-year-old Dmitri Shostakovich produced a work typical of the Roaring Twenties, emerging shortly after Ernst Krenek's *Jonny spielt auf* and at around the same time as Kurt Weill's *Dreigroschenoper*. These years were every bit as wild, experimental and open in the Soviet Union as they were in the West. Inspired by Gogol's sardonically absurd, socially critical story, Shostakovich composed irreverently spirited, light-hearted music in 16 more or less short, consecutive scenes. Yet all of its various styles – circus music, galop, polka, Russian Orthodox church music, folk tunes (there are four balalaikas in the orchestra!) – were channelled into an annihilating critique of Russian society, which was still obsessed with authoritarianism and hierarchy. Leningrad audiences lapped it up. Performances were overrun. Communist officials wrinkled their noses, particularly since the work, with its short, grotesque scenes, was a slap in the face for Russian tradition. While writing the opera, Shostakovich claimed that *The Nose* was a *dreadful* story, not a funny one.

Synopsis: A man of reputation wakes up one morning to find that his nose has disappeared. It turns up in baked bread, walks as a larger-than-life nose through the streets and parks of Petersburg, causing crowds to gather, and is ultimately beaten until it has returned to its original size. However, all attempts to reattach it are in vain. But at some stage it is there again and Mr. K. can carry on with his little life as a member of respectable society.

***The Nose (Die Nase)* (1927/1928)**

Opera in 3 acts and 1 epilogue | op. 15 | 105'

Choir : SATB

1 1 1 1 - 1 1 1 0 - Balalaika, Kleine Domra, Kleine Domra, Alt-Domra, Alt-Domra, 1. Teil d. Part (frz.), 2. Teil d. Part (frz.), perc(9), hp(2), pno, str(18 16 14 12 10)

world première: 18.01.1930 Leningrad (RUS), Maly Operny Theatre, Samuel Samossud

Available in Russian (Cyrillic script), German, English, and French

Roles:

Platon Kusmitsch Kowaljoff, Bar

Iwan Jakowlewitsch, Bar

Ein Wachtmeister, T

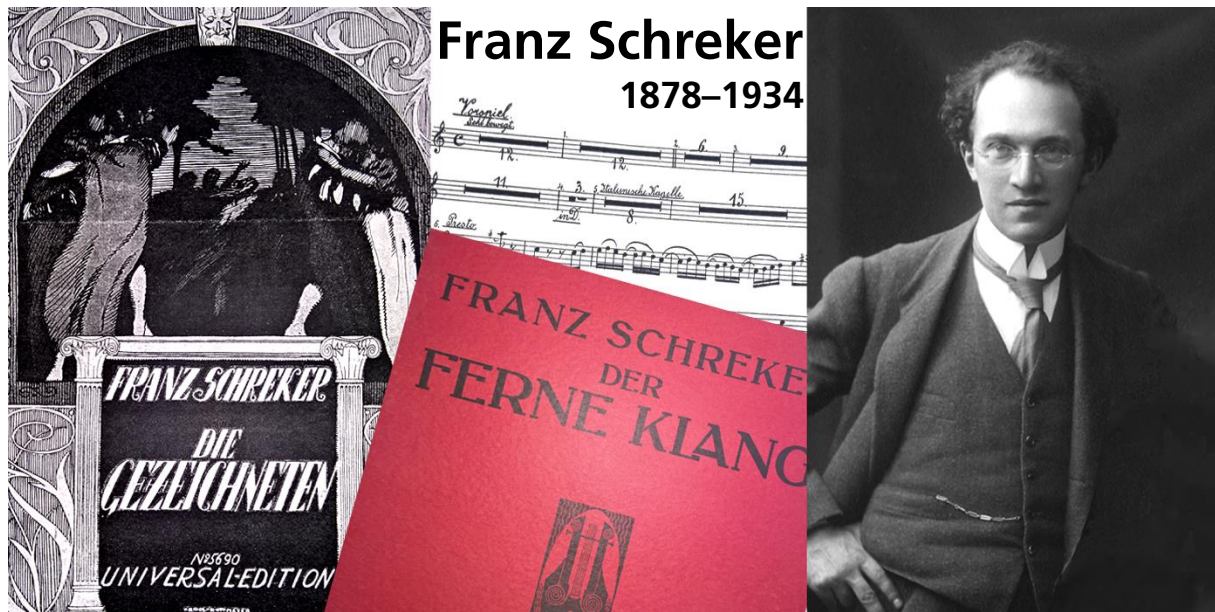
Iwan, T

The nose in the form of a state council, T

Alexandra Grigorjewna Podtotschina, MS

their daughters, S

3 little roles, some speaking roles, and 17 soloists from the choir



It was *Der ferne Klang*, following its premiere in Frankfurt Opera House on 18 August 1912, that established Schreker as one of the most widely performed operatic composers in Germany. 20 years later, he was branded a degenerate. In the libretto that he had written himself for his drama about the failure of love and the decline of an artist, Schreker packaged together everything that was *de rigueur* at the time: *fin de siècle* artistic themes, Freud's discovery of the unconscious and the naturalist poetry of misery. Schreker's sound universe is characterised by stylistic diversity, with extensive use being made of instruments such as the harp, celesta and piano. With singular virtuosity, he brings together a wide cross-section of sound sources, fusing the standard orchestra with gypsy music and Venetian music played from various distances from the stage and adding a distant chorus as well. The unbelievable magic of Schreker's orchestral sound is not easily forgotten.

The storyline for Schreker's opera covers a period of 15 years. The opera takes place in Germany and Venice circa 1900. Young composer Fritz leaves his Grete, no longer able to stand the petit bourgeois confines of his surroundings and feeling that he is destined for greater things. His plan is to return when he is famous and offer her riches, celebrity and his undying love. Grete is gambled away by her alcoholic father to a landlord and goes on the run. At the end of her tether, she is taken up by a matchmaker and agrees to follow her. After some time, Fritz – driven by a yearning for Grete – finds her again in the dance salon "La Casa di Maschere", where she is now a courtesan called Greta. Fritz calls her a harlot and leaves again. Greta succumbs to the advances of a Count who had been wooing her for a long time in vain. Five years later, Fritz succeeds in having his opera "The Harp" premiered in a court theatre. Grete, who has since been abandoned by the Count and is now a common streetwalker called Tini, was at the performance. However, when she recognises herself in the main protagonist, she feels faint. The premiere turns into a fiasco. Grete learns that Fritz is terminally ill. The two of them meet again. However, their new-found happiness together comes too late: Fritz finds his mysterious "distant sound", the mirage of which he has been chasing all his life, while dying in the arms of his long-lost love, Grete.

Der ferne Klang (The Distant Sound) (1903-1910)

Opera in 3 acts | 140'

Choir : SATB

3 3 3 3 - 4 3 3 1 - timp(2), perc(3), glock, hp(2), cel, str - behind the scene: Venetian music (fl, cl, 2 hn, timp, tamb, hp, 3 mand, 2 guit, str.quin), on the stage: Gipsy music (cl, cimb, str.quin), behind the scene: pno

world première: 18.08.1912 Frankfurt am Main (D), Oper Frankfurt, Ludwig Rottenberg

Available in German

Roles:

Old Graumann, Bar

Old Graumann's Wife, MS

Grete (aliases Greta Graumann and Tini), S

Fritz, T

Landlord of the inn, B

A bad actor, Bar

Dr. Vigelius, B

An old woman, MS

Mizi, S

Milli, S

Mary, S

A Spanish girl, S

The count, Bar

The baron, B

The chevalier, T

Rudolf, B or Bar

An actor, Bar

First chorus member, T

Second chorus member, B

Waitress, MS

A dubious individual, T

A policeman, B

A servant, speaking role

Die Gezeichneten was originally commissioned by Alexander Zemlinsky, who asked Franz Schreker to write a libretto for him to set to music – a libretto that would tell “the tragedy of the ugly man”. However, Schreker was so taken with the material that he used it as a basis for his own major operatic work. The triumphant success of the premiere established Schreker for once and for all as one of the leading operatic composers of the early 20th century. Until being outlawed by the Nazis, this work even went so far as to rival Richard Strauss’ operas. *Die Gezeichneten* faded into obscurity for many decades and was only rediscovered thanks to a performance in Frankfurt in 1979. This forgotten masterpiece has now assumed its rightful place on the world’s stages and has since been seen more and more often in opera house repertoires.

Although not written until between 1913 and 1915, Schreker’s opera *Die Gezeichneten* is a *fin de siècle* drama in which, alongside moments of decadence, the focus is on the essential contrast between art and life. The opera is based on Frank Wedekind’s play *Hidalla oder Sein und Haben* and takes place in Renaissance-era Genoa. Ugly and crippled nobleman Alviano Salvago has a paradise called Elysium built on an island near the city, to be devoted to art and beauty. On account of his own ugliness, however, he has never set foot on the island himself. He would like to gift this paradise to the city of Genoa and to make it accessible to all its citizens. Against Alviano’s will, the dashing and confident aristocrat Tamare has set up a brothel on the island in which Genoese noblemen abuse kidnapped girls. The two men are both vying for the affections of painter Carlotta. Recognising the noble soul beneath Alviano’s deformed exterior, she expresses a desire to paint him, he agrees, and the two fall in love. However, Carlotta is also attracted by Tamare’s good looks and allows herself to be seduced by him. Alviano catches them both red-handed and kills Tamare. As Carlotta dies of despair next to his dead body, Alviano loses his mind.

Die Gezeichneten (The Stigmatized) (1911/1913-1915)

Opera in 3 acts | 150'

Choir : SATB

4 4 5 3 - 6 4 3 1 - timp, perc(3), hp(2), cel, pno, str; stage music (can be played by the orchestra): picc, 2 hn, 3 tpt, timp, perc(2), hp, pno, str(1 1 1 1 1)

world première: 18.04.1918 Frankfurt am Main (D), Oper Frankfurt, Ludwig Rottenberg

Available in German

Roles:

Herzog Antoniotto Adorno, B

Graf Andrea Vitellozzo Tamare, Bar

Lodovico Nardi, B

Carlotta Nardi, S

Alviano Salvago, T

Guidobald Usodimare, T

Menaldo Negroni, T

Michlotta Cibo, Bar

Gonsalvo Fieschi, Bar

Julian Pinelli, B

Paolo Calvi, B

The Justice Captain, B

Ginevra Scotti, S

Martuccia, A

Pietro, T

A young man, T

His friend, B

A girl, S

First Senator, T

Second Senator, Bar

Third Senator, B

Servant, B

First citizen, T

Second citizen, Bar

Third citizen, B

Father, B

Mother, A

Child, silent role

Three young people : B, Bar, T

A huge citizen, B

Eight hooded characters, nobles, citizens, soldiers, servants, women, girls, kids, wildlife, nymphs, drunk females



European music at the turn of the century was dominated by an intoxication of sound. In the years that followed Richard Wagner, the orchestral pedal became a feature of excessive sound settings, the word “sound” itself being accorded a magical meaning.

The Polish composer Karol Szymanowski, who was born in 1882 (the year Wagner died), must also be included in the group of sound erotomaniacs. If we consciously exclude Szymanowski’s creative period in Poland, then many of his works are absolute emanations of sound, including his opera *Krol Roger*.

During his travels to Italy and North Africa between 1908 and 1914, Szymanowski was captivated by these countries and collected a wealth of material which found its way into *Krol Roger*. As regards genre, the opera belongs in the mysterious “no man’s land” between opera, oratorio and mystery play. In the opera’s three acts, Szymanowski captured three different cultural societies – in some cases based on authentic music material – Byzantinism, the Arabian-Indian Orient and Greek-Roman Antiquity.

The storyline itself is rooted in Euripides’ “The Bacchae” and, in three oratorio-like tableaux, tells of the struggle between Apollo and Dionysos, between the intellect and the unconscious, and between the Christian Church in mediaeval Sicily and a pagan faith.

The libretto, written by Szymanowski together with Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz, is only based on historical facts as regards the personage of King Roger II, who ruled Sicily between 1130 and 1154, and his advisor. Although the storyline is based on circumstances that are typical of the time, it is fictitious.

This opera was instrumental in cementing Szymanowski’s reputation as an absolute master of ecstasy, mysticism and misterioso.

King Roger (Krol Roger) (1918–1924)

Opera in 3 acts | op. 46 | 120'

Libretto: Jaroslaw Iwaszkiewicz and Karol Szymanowski

Choir : SATB, boys choir (SA)

3 3 4 3 - 4 3 3 1 - perc(6), hp(2), cel, pno, org, str

world première: 19.06.1926 Warsaw (PL), Grand Theatre, Emil Mlynarski

Available in Polish, German, and English

Roles:

Roger II, Bar

Roxana, S

Edrisi, T

Shepherd, T

Archbishop, B

Deaconess, A

Various Priests, monks, nuns, acolytes, courtiers, guards, eunuchs, Shepherd's disciples



After *The Threepenny Opera*, *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* is the best-known opera by Kurt Weill and Bertolt Brecht. Although one of the high points of their collaboration, it sent them on their separate ways again, as it soon became clear that Brecht's notions of epic theatre were at odds with Weill's music. *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* was preceded by *Mahagonny Songspiel*, which was premiered to great success in Baden-Baden in 1927, prompting Weill and Brecht to make a complete opera out of the material. After the Kroll Opera in Berlin rejected the work, *Mahagonny* was premiered in Leipzig. The premiere was a scandal, the performance being destroyed by National Socialist supporters. Nonetheless, performances in Kassel, Prague and Frankfurt followed shortly afterwards and the work was ultimately performed to great success in Berlin's Theater am Kurfürstendamm in 1931, with some 50 performances conducted by Alexander Zemlinsky. *Mahagonny* was no longer produced after 1932 and did not return to the stage in Weill's lifetime. The first complete post-war production was held in Darmstadt in 1957, after which the work gradually conquered the world's stages.

Three fugitives from justice – Leocadia Begbick, Fatty and Trinity Moses – found the city of Mahagonny in the middle of the desert: a paradise for pleasure-seekers, it grows rapidly. Jim Mahoney and his friends soon develop a taste for life in Mahagonny. Jimmy gets together with Jenny the prostitute, but is soon dissatisfied at the number of restraints being imposed in the city and considers leaving Mahagonny. But suddenly word arrives that a hurricane is on the way, threatening to reduce Mahagonny to rubble. Magically, the hurricane bypasses the city, prompting its people to engage in riotous excess. Jimmy finally runs out of money and, as neither his friends nor Jenny are willing to help him out, he is sentenced to death, heralding the end of Mahagonny.

Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny (1930)

Opera in 3 acts | 140'

Libretto: Bertolt Brecht

Choir : SATB

2 1 1 2 - 2 3 2 1 - s.sax, alto sax, t.sax, timp, perc, pno, bass guit, bjo, band, str - on stage: zith, pno, 3 vl

world première: 09.03.1930 Leipzig (D), Städtisches Theater Leipzig, Gustav Brecher

Available in German and English

Roles:

Leokadja Begbick, MS

Fatty, T

Dreieinigkeitsmoses, Bar

Jenny Hill, S

Jimmy Mahoney, T

Jack O'Brien, T

Bill, Bar

Joe, B

Tobby Higgins, T

six girls and the men from Mahagonny

The Threepenny Opera is the central work emanating from the collaboration between Kurt Weill and Bertolt Brecht. The work is based on *The Beggar's Opera*, an 18th-century ballad opera by English dramatist John Gay, which was translated into German by Brecht's colleague Elisabeth Hauptmann. Weill summed up the basic idea behind the work as follows: "With *The Threepenny Opera*, Bertold Brecht and I wanted to go in search of opera in its original form. [...] In my view, the music itself cannot be realistic but must be set against a realistic storyline. The music cannot convey proceedings, shapes or characters. This means the strongest detachment from Wagner to date (although this should in no way be seen as a rejection of his work). This kind of music is the most consistent reaction to Wagner. It means the complete destruction of the concept of music drama. Each piece of music is a separate music form and interrupts the story."

After premiering in Berlin's Theater am Schiffbauerdamm with a stage design by Caspar Neher and with Lotte Lenya in the role of Jenny, *The Threepenny Opera* was a resounding success, with 4,000 performances being held at 120 theatres in Germany and further afield within the space of a year. By 1932, it had been translated into 18 languages. After the work had been ultimately banned by the Nazis, the first German post-war production was held in Berlin as early as August 1945. Today, *The Threepenny Opera* is one of the best-known and most performed theatrical works in the world.

Jonathan Peachum is the boss of London's beggar mafia. To his horror, his daughter Polly has married the greatest villain in the city, Captain Macheath – better known as Mack the Knife. In revenge, Peachum wants to deliver Mack to the police for hanging. Mack is forced to flee and passes on his business to Polly beforehand. But rather than leaving the city straight away, he pays another visit to a brothel in Turnbridge, including his favourite prostitute Low-Dive Jenny. Jenny informs the police, who come and arrest Mack. His execution seems inevitable until a messenger from the Queen arrives announcing that Mack has been pardoned and granted a title.

The Threepenny Opera (1928)

Play with music | based on the text of the Kurt Weill Edition | Music: 55'

Libretto: Bertolt Brecht and Elisabeth Hauptmann

0 0 0 0 - 0 1 1 0 - sop.sax(Bb), alto sax(Eb), bar.sax(Eb), t.sax(Bb), bjo, harm, timp

world première: 31.08.1928 Berlin (D), Theater am Schiffbauerdamm, Theo Mackeben

Available in German and English

Roles:

Jonathan Jeremiah Peachum, Bar

Mrs. Peachum, MS

Polly Peachum, S

Macheath, T/Bar

Jackie Brown, Bar

Lucy Brown, S

Macheath's gang, street bandits: Walt Dreary, Crook Finger Jack, Matt of the Mint, Sawtooth Bob, Ed, Jimmy Filch, T

Jenny Diver, MS

Smith, Bar

Reverend Kimball

Beggars, Whores (Dolly, Betty, Vixer, Molly, and others), Policemen



In spring 1915, Zemlinsky commenced work at a feverish pace, setting to music Max Meyerfeld's German translation of Oscar Wilde's play *A Florentine Tragedy*. Not only did it take a whole year for the acquisition of the rights to go through, but the First World War hampered communication between Oscar Wilde's legal successor, who also wanted to reserve the scoring rights for a more established composer. Several theatres expressed an interest in the opera, but ultimately pulled out again. However, general music director in Stuttgart Max von Schillings, who owed a debt to Zemlinsky for helping him have his opera *Mona Lisa* performed in Prague, kept his word and scheduled his colleague's work for the end of January 1917. Rehearsals and performances were plagued with bad luck: the second performance had to be cancelled at the last minute when Schillings missed his train from Frankfurt; shortly afterwards, a church newspaper denounced the opera on moral grounds, causing the theatre manager to call off performances temporarily.

There were only eight further productions during Zemlinsky's lifetime. The work gathered dust until being rediscovered in 1954 and brought to life again in Radio Bern's concert hall. The first post-war stage performance took place in Kiel in 1977, followed by Venice in 1980 and Hamburg in 1981. Since then, *A Florentine Tragedy* has gradually established itself as a milestone in the history of 20th-century music theatre.

Synopsis: Florentine cloth merchant Simone returns home unexpectedly from a business trip to find his wife with a young man who introduces himself as Guido Bardi, son of the Duke of Florence. Seized by jealousy, Simone initially plays the humble servant, offering the prince wine and finery. But harmless banter suddenly leads to conflict as Simone challenges the prince to a duel. The merchant knocks Guido's sword from his hand and strangles him with his bare hands. Bianca admires her husband's true colours and he in turn recognises her beauty anew.

A Florentine Tragedy (1916)

Opera in 1 act | op. 16 | New critical edition by Antony Beaumont | 60'

Libretto: Max Meyerfeld

Based on text by: Oscar Wilde

3 3 4 3 - 6 4 3 1 - timp, perc(2), hp, cel, mand, str

world première: 30.01.1917 Stuttgart (D), Königliche Hoftheater, Max von Schillings

Available in German

Roles:

Guido Bardi, T

Simone, Bar

Bianca, S

Reduced version available

In 1919, 19-year-old Georg C. Klaren sent Zemlinsky the libretto for *Der Zwerg*, which was based loosely on Oscar Wilde's *Birthday of the Infanta*. Zemlinsky was so taken with this that he abandoned work on another of Klaren's librettos and set to work on *Der Zwerg* in a wild burst of creativity. Friends and acquaintances did not necessarily share his enthusiasm for this "tragedy of the ugly man", primarily because Klaren had – perhaps inadvertently – given the title character the composer's own physical attributes. By identifying himself with a figure on the stage that was so closely modelled on his own appearance and character, the concern was that Zemlinsky would make himself a laughing stock.

Of the many conductors and theatre directors who received copies of the piano score during the spring of 1921, Otto Klemperer – musical director of the Städtische Bühnen in Cologne at the time – was the first to respond positively. The search for a singer with sufficient range and acting ability for the title role, conceived as it was for a fusion of character tenor and *Heldentenor*, forced the Cologne theatre management to postpone the production more than once, but eventually the premiere was scheduled for 28 May 1922.

During that period of great change, with audiences more and more in thrall to the *Zeitoper* genre, neoclassicism and New Objectivity, such supposedly effusive, post-Romantic music as that of *Der Zwerg* appealed less and less to public taste. Accordingly, the work vanished from the repertoire for half a century, only to make a triumphant return on 20 September 1981, when it was performed in a double-bill with *Florentinische Tragödie* at the Staatsoper Hamburg. Zemlinsky's music, which alternated between vibrant orchestral sounds, iridescent orientalism and rhythmic conciseness, conjures up an exaggeratedly superficial picture of society with which the naive, honest dwarf does not fit in.

Synopsis: *Der Zwerg* is the brutal conflict between how we perceive ourselves and how we are perceived by others: the Spanish Infanta is celebrating her 18th birthday and, in addition to gifts from all over the world, she is given a deformed dwarf who idolises all forms of beauty but has never seen himself. The dwarf falls in love with the Infanta, who is fascinated by the creature and who ultimately confronts him with his own reflection: the dwarf dies.

The Dwarf (Der Zwerg) (1920-21)

A tragic tale of music in 1 act | op. 17 | New critical edition by Antony Beaumont | 90'

Libretto: Georg Klaren

3 3 3 3 - 4 3 3 1 - timp, perc(4), hp, cel, mand, guit, str; stage music: 2 cl(C), bsn, 2 hn(F), 3 tpt(C), tamb, mand, vln.I(4), vln.II(3), vla(2), vc(2), cb(1)

Choir: SA

world première: 28.05.1922 Köln (D), Stadttheater Köln, Otto Klemperer

The Birthday of the Infanta (Der Geburtstag der Infantin) (1920-21)

A tragic tale of music in 1 act | New version of the text by Adolf Dresen (1981) | 90'

Libretto: Georg Klaren

Choir: SA

3 3 5 4 - 4 3 3 1 - timp, perc(4), hp, cel, mand, guit, str; on stage: bsn, 2 cl(C), 2 hn(F), tamb, mand, str

world première: 20.09.1981 Hamburg (D), Staatsoper Hamburg, Gerd Albrecht

Available in German

Roles:

Donna Clara, S

Ghita, S

Don Estoban, B

The Dwarf, T

3 Maids: 2 S and 1 MS

The playmates of the infanta, S and A

Servants (silent roles)

Reduced version available

Opera Milestones

REDISCOVERED

Sir Harrison Birtwistle (*1934)

Sir Harrison Birtwistle's opera *The Mask of Orpheus* was created over the course of more than a decade. As early as 1973 Birtwistle and his librettist Peter Zinovieff had started work on a "lyric tragedy" – which was their description for the opera. In *The Mask of Orpheus* Birtwistle explores the boundaries between music, song, drama, myth, pantomime and electronics. "I wanted to invent a formalism which does not rely on tradition in the way that *Punch and Judy* [...] relied on tradition. [...] In *The Mask of Orpheus*, I didn't want to hark back any more; I wanted to create a formal world that was utterly new," remarked Birtwistle. He therefore created a milestone in his oeuvre, and his subsequent stage works *Yan Yan Tethera*, *Gawain* and *The Second Mrs Kong* must be seen from this perspective.

Electronic music that was produced in the early 1980s by Barry Anderson at IRCAM in Paris, and was described by Birtwistle as "a mad, mechanical percussion instrument", forms an important part of the opera. The electronics consist of only four notes and chords played by the harp and symbolise Orpheus' lyre in a figurative sense. Each act is also characterised by electronic *auras* which represent summer, winter and the tides.

It appears difficult to describe the content of the work as it is not linear. The mythological stories about Orpheus are its basis, for example his love for Eurydice and his futile attempts to bring her back to life after her death, his role as one of the Argonauts and his violent death at the hands of the maenads. The opera consists of 126 individual events that are always arranged in groups of three. The three main characters Orpheus, Euridice and Aristaeus are each subdivided into three roles: a singer, a mime artist and a puppet. All are masked and characterised with a colour that is allocated to them.

***The Mask of Orpheus* (1973–1984)**

Opera in 3 acts | 210'

Libretto: Peter Zinovieff

Choir: SATB (16 voices)

4 4 4 4 - 4 4 6 2 - perc(7), hp(3), sop.sax(3), e.guit, bass guit, e.mand, tape

world première: 21.05.1986 London (GB), Coliseum London. English National Opera, Elgar Howarth

Available in English

Roles:

Orpheus - The Man, T

Orpheus - Hero, mime

Orpheus - The Myth, Hades, T

Euridice - The Woman, MS

Euridice - The Heroine, mime

Euridice - The Myth, Persephone, MS

Aristaeus - The Man, Bar

Aristaeus - The Hero, mime

Aristaeus - The Myth / Charon, Bar

The Oracle of the dead / Hecate, S

The Caller, Bar

1st Priest, T

2nd Priest, Bar

3rd Priest, B

1st Woman, S

2nd Woman, MS

3rd Woman, A

The troupe of the passing clouds, mimes

Apollo, tape

Boris Blacher (1903–1975)

Boris Blacher's chamber opera *Romeo und Julia* sets itself apart musically through its extremely sparse instrumentation – a masterclass in the art of omission. The text was based on several scenes of August Wilhelm Schlegel's translation of the Shakespeare play, whereby Blacher did not change the drama but rather condensed it, focusing on the tragic events of the Romeo and Juliet story and purging all elements that were not central to this. True to the chamber opera style, the voice parts are sung in a free narrative tone that can range from soaring expressiveness to lyrical restraint. However, Blacher also interspersed this work with a series of German cabaret songs which, having been written in 1943/1944, were characterised not by sentimentality but rather by a sense of impending doom (however, these songs were omitted for the 1950 premiere at Salzburg Festival!). And Blacher was not interested in telling an epic story but rather in isolating his characters, in which connection the harmonically and rhythmically daring chorus of soloists played an important role. This chorus comments upon and shapes the proceedings, assuming the role of several Shakespearean characters in dialogue and directing attention to the fate of the lovers again and again.

The chamber opera can be performed either in German using Schlegel's translation or in English using Shakespeare's original words.

Synopsis: Romeo and Juliet meet at a ball, spend the night on the balcony together and marry in secret the following morning. The machinations of their respective parental houses ultimately lead to a fateful, tragic end.

***Romeo and Juliet* (1943)**

Chamber Opera in 3 parts based on Shakespeare | 65'

Choir: SATB

fl., bs. - tpt. - pno. - string quintet

world première: 1950 Salzburg (A), Salzburger Festspiele

Available in bilingual German/English (Shakespeare)

Roles:

Romeo, T

Julia, S

Lady Capulet, A

The Nurse, A

Capulet, B

Tybalt, T

Benvolio, B

Peter, S or T

3 male roles

Josef Bohuslav Foerster (1859–1951)

Foerster composed his tragic opera *Eva* while he was staying in Hamburg (1893–1903), where Gustav Mahler had engaged his wife Berta Foersterová-Lautererová as a soloist at the opera there. The couple followed Mahler to Vienna, where Berta performed under Mahler at the Court Opera (1901–1913). Both she and Foerster became important figures in Mahler's life.

Foerster took the subject for *Eva* from the play *Gazdina roba* (*Gazdina* = housekeeper, landlady; *roba* = an opprobrious word for a woman who has left her husband) by Gabriela Preissová, to whom we also owe the source material for *Jenůfa*. This piece made Preissová the founder of Czech realistic rustic drama. Foerster introduced a type of woman to Czech opera which Janáček subsequently perfected. The opera centers on a social conflict: Eva, a poor seamstress, and Mánek, the son of a rich farmer, are in love, scorning the barriers of social status. However, in accordance with the social and religious laws of the time, Mánek's mother and the village populace disallow their love. Desperately seeking a way out of the intolerable situation, Eva drowns herself in the waters of the Danube.

This tense, dramatic mood prevails through the entire opera. For Foerster (who also wrote the libretto), it was important "to capture the individual characters and events in all their psychological veracity and ultimately to omit all minor figures" (*Der Pilger*); thus he retained only six of the original 20 roles. Premiered in 1899 at the National Theatre in Prague, *Eva* remained in the Czech repertoire (255 performances in Prague alone by 1983). When it was first given in Vienna at the Volksoper in 1915, it was known as *Marja*, not least due to the coincidence with the eponymous Lehár operetta.

Eva (1895–1897)

Opera in 3 acts | op. 50 | 130'

3 3 3 3 - 4 3 3 1 - timp, perc, hp, org, str

world première: 01.01.1899 Prague (CZ), National Theatre Prague, Adolf Čech

Available in Czech and German

Roles:

Eva, S

Mánek, T

Mešjanovka, his mother A

Samko, Bar

Zuzka, MS

Rubač, B

Farmers, workers, musicians

Hans Gál (1890–1987)

Hans Gál described his *Das Lied der Nacht* as a “dramatic ballad”, symbolically based on the emotional experiences of a Sicilian princess destined for the throne. Levetzow’s text conjures up a fabulous, romantic world in 12th-century Palermo, in which classical, Byzantine and Moorish elements combine to form a strangely alluring whole, a lyrical blend of oriental and occidental culture.

After the premiere at Stadttheater Breslau in 1926, the general consensus was that Gál had succeeded in restoring cantabile style to modern compositional technique. In spite of all the dissonant harmonic treatment, the complicated rhythmic displacements and changes, the voice has been returned to its essential form, no longer cramped by instrumentation as is often the case with operas of the time.

Synopsis: *Das Lied der Nacht* symbolises the inner voice of a woman that makes her yearn for a man. Princess Lianora has heard a strangely poignant song coming up through her window. She feels a longing for the unknown voice that sang the song. She decides to marry the mysterious singer of the “song of the night” and make him her king. Before her assembled subjects, she declares him king and calls upon him to remove his mask. It is the boatswain. To spare her the dishonour of such an alliance, he takes his own life. Wracked with nameless pain, the Princess throws herself upon the corpse of the singer, to whom alone she belongs. She takes the veil and follows the royal corpse, the singer of the “song of the night”.

Das Lied der Nacht (1924/1925)

Dramatic Ballad in 3 acts | op. 23 | 130'

Text author: Karl M. von Levetzow

Choir: SATB

3 3 3 3 - 4 6 3 1 - timp, perc(3), hp, cel, str, stage music: 1st trp in C, 2nd trp in C, 3rd trp in C, deep bells

world première: 24.04.1926 Breslau (D), Opernhaus Breslau, Hans Gál

Available in German

Roles:

The Prince Abbess, A

Lianora, S

Hämone, S

Galwina, silent role

Tancred, Bar

The Chancellor Regent, B

Ciullo, T

Four years after the remarkable success in 1919 of Hans Gál's first opera *Der Arzt der Sobeide* in Breslau, the Düsseldorf Stadttheater agreed to stage the premiere of his second opera. Composed in three acts, even the spirited, charming quality of the libretto delivered appeal, and the opera was received so favourably under the baton of Georg Széll that a considerable number of German opera houses immediately included the work in their repertoire as well. The first two operas by Gál were given comic themes. *Die heilige Ente* is bathed in an atmosphere of humour and irony.

Hans Gutman writes in an issue of *Anbruch* from 1925 on the occasion of the Berlin premiere: the harmony of this score and its timbres show how the orchestra developed over the course of the 19th century, and its subsequent virtuoso treatment by masters such as Strauss and Mahler. Gál also displays an understanding of how to deal with the resources supplied by this large body of sound, hinting at the exotic milieu where the action takes place with the use of fifths and octaves (the recognised signs of such a setting) and by means of whole-tone scales, while also demonstrating his skill at emphasising the *bonze* solemnity of his material with a gong. The score has a pleasant sound, the vocal melodies are not written in conflict with the singers (as is so frequently the case in post-Wagnerian productions).

Synopsis: Yang, a simple duck-breeder, is on his way to the mandarin's palace, where he is to deliver a duck for the evening's festive banquet, when he succumbs to the enchantment of the mandarin's beautiful consort and her song. Bewitched, he does not notice when someone steals the duck. The festivities commence, and the mandarin threatens Yang with the death penalty if he does not produce the duck. The gods intervene and switch Yang's soul with the mandarin's; in the latter form, Yang abolishes the death penalty. But when he declares the gods to be superfluous, they are not amused, and reverse the exchange of souls...

***The Sacred Duck (Die heilige Ente)* (1920/1921)**

A play with Gods and men | Opera in 1 prologue and 3 acts | op. 15 | 180'

Text authors: Leo Feld and Karl M. von Levezow

Choir: SATB

3 3 3 3 – 4 3 3 1 - timp., perc.(2) - hp., cel. - str. - on stage: 3 tpt., 3 tbn., gong, low bells, 1 pair timpani

world première: 29.04.1923 Düsseldorf (D), Georg Széll

Available in German

Roles:

The Mandarin, Bar

Li, S

Yang, T

The Tän zerin, S

The jester, B

The bonze, B

The major Domo, B

A nun, A

God of the Waterbasin, T

God of the Throne, B

God of the Doors, Bar

Chorus of bonzes, Buddhist nuns, carriers, palace servants

Manfred Gurlitt (1890–1972)

Anyone who knows Manfred Gurlitt (1890–1972) will be aware that he composed an opera based on *Wozzeck* (1921–1925). In contrast to Alban Berg's setting, Gurlitt interprets the drama with little structural, harmonic or instrumental refinement – not on account of any particular technical deficiencies, but rather because he approaches the subject from the perspective of spoken theatre. It would be unjust to degrade his work to a "second" *Wozzeck*; instead, it would be more appropriate to speak of the "other" *Wozzeck*.

Gurlitt's handling of the source materials is quite unlike Berg's, as he barely changes the ingredients at all. Instead, he takes the materials, dry and fragile as they are, and translates them directly into sound. Could the one have influenced the other? Even in the 1960s, Gurlitt still insisted that he had neither read nor heard Berg's score. "The composition and orchestration is [*sic*] handled in a completely new way," he promised in a letter to UE. "A chamber orchestra with soloists (including a soprano) and a grand orchestra, [...] the whole sequence of scenes runs together without a break. A few orchestral interludes serve to connect and expand." (Letter to UE director Emil Hertzka on 29 March 1921).

In the finished work, all that remains of the planned orchestral interludes is the epilogue, a "Lament for Wozzeck" following after the suicide of the title character; this functions, as in the equivalent section of Berg's score, as an epitaph for the anti-hero: music of compassion and bewilderment. Using a dialogue between visible and invisible sound effects – off-stage choruses, trombones below the stage, violins above it – Gurlitt explores the theatrical ideas as written in 1921 by his mentor, Ferruccio Busoni, in an essay "On the Possibilities of Opera".

This "other" *Wozzeck* is an alternative by Manfred Gurlitt that allows us a view of Büchner's masterpiece from a fascinating perspective, leaving us breathless.

Wozzeck (1923/1924)

Musical Tragedy in 18 scenes and 1 epilogue | 90'

Based on text by: Georg Büchner

Choir: SATB

3 3 3 3 - 4 3 3 1 - timp, perc, - hp, cel, pno, - str

world première: 22.04.1926 Bremen (D), Stadttheater Bremen, Manfred Gurlitt

Available in German

Roles:

Wozzeck, Bar

Marie, S

Captain, Bar

Doctor, T

Andrés, T

Drum major, Bar

Margaret, MS

Old woman, A

Jude, T

A girl, S

2 voice roles

Roman Haubenstock-Ramati (1919–1994)

The audience responded with loud, sustained protests at the premiere of Roman Haubenstock-Ramati's *Amerika* at the Deutsche Oper Berlin in 1966. The libretto consists of short sentences and fragments of words taken by the composer from Kafka's unfinished novel "Amerika". Kafka's essential features – fragmentation and the unreal – also lend characteristic expression to the 25 parts of the libretto.

Haubenstock-Ramati emphasises in his stage directions: everything is there. This means everything at once; there is no action in the sense of dramatic development. The fact that we see the 25 scenes of the opera in chronological sequence is a concession to the comprehensive faculty of our senses. We have to content ourselves with intimations of simultaneous events.

Synopsis: We meet the most important people involved in the storyline, although there is no actual storyline. It disintegrates into movement that is scenic, occasionally pantomimic or purely emotional: Karl Rossmann and his arrival in America; his encounter with the stoker; the uncle's intervention; goings-on in Pollunder's house and at the Hotel Occidental; Rossmann and the student getting to know each other; Brunelda's room and her departure from Delamarche's prison; Rossmann's engagement at the Grand Nature Theater of Oklahoma; heaven and hell.

Amerika (1962/1964)

Opera in 2 parts | opera | 150'

Choir: 4S 4A 4T 4B (chanting)

3 2 3 2 - 4 4 3 1 - perc(4), vib, mar, cel, harm, pno, mand, str (16vln, 8vla, 6vc, 4cb)

world première: 08.10.1966 Berlin (D), Deutsche Oper Berlin, Bruno Maderna

Available in German

Roles:

Karl Rossmann, T

Clare, S

Therese, S

Brunelda, MS

The head cook, A

Uncle Jacob, B

The head Porter, B

The Director of the great nature Theatre, B

The heater, Bar

Mr. Pollunder, Bar

Robinson, Bar

Delamarche, B or Bar

The Head waiter, B or Bar

The Chief of staff of the great nature Theatre, B or Bar

Speaker 1, speaking voice ad lib.

The student, speaking voice ad lib.

First scribe, speaking voice ad lib.

Speaker 2, speaking voice ad lib.

Second clerk, speaking voice ad lib.

"Court agent" acting role

The "I love you" candidate, acting role

Ballet and pantomime

Leoš Janáček (1854–1928)

The libretto of *Šárka*, by leading Czech symbolist poet Julius Zeyer, was written at the request of Antonín Dvořák, who then decided against setting the text to music. Fascinated by the material, in 1887 33-year-old Janáček commenced with the composition, which was the starting point for the work's complex genesis. The refusal of the librettist to grant his approval and the critical response from Dvořák, to whom Janáček sent the finished pages, led to the composer only completing *Šárka* in 1925 in Brno, three years before his death. The work subsequently faded into obscurity. The CD recording of the opera in 2000, conducted by Sir Charles Mackerras, was a coproduction by the publishing houses Universal Edition and Editio Moravia. For the first time, Sir Charles Mackerras employed the score material edited by musicologist Jiří Zahrádka and made improvement proposals for practical use. The opera bears characteristics both from the early works and also of a mature opera composer.

With three acts lasting a total of one hour, the storyline of the opera is set in Czech mythology. The long years of peace, during which the wise Queen Libuša ruled over the country, was followed by a period of military conflict after the death of the monarch. Under the leadership of ambitious warrior Šárka, an army of women approaches Libuša's burial tomb, where widowed King Přemysl is spending time with his confidants. The young fighter Ctirad appears before him unexpectedly, who is supposed to assist the ruler on behalf of his father Dobrovoj in the fight against Vlasta, who is refusing to recognise male domination. Přemysl entrusts the castle treasury and Libuša's tomb to Ctirad's care. Šárka and her women succeed in breaking into the vaults. Undaunted, they approach the corpse in order to steal the crown and relic. At this moment, Ctirad challenges them with his weapon drawn. He is immediately overwhelmed by their beauty and courage. Šárka, who is involuntarily deeply touched at the sight of Ctirad, chooses a form of quick revenge. She lets herself be disarmed and tied up. When Ctirad finds her, he frees her and declares his love for her. However, a signal calls her fellow warriors, who overwhelm and execute the young man. Přemysl and the princes find his body a short time later. Šárka returns unexpectedly with the captured crown and allows herself to be put to death by burning as a sign of remorse and her love.

Šárka (1887–1888)

Opera in 3 acts | 1919 version | 67'

Choir: Chorus of Wladiken (TB), Choir of the combatants (SA), Chorus of young men (TB), Chorus of girls (SA)

2 3 3 3 - 4 2 3 1 - timp, perc, hp, str

world première: 11.11.1925 Brno (CZ), Mahen Theatre, František Neumann

Available in Czech, German, and English

Roles:

Šárka, S

Přemysl, Bar

Ctirad, T

Lumír, T

Častava, A

Hosta, A

Libina, S

Mlada, S

Radka, MS

Svatava, S

Vitoraz, B

Vlasta, MS

The two parts of *The Excursions of Mr. Brouček* are very different in their design, which can be attributed to the genesis of the work. The first part originated between 1908 and 1917, at a time when the composer was growing increasingly bitter about the disregard for his works shown by artistic circles in Prague. In contrast, the second part was composed in 1916/17 and reflects the patriotism of the war years. *The Excursion of Mr. Brouček to the Moon* and *The Excursion of Mr. Brouček to the 15th Century* doubtlessly occupy a special position within the composer's operatic oeuvre. After all, they seem to completely contradict the fundamentally serious and dramatic character of his other operas. With its intense comedy, garnished with unmistakably satirical elements, one could almost characterise *The Excursions of Mr. Brouček* as being atypical of Janáček's production. Yet here as well, his extremely expressive, text-orientated and, above all, original compositional style, which made him one of the 20th century's most important composers, is unmistakably present.

The opera is set in Prague in the year 1888. Verger's daughter Málinka accuses the painter Mazal of dancing with another woman, and she announces defiantly that she is now going to marry the landlord Brouček. Annoyed by all the little troubles of everyday life, however, Brouček yearns to travel to the moon – far away from insolvent tenants, irksome taxes and unbearable scandals in the press. With his mind clouded by alcohol, Brouček embarks on an excursion to the distant planet in a dream and is astonished that the world up there is entirely different to how he imagined it to be. Instead of being free of his worries, he meets numerous oversensitive aesthetes who dedicate their lives to painting, poetry and music. Finally he escapes and is found near a pub in a drunken stupor while Mazal and Málinka declare their love for one another.

Brouček has hardly returned to Earth when he sets off on another journey. This time his dream takes him to Prague in the year 1420, in the midst of the Hussite Wars. Brouček is summoned to fight with the Hussites, headed by Jan Žižka, against Emperor Sigmund. However, Brouček proves to be a less than steadfast fighter and seems like an utter coward compared with the extremely patriotic Czechs who are bursting with religious zeal. He is therefore sentenced to death by burning as a traitor and deserter. But at the crucial moment, to his great relief he wakes up from his nightmare. And he is left with nothing more than a cold that he caught because he spent the night in a barrel in Würfel's cellar.

The excursion of Mr. Brouček to the Moon (1808–1920)

Opera in 2 acts and 1 epilogue | 70'

Edited by Jiří Zahrádka (2001)

Choir: Artists (TTTBBB), Musicians (TTBB), Ethereal Companions (SSAA)

4 3 3 3 - 4 4 4 1 - timp, perc, hp, cel, str

world première: 23.04.1920, Prague (CZ), National Theatre

world première of the revised version: 20.12.2003 Prague (CZ), National Theater in Prague, Charles Mackerras

Roles:

Matěj Brouček, T

Blankytný, T

Lunobor, Bar

Etherea, S

Čaroskvoucí, B

Child Prodigy, S

Harfoboj, T

Duhoslav, T

Oblačný, Bar

Poet, T

Another Poet, T

The excursion of Mr. Brouček to the 15th Century (1917)*

Opera in 2 acts | 60'

Edited by Jiří Zahrádka (2001)

Choir: Armed men (TTTBBB), Warriors (TTBB), Voices (SSAATT), People (SSAATTTBB),

Children (SA-children's choir)

4 3 3 3 - 4 3 3 1 - timp, perc, hp, cel, str - stage orchestra: ob(2), bsn, hn, tpt(3), org, bagpipe

world première: 23.04.1920, Prague (CZ), National Theatre

world première of the revised version: 20.12.2003 Prague (CZ), National Theater in Prague, Charles Mackerras

Available in Czech, German, and English, except * (available in Czech and German only)

Roles:

Matěj Brouček, T

Petřík, T

Domšík of the Bell, Bar

Kunka, S

Councillor, B

Student, S

Kedruta, A

Miroslav the Goldsmith, T

Vojta of the Peacocks, T

Vacek Bradatý, Bar

First Taborite, Bar

Second Taborite, T

Zoltán Kodály (1882–1967)

Háry János, or in full *János Háry's Adventures from Nagybony to the Vienna Burg op. 15*, is one of the most original musical works composed in the 20th century. It is a singspiel with four scenes and also a prelude and postlude, consisting of authentic peasant folk songs and folk dances that were arranged and orchestrated by Kodály with much sensitivity and respect. Kodály packaged this heritage in a scenic composition with radiant joviality and a comical storyline that are altogether most effective on stage. The idea for the libretto that was written by Zsolt Harsányi and Béla Paulini originated from the humorous epic poem by János Garay titled *The Veteran*, which was widely known across Hungary up until the 20th century.

The theme can be roughly described as the fairy tale of the old Hungarian peasant János and the incredible heroic deeds during his time as a soldier which he relates to his friends but which were never actually performed. The storyline is set in Hungary, Austria and Italy at the beginning of the 19th century. 1st adventure: János rescues Napoleon's second wife Marie-Luise, the daughter of Emperor Franz, who was being held at the border between Hungary and Russia. She gratefully takes him and his bride Örsze with her to Vienna. 2nd adventure: He is working as a sergeant at the Viennese Court, enjoying the favour of Marie-Luise. In order to get rid of him, the knight Ebelastin delivers Napoleon's declaration of war. János leaves for battle. 3rd adventure: János, who has been posted to Milan, defeats the French, captures Napoleon and dictates the peace treaty to him. General Kruzifix hands over his military staff to him. Marie-Luise wants to leave Napoleon in order to be with János. 4th adventure: János is celebrated as a hero in the Viennese court. However, he rejects Marie-Luise when she asks him to marry her. Instead he moves back to his homeland and his bride Örsze, and marries her.

The Imperial Adventure of Háry János (1925–1926)

Comic opera | op. 15 | 1962 Authorised revised version by Ernst Hartmann | 150'

Arranged by Ernst Hartmann

Choir: SATB - Children's choir

3 2 3 2 - 4 3 3 1 - cornet(3), timp, perc, cel, cimb, pno, str

world première: 16.10.1926 Budapest (H), Hungarian Royal Opera House Budapest.

Orchestra of the Hungarian Royal Opera House, Nándor Rékai

Háry János (1925–1926)*

A Hungarian Folk Opera | op. 15 | authorised shortened version 1983 | 120'

Libretto: Béla Paulini and Zsolt Harsányi

3 2 3 2 - 4 3 3 1 - timp, perc(5), cel, pno, cornet(3), cimb, str

world première: N/A

Available in Hungarian and German, except * (available in English only)

Roles:

Ilka, MS

Háry János, Bar

Uncle Marcsi, Bar

Marie-Luise, MS

Napoleon, B

Ebelasztin, voice

Empress, S

Kaiser Franz, voice

15 small speaking roles (Ballet)

Hans Krása (1899–1944)

The opera *Verlobung im Traum* is a fascinating product of the democratic and multicultural 1920s in Prague. The libretto by Rudolf Fuchs and Rudolf Thomas was written in German owing to its potential distribution. From a musically idiomatic perspective, Krása was shaped at least by Czech and German qualities, open to the influence of Janáček and Bohemian folk music, and also touched by Zemlinsky's late-tonal, constructive mastery and Schönberg's radicalism. Krása tells a story that is positioned somewhere between dream and reality in the form of an opera – with dialogues that change very rapidly into extended ensemble scenes, with vehement and characteristic arioso declarations, with dramatic, gripping choral scenes, and with eloquent instrumental sections that capture atmosphere in the smallest of spaces. The highlights include a powerfully surging vocal quintet and to no less an extent the brilliant ensemble built around a quote from Bellini's "Norma". With a finesse akin to none less than Mozart, Krása's music synthesises with diverging temporal phenomena such as jazz, expressionism, the motivity of New Objectivity, and also post-romantic sensualism.

Dostoyevsky's novella *Uncle's Dream* delivered appealing material for Krása's opera. The storyline is set in a small Russian town. It is centred on Zina, whose ambitious mother Maria Alexandrovna wants to pair her up with the rich old prince who is staying in their house on a visit. Zina is in love with Fedja who is ill, however, while Paul – who is a schemer and also related to the prince – loves Zina. Maria's sister-in-law Nastasia creates intrigue out of envy and resentment. Paul attempts to stop the marriage because he is in love with the young girl himself, and he persuades the prince that the engagement to Zina that was cleverly orchestrated by Maria Alexandrovna late in the evening was actually just a dream. Fedja has since died. In the epilogue, the end of the story is recounted by the archivist. Zina bowed to her mother's pressure and lived the rest of her unhappy life in a conventional marriage in the countryside.

Verlobung im Traum (1928–1930)

Opera in 2 acts | 135'

Libretto: Rudolf Fuchs and Rudolf Thomas

Based on text by: Dostoyevsky

Choir: SA

arranged by Marcel Dupré (1930)

3 3 4 3 - 4 3 2 0 - timp, perc, hp, pno(2), alto sax(Eb), str

world première: 18.05.1933 Prague (CZ), Neues Deutsches Theater Prague, Georg Szell

Available in German

Roles:

Marja Alexandrovna, MS

Sina, S

Nastassja, A

The Prince, Bar

Paul, T

Barbara, A

The Archivist of the city Mordasov, Bar

Sofia Petrovna, MS

Ernst Krenek (1900–1991)

Ernst Krenek's *Das geheime Königreich* is a fairy tale opera that was broadly inspired by William Shakespeare and Johann Wolfgang Goethe. Krenek composed the work between December 1926 and February 1927, immediately following his *Der Diktator*. He was working as assistant to Paul Bekker at the opera house in Kassel at the time. Together with *Der Diktator* and *Schwergewicht*, *Das geheime Königreich* forms a trilogy which – although it was not the composer's actual intention – are frequently performed together. The fairy tale opera could be described as the lyrical counterpart to the other two works. Its instrumentation is akin to chamber music and it is permeated by impressionistic, partially romantic intimations. Various dance forms are found in the work, from the minuet that was popular at court, to the contemporary tango.

The opera was described by Krenek as “a fairy tale which celebrates the simple life”; it has two scenes and is set in an unknown fairy tale kingdom. It is based on the story of a feeble king who is unable to use the power over his subjects contained in his circlet in order to fight a riotous rebellion in his country. The queen is tired of him and falls in love with an imprisoned rebel leader. She also wants to have the circlet for herself. After freeing her beloved rebel, he leads his comrades to victory against the king instead. The king and queen are forced to flee, with the overthrown ruler disguised as a jester. When the rebel tracks down the queen in the wood and attempts to steal the circlet from her, she attempts to seduce him and is turned into a tree as a punishment. The king is not recognised by the two drunken revolutionaries and is therefore spared. When, out of desperation, he is about to hang himself from the very tree which was actually his queen, the tree speaks him and he decides to remain in the beautiful, peaceful forest – his true kingdom.

***Das geheime Königreich (The Secret Kingdom)* (1926–1927)**

Fairy tale opera in 1 act | 35'

Choir: SATB

2 2 2 2 - 1 1 1 0 - timp, perc, str - on stage: perc, bjo or mandolin

world première: 06.05.1928 Wiesbaden (D), Staatstheater

Available in German

Roles:

The King, Bar

The Queen, S

The fool, B

The rebel, T

The three singing ladies: S, MS, A

First revolutionary, T

Second revolutionary, B

A guard, T

The tragic short opera *Der Diktator* was written by Ernst Krenek as the first of three pieces that are nowadays frequently performed as a trilogy with *Das geheime Königreich* and *Schwergewicht*. He began working on the composition only four days after finishing his *Jonny spielt auf*, and finished in August 1926. According to Krenek, the thematic basis of the opera is “a bloody murder story from the private life of a contemporary dictator”. The composer modelled his dictator on Benito Mussolini, who had come to power in Italy in 1922.

Describing the anti-hero of his opera, Ernst Krenek wrote: "I do not view a dictator as the exponent of a certain political ideology, but rather as a type of person whose dominant qualities express themselves through a persuasive domination of their environment, also from a political perspective, which in this case does not interest me at all, however. This type of person, which is not at all new to history, nowadays seems to be newly evoked by certain manifestations".

The storyline of the opera is set in Switzerland, where a belligerent dictator is spending time resting on vacation with his wife Charlotte. He also has his eye on Maria, the pretty wife of an officer who was blinded in battle. Maria decides to kill the dictator in retaliation for her disabled husband, and threatens him with a revolver. However, at the crucial moment she succumbs to the dictator's seductive charm and lets the revolver fall. The dictator's wife has secretly witnessed the scene and out of jealousy threatens her husband with the gun, which she has seized. When the shot rings out, the officer's wife throws herself in front and dies instead of the dictator. The oblivious, blind officer is left behind, shouting out in search of his wife.

Der Diktator (1926)

Tragic opera in 1 act (2 scenes) | op. 49 | 55'

2 2 2 2 - 1 1 1 0 - timp, perc, str

world première: 06.05.1928 Wiesbaden (D), Staatstheater

Available in German

Roles:

The dictator, Bar

Charlotte, S

The officer, T

Maria, S

Four silent roles

Ernst Krenek's *Karl V.* was the first full-length "twelve-tone opera" in music history. Following the success of his *Jonny spielt auf*, the Austrian composer did not know whether he should continue with the traditional major/minor tonality or pursue new compositional paths. After a short phase of neo-Schubertian romanticism and giving consideration to a career in journalism instead of composing, he familiarised himself with the ideas of the Schönberg school and twelve-tone music. *Karl V.* was the first composition in which he employed these ideas on a large scale. Krenek wrote: "To my own surprise this purely technical and intellectual study eventually revealed to me a world of artistic beauty and perfection that I never had expected."

The mysterious figure of Karl V. had already fascinated Krenek since his school days: "He seemed to be one of these problematical, half obscure figures which had always attracted me – not a shining hero of simple outline, not a man of straightforward action, but a human being full of doubt, indecision, weighted down by the problems of his office. The fact that he wielded unprecedented power and gave it up in order to spend his last days in a remote monastery in Spain intrigued me a great deal." In a similar way to his previously composed opera *Leben des Orest*, Krenek wanted to tell the story of the Emperor's life and achieved this by employing flashbacks to individual stages in the life of the ruler – a technique that he had seen for the first time in Darius Milhaud's *Christophe Colombe*. Karl V. therefore encounters Martin Luther, Pope Clement VII, King Francis I of France and Moritz of Saxony. At the pinnacle of his power, the Emperor abdicated as the supreme ruler of the Holy Roman Empire and retreated to a monastery in order to await his death and look back at the key stages in his biography. He is supported by the young monk Juan de Regla as his father confessor, to whom he tells his life story.

Rediscovered

Krenek received a commission for *Karl V.* in 1930 from the Director of the Vienna State Opera at the time, Clemens Krauss, and the composer enthusiastically accepted his proposed theme. The premiere of the opera was originally planned for 1934, but this was cancelled due to the influence of the National Socialists. The work was therefore premiered in 1938 at the Neues Deutsches Theater in Prague – although the composer was absent as he had already emigrated to the USA by this point in time. The opera was not performed in Vienna until 1984.

***Karl V.* (1933)**

Stage work with music in 2 parts | version 1983 | op. 73 | 180'

Choir: SATB

2 2 3 2 - 4 2 2 1 - timp, perc(5), hp, mand, str - stage music: 3 tpt, perc(4)

world première: 22.06.1938 Prague (CZ), Neues Deutsches Theater, Karl Rankl

Available in German

Roles:

Karl V, Bar

Juana, A

Eleonore, S

Ferdinand, T

Isabella, S

Juan de Regla, voice

Francisco Borgia, T

Franz I, T

Frangipani, T

Luther, Bar

A few smaller singing and speaking roles

To mark the reopening of Hamburg State Opera after the Second World War, Ernst Krenek composed a new opera between 1952 and 1955. The background theme was a story that had already fascinated him as a schoolboy: the downfall of Athenian democracy at the end of the Peloponnesian War in 404 BC. In his book *Exploring Music* Ernst Krenek wrote: "Since my school-days, classical Greece has constantly fascinated and occupied me. As far as I can recall, this interest always sprang from my belief that I could see connections between the events of classical antiquity and the problems of today". In *Pallas Athene weint* Krenek also takes a critical look at a current topic: the anticommunist and denouncing investigations in the United States, Krenek's chosen home since 1938, which had been ordered by US senator Joseph McCarthy starting in the 1950s. McCarthy is captured in the devious character Meletos, who causes democracy to collapse.

The beginning of the opera shows Pallas Athene grieving. Athens has lost the war against Sparta; the philosopher Socrates is dead. The story that follows is a flashback to the events that led to this outcome. Two of Socrates' pupils, Alkibiades and Meletos, are competing to be appointed strategos, or military general, and command the fleet against Sparta. A third pupil, Meton, is a committed pacifist. The night before the fleet is due to leave for Sicily, the sacred statues of Hermes are defiled by an unknown culprit. Alkibiades is suspected – he responds by defecting to the Spartans and telling them the Athenian's military strategy. King Agis of Sparta then sets off for Athens in order to defeat the Greeks. Fate takes its course...

The opera is written in the twelve-tone method of composition, of which Krenek has a masterly command and uses in the interests of musical expression and dramatic art. Seven twelve-tone rows are employed here as "thematic material". The applause at the end of the work's premiere lasted for three-quarters of an hour.

Pallas Athene weint (1952/1955)

Opera in 1 prologue and 3 acts | op. 144 | 130'

Choir: SATB

2 2 2 2 - 4 2 2 0 - timp, perc(3), hp, cel, pno, str

world première: 17.10.1955 Hamburg (D), Staatsoper Hamburg

Available in German

Roles:

Pallas Athene, MS

Socrates, Bar

Alcibiades, T

Meletos, T

Meton of Athens, Bar

Althaea, S

Agis, B

Timaea, S

Lysander, T

4 small roles, T or Bar

Between March and September 1927, as a response to comments by German ambassador in the USA that the top athletes had done more for Germany's good reputation than all the artists and scholars put together, Ernst Krenek composed his burlesque operetta *Schwergewicht oder Die Ehre der Nation*. This is seen as the last part of what is now frequently performed as a trilogy of single-act operas: alongside *Der Diktator* and *Das geheime Königreich*. Krenek's music uses familiar rhythms from the context of modern social dance such as blues, valse, tango milonga and foxtrot, which revive the "hit song" mood from *Jonny spielt auf*.

The opera is set in the present day, in the training room of boxing champion Adam Ochsenschwanz. His wife Evelyne is there, preparing with dancing champion Gaston for the world record in non-stop dancing. Their practice sessions are actually a cover-up for an affair, however. Ochsenschwanz catches them kissing secretly, loses his temper and demolishes his training equipment. Gaston makes a getaway while the boxing champion is locking Evelyne in a room. Gaston eventually frees her and connects the training equipment in such a way that the boxer is forced to train on the machine without being able to stop. This enables the lovers to escape. A councillor then steps onto the stage and names Ochsenschwanz as one of the participants in the next Olympics, as "an honour for the nation". His request to turn off the equipment is refused by the councillor, so as to avoid wasting even a minute of his valuable training. And so Ochsenschwanz remains there alone and continues to train on his equipment.

Schwergewicht, oder Die Ehre der Nation (Heavyweight, or the Glory of the Nation) (1927)

Burlesque operetta in 1 act | op. 55 | 180'

2 2 2 2 - 0 2 2 0 - timp, perc(4), pno, bjo, str

world première: 06.05.1928 Wiesbaden (D), Festspiele Wiesbaden, Joseph Rosenstock

Available in German

Roles:

Adam Ochsenschwanz, B

Evelyne, S

Gaston, T

Prof. Himmelhuber, Bar

Anna Maria Himmelhuber, MS

Journalist, T

Government Minister, T

Darius Milhaud (1892–1974)

Ever since its premiere in 1930, Milhaud's *Christophe Colomb* has presented a fascinating challenge for conductors and directors, as it is a synthesis of many different areas: narrator, singers, chorus, ballet and film. In the revised version from 1969/70, Milhaud changes the chronological development of the rise and fall of Christopher Columbus. The first part now describes his fall, and in the second part we witness the terrific adventure leading up to the discovery of America.

The score displays all the features of Milhaud's compositional technique: mediaeval polyphony coupled with modern sound effects, even powerful folklorist elements and the effective use of a large percussion section. However, all this is presided over by the "classical mindset" that the composer expressly claimed as his own and documents in impressive choral sections.

In a 1930 issue of *Anbruch*, Ernst Krenek remarked that in *Christophe Colomb* he identified Darius Milhaud's love of nature and folksiness as the original source of his artistic oeuvre, together with his connection with the timelessness of people and their homeland. He took *Christophe Colomb* as an example of this, where southern folk traditions and meridional nature are monumentalised on a much higher, purified level in material from a topical, timeless past. At the end of the opera, the hero is redeemed: the deed which enables Columbus to be blessed, despite his many dubious faults, was an inspired deed. America is an extension of the human horizon of understanding, next to which the question of increasing happiness on this Earth or even the argument that the overwhelming majority of the people living in those days were plunged into misfortune is of subordinate importance.

Christophe Colomb (1928)

Opera in 2 parts and 24 scenes | op. 102 | 150'

Libretto: Paul Claudel

Choir: SATB

3 3 2 3 - 4 3 3 1 - timp, perc, hp, cel, harm, str

world première: 05.05.1930 Berlin (D), Staatsoper, Erich Kleiber

Available in French and German

Roles:

Isabella, Queen of Spain, S

Christopher Columbus, Bar

Christopher Columbus II, Bar

The Narrator, voice

The Prosecutor, speaking role

The emissaries of the sailors, voice

The major Domo, T

The Master of Ceremonies, T

The chef, T

The King of Spain, B

The Commander, B

The Messenger, Bar

several soloists from the choir (Ballet)

Henri Pousseur (1929–2009)

In 1995 Henri Pousseur wrote in a letter to UE: "As you already know, *Votre Faust* is not a work that can easily be called conventional opera. When Butor and I drafted the piece in the early 60s, we dreamed of a new form of theatre that would merge the characteristics of (modern) theatre and modern music, while at the same time approaching baroque opera, the form of the operas of Brecht and Weill, the Japanese Noh and the "théâtre de tréteaux", such as the *l'Histoire du soldat* – while still being completely different."

The focus of attention in this "variable" opera is the young composer Henri, who is commissioned by a fiendish theatre director to write a version of "Faust". The opera is structured in such a way that at the end of Act 1 the audience is able to decide how the story should continue. Should Henri spend his life with warm-hearted Maggy? Or with saucy Greta? This fork branches into an ever more complicated thicket of alternatives. After almost every scene the audience can interrupt and change the course of events. All the alternatives are well structured, but the path itself is unpredictable.

Pousseur: "From a certain point the opera is like a system of railway tracks with lots of points that can be switched by the actors, singers, musicians, at the request of the audience. That is the advantage of 'mobile' art."

Pousseur and Butor toy with biographical self-reflection and dig deeply into the treasure trove of quotations from literature and music in all style epochs.

Recognition even of some of the quotations, imitations, literary and musical references supplies the audience with a wholly specific pleasure and a deeper understanding of the whole experience.

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-Excerpt from a letter from Henri Pousseur to Universal Edition on 6 November 1995

Votre Faust (1961/1968)

Variable work in the operatic genre | new version 1981 | 150–180'

Libretto: Henri Pousseur and Michel Butor

1 0 1 1 - 1 1 0 0 - perc, hp, pno, alto sax, vln, vc, cb

world première: 13.03.1982 Gelsenkirchen (D), Musiktheater im Revier

Available in French and German

Roles:

Singing roles: B / A / S / T

Acting roles: Mondor, Henri, Maggy, Pamonella, and an actress

Emil Nikolaus von Reznicek (1860–1945)

Right from the beginning, it was attested that the overture to *Donna Diana* was the best overture to a comic opera since *Nozze di Figaro*, or at least it was said to exude a Mozartian lightness. The first version of *Donna Diana* (1894) was performed on about 50 stages, including in 1898 at the Imperial and Royal Court Opera House in Vienna, conducted by Gustav Mahler. However, in contrast to the overture which became an evergreen around the world, the complete opera did not become part of the German repertoire over the long term. After 1900 the opera's performance frequency decreased distinctly, and this must surely have been the reason why it was revised in 1907. In many places, Reznicek changed the musical substance and reduced its Wagnerian elements. After only two productions (1908), however, the work disappeared almost completely from the stage for 25 years. Only the third version which was completed in 1933 was given almost 50 performances in the years leading up to 1944, with a complete revision of the music by Reznicek. The work received a new text by Julius Kapp and the instrumentation was changed, while the size of the orchestra was reduced. Last but not least – in what would be a normal habit today, but was a novelty in those days – the action of the 16th century is brought to the present day. The Count of Barcelona became its mayor, the Knight Don Cesar, an ageing bullfighter, and the servant Perrin as his manager.

The orchestral material for this successful third version fell victim to the turmoil of war, however, and its reconstruction and reproduction only began in 2016.

Synopsis: Donna Diana lives at the court of her father Don Diego in Barcelona and ignores all the attention that is paid to her. The court jester persuades Don Cesar, who is in love with Donna Diana, to pursue a ploy to conquer the heart of this unapproachable, beautiful woman: Don Cesar should feign disinterest in the "most beautiful of all beauties". The advice of the court jester has the desired effect: Diana now wants to win over Cesar, but Cesar remains steadfast and pretends that he intends to marry somebody else. Diana attempts to employ the same tactics herself, until she finds the effort too much and ultimately proclaims her love for Cesar, who then can finally confess his love for her as well.

Donna Diana (1894/1908)

Comic opera in 3 acts | 133'

Choir: SSTTBB

3 3 3 2 - 4 6 3 0 - timp, perc, hp, pno, str - on stage: 3 tpt, timp, perc, guit, mand, vc,
for ballet

world première: 16.12.1894 Prague (CZ), Neues Deutsches Theater, Rudolf
Krzyzanowski

Available in German

Roles:

Don Diego, B

Donna Diana, S

Donna Laura, S

Donna Finesa, MS

Don Cesar, T

Don Louis, T

Don Gaston, B

Perin, Bar

Floretta, MS

Several smaller roles

Peter Ronnefeld (1935–1965)

Peter Ronnefeld was only 20 when he composed his chamber opera *Nachtausgabe* – opera piccola in 5 scenes (1955–56). It was not his first work for the stage, but earlier ones only survived as fragments. Ronnefeld was already teaching at the time at the Mozarteum in Salzburg; he wrote *Nachtausgabe* mainly for his students' study purposes at the International Summer Academy. Although it is a modern opera buffa, its subject is timeless – it is about sensational stories, gossip and tittle-tattle in the tabloid press, the persons involved and scandal-sheet readers. Ronnefeld brought his great musical and linguistic talents to bear in a manner reminiscent of his own personality – shrewd, impudent, and ironically jocular. In conversation, his contemporaries all mention Ronnefeld's sparkling sense of humour, obviously not forgotten; even Thomas Bernhard (who had a speaking role at the premiere) said afterwards that he had never laughed so much as he did during the time he spent with Peter Ronnefeld, one of his best friends.*

Boris Blacher, Ronnefeld's teacher, was the musical influence; Ronnefeld esteemed him highly, and his stimulus is plainly evident. The freely tonal composition bristles with brilliant ideas, for example the moment when the reporter, a singer on the telephone, receives the replies to his words from the orchestra in a sonic jumble of voices – punchlines are often triggered by the instruments in the ensemble instead of human voices.

Ernst Märzendorfer reworked the piece in 1987, leaving the opera's essentials untouched but carefully "smoothing it over". For instance, a secretary now has a mezzo part, Bernhard's speaking role at the premiere is now sung and the music regrouped in some places. The press was uniformly enthralled at the premiere when the new version was given in 1987 (on the studio stage of the Vienna State Opera in the Künstlerhaus); many of the Austrian and German media raised their voices to praise the work and the performers to the skies.

Synopsis: A small group of bohemians who are working for the newspaper as illustrators and writers come up with the idea of simulating a kidnapping. The fact that the daughter of the landlady's hysterical friend is supposed to act the part of the "victim" makes the whole affair somewhat complicated, however...

* Thomas Bernhard, letter to the editor of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* newspaper on 20 February 1987. It was published with the title "...allerdings nur als Bass-Stimmführer".

Peter Ronnefeld

Nachtausgabe (1955/1956)

Opera piccolo in 5 scenes | New version

Arranged (1987) by Ernst Märzendorfer

1 1 1 1 - 1 2 1 0 - timp, perc(2), pno, str (soloistic)

world première: 20.03.1987 Vienna (A), Staatsoper Wien, Ernst Märzendorfer

Available in German

Roles:

Emma Bachofen, B

Anna Pachulke, S

Renée Pachulke, S

Lothar Witzlaff, Bar

Mario Caraccini, T

Ping Schma Fu, T

Dr. Erich Stielicke, T

Karin Mikoleit, MS

Sternhagel, Bar

Stramm, Bar

Four juvenile newspeople:Frauke (S), Wibke (S), Heike (MS), Hauke (T)

Othmar Schoeck (1886–1957)

Joseph von Eichendorff wrote his novel *Das Schloss Dürande* in the year 1836. It describes the socially unacceptable love affair between a nobleman and the daughter of a forester. The brother of the forester's daughter believes that the family's honour has been violated and ultimately turns into a murderer to save their honour before killing himself as well. Eichendorff linked this storyline with the French Revolution.

The original version of the story became a classic work. Slightly more than 100 years after it was written, the material was revisited by Othmar Schoeck; in 1937 he commissioned the German poet Hermann Burte to rewrite Eichendorff's text so he could use it for his opera. The libretto by Burte was not without controversy from the very beginning. Musicologists charged Burte with a "pronounced nationalistic, German bias". The composer Othmar Schoeck was above all such suspicion, however.

A research project at Bern College of Music undertook to remove all dubious sections and thoughts that were influenced by National Socialist ideals, to alter relevant formulations accordingly and therefore "decontaminate" the opera. The number of necessary changes to the libretto ultimately required a new version of the text (by Francesco Micieli), and the musical adaptation of the vocal lines was completed by Mario Venzago.

The piano score of the opera – seen by experts as a masterpiece of its genre – was produced by Anton Webern. It is apparent that Webern was aware of the ambiguity of the libretto and therefore asked the UE not to name him as the author of the original piano score. In view of the revised text and the quality of his work, we have now revealed his authorship of the piano score in the new edition.

Mario Venzago and Francesco Micieli provide an insightful explanation of their work in their article "Schloss Dürande wird renoviert", which is available (German only) at the following web address: http://www.dissonance.ch/upload/pdf/135_28_hb_mv_mic_duerande.pdf

Das Schloss Dürande is an exciting chapter in opera history during the 20th century.

Ottmar Schoeck

Das Schloss Dürande (1937/1941)

Opera in 4 acts | op. 53 | 150'

Libretto: Hermann Burte

Choir: SATB

2 2 3 3 - 4 3 3 1 - timp, perc, hp, pno, str, stage music: fl(2), hn(4), tpt(3), perc, pno, cel, org

world première: 01.04.1943 Berlin (D), Staatsoper Berlin, Robert Heger

Das Schloss Dürande (1937/1941/2017)

Opera in 4 acts | New text version | op. 53 | 150'

Libretto: Hermann Burte

Text Editor: Francesco Micieli

Available in German

Roles:

Armand, T

The old count, T

The Prioress, A

Countess Morville, S

Renald, Bar

Gabriele, S

Nicole, Bar

A game warden, Bar

12 supporting roles

Franz Schreker (1878–1934)

Der Schatzgräber was regarded as one of the most-performed operas of the Weimar Republic and brought Schreker his greatest success on stage. There is evidence of 385 performances in 50 different cities between its premiere in 1920 and 1932. Branded by the National Socialists as “degenerate”, the opera faded into obscurity and only experienced its renaissance towards the end of the 20th century. Schreker wrote the libretto himself, inspired by the encounter with a young girl who sang him folk songs and ballads accompanied by the lute. The immense success on stage must have been helped by the fairy tale character of the text, but it was particularly due to the music: without ever seeming trivial, Schreker’s music for the *Schatzgräber* is plainer and harmonically simpler than in his earlier operas. None of his other operas achieved this level of folksiness. The comparatively transparent orchestral language and the entirely tonal, yet still chromatic harmony was reconciled with even the most conservative minds that were overstrained by the opulent sound of his other operas.

The storyline in the work has a mediaeval fairy tale setting and recounts the tale of an ailing queen whose jewellery has disappeared – the source of her beauty and fertility. Following the advice of his court jester, the worried king employs the travelling singer Elis as a “special investigator”, whose magical lute is able to find hidden treasure. Elis and Els meet in an inn. Els, a typical Schreker femme fatale, is paired off by her father, but she dislikes her prospective husband intensely and therefore arranges for him to be murdered by her servant Albi the day before their wedding. Before the deed, however, he has to steal the queen’s jewellery as a wedding present. Elis gives Els an emerald necklace that he found in the forest. They fall in love. When Els’ bridegroom is found murdered, suspicion falls on Elis. He only avoids execution because the king requires his help in order to track down the queen’s jewellery. Elis has no idea that this is the jewellery that he has given Els. In order to prevent Elis finding her with the queen’s jewels, Els asks Albi to steal his magical lute. After an intoxicating night together, she gives Elis the jewellery on the condition that he never asks her about how she received it. While Elis is celebrated at the king’s court, Albi confesses that he murdered Els’ lover and stole the lute. Els is going to be put to death, but the jester reminds the king about his promise. He takes Els as his wife. When she is dying, the jester fetches Elis, who sings a final song for her. She dies in his arms.

Rediscovered

Der Schatzgräber (The Treasure Hunter) (1915–1918)

Opera in 1 prologue, 4 acts and 1 epilogue | 145'

Choir: SATB, In the orchestra pit: 1 mezzo-soprano, 2 alto

3 3 3 3 - 4 3 3 1 - timp, perc(4), high bells, hp(2), cel, str; stage music: 3 hn, 3 tpt

world première: 21.01.1920 Frankfurt am Main (D), Oper Frankfurt. Orchester der Oper Frankfurt, Ludwig Rottenburg

Available in German

Roles:

The King, B

The Queen, silent role

The Chancellor, T

The count, Bar

The Magister, B

The fool, T

The bailiff, Bar

The Junker, Bar or B

Elis, T

The Mayor, B

The scribe, T

The innkeeper, B

Els, S

Albi, T

A soldier, B

First citizen, T

Second citizen, Bar

Third citizen, B

First old maid, MS

Second old maid, MS or A

A woman, A or MS

Dukes, Counts, a Knight, a noble, and their wives, soldiers, monks, an executioner, a Court Messenger, and people.

Reduced version available

Irrelohe, Schreker's fifth opera, could almost be described as the sum of his previous opera projects. In this work, Schreker's musical-dramatic style again develops its full character in terms of the sound, the orchestral disposition of the music. The soundscapes, built from several chordal layers that are also dissonant, merge with one another. There is an increase in contrapuntal technique, and the orchestra is treated more like a homogenous body of sound owing to the dispensation with individual instruments. Excessively employed chromaticism is intensified, as is bi- and polytonality, particularly in the great tableau in Act 3, with immense intensification from the dialogue between Peter/Eva to the fratricide and burning of Irrelohe. Following its premiere, the opera did not become a fixed part of the repertoire and after a few performances it already faded into obscurity towards the end of the 1920s. It was only rediscovered in 1985 at Bielefeld Opera House, later being performed at Vienna's Volksoper (2004), Bonn Opera House (2010) and Kaiserslautern Pfalztheater (2015).

The story of *Irrelohe* is set in the 18th century at the castle and in the village of Irrelohe, an imaginary place whose name was inspired by the train station at Irrenlohe, which Schreker had passed through on a journey. The opera tells the story of the half-brothers Peter and Heinrich, who are both interested in the same woman, Eva. Peter is the illegitimate son of pub landlady Lola, who refuses to tell him the name of his father. Lola is a vivacious woman who was raped by Count Irrelohe 30 years ago at his wedding celebration. There seems to be a curse on the house of Count Irrelohe, as wild sensuousness turns them into aggressive animals. Peter hears about the story by wedding musician Christobald, who was unable to save his bride Lola from her rapist and is still planning his revenge. Together with his musicians, he starts a fire which is intended to burn the odious Irrelohe Castle as well. Eva, a sisterly friend of Peter, has fallen in love with the hapless Count Heinrich. She believes that she can free him of the curse with her pure love. Peter is consumed by jealousy. The whole village celebrates the wedding at Lola's establishment. Peter tears apart Heinrich and Eva during the bridal dance and claims Eva for himself. Heinrich kills him as he is out of control. Irrelohe Castle is engulfed in flames, set on fire by Christobald. Heinrich is distraught that he has unwittingly killed his brother. Eva gives him new heart, however, because her love has banished the demonic curse from Irrelohe. Heinrich is freed and the fantastic blaze is extinguished. Heinrich and Eva welcome in the new day.

Irrelohe (1919–1922)

Opera in 3 acts | 165'

Choir: SATB

3 3 4 3 - 6 4 3 1 - timp(2-3), perc(9), hp(2), cel, cemb, guit, mand, str(16 14 12 10 8) -
on stage: picc(2), cl(2), hn(6(3)), tpt(3), perc(5), org

world première: 27.03.1924 Köln (D), Stadttheater Köln, Otto Klemperer

Available in German

Roles:

Count Heinrich, T

The Forester, B

Eva, S

The old Lola, A

Peter, Bar

Christobald, T

The parish priest, Bar

The Miller, B

Fünkchen, T

Strahlbusch, Bar

Ratzekahl, B

Anselmus, Bar

A Footman, T

The mother of the count's sister, the Mayor, the teacher, the clerk, a girl, peasants, people of all kinds, minions, young girls, young boys, and children.

Karol Szymanowski (1882–1937)

As is already the case in Szymanowski's *King Roger*, the story in *Hagith* is also set in a fictitious kingdom with a potentate whose power slips from his grasp. However, while the basic problem in the former is caused by cultural conflict, in *Hagith* there is a focus on the individual problem of the abdication of power. The decrepit old king is reluctant to hand over to his son, and is persuaded by his personal physician to seek a rejuvenating cure. He believes that if a virgin surrenders herself to him, her youthful and vital energy will transfer to him. The therapy is unsuccessful, however, as the designated victim Hagith falls in love with the king's son. She refuses to go to bed with the old man, whereupon the latter dies from all the commotion. As a punishment, she is stoned to death. She dies knowing that her death has cleared the way for her beloved young king to ascend the throne. The sombre story finishes without its happy, fairy tale ending.

Hagith is the creation of German librettist Felix Dörmann as a female figure between femme fatale and emancipated woman from the era before the First World War, half Judith, half Salome – a woman who revolts against power and laws, and sacrifices herself in the interests of greater aspirations. Together with Szymanowski's music, she becomes a strong female character who in the concluding scene grows from a naive girl from the common people into a heroine who dominates the stage with her voice and presence.

All four scenes of the single-act opera are pervaded with music whose instrumentation is in shining colours that repeatedly brush the borders of atonality. The challenging vocal parts are written in lengthy phrases, and the radiant melodies in the love duet between Hagith and the king's son are reminiscent of Puccini.

Hagith (1911/1913)

Opera in 1 act | op. 25 | 95'

Libretto: Felix Dörmann

Choir: SATB

4 4 5 4 - 6 4 4 1 - timp, perc(6), hp(2), cel, harm, org, str - behind the scene: tpt(4), tbn(4), timp, tr

world première: 13.05.1922 Warsaw (PL), Grand Theater, Emil Młynarski

Available in Polish and German

Roles:

The old King, T

The young King, T

Hagith, S

The high priest, B

The doctor, Bar

A servant, silent role

Max von Schillings (1868–1933)

Max von Schillings played a significant role in Germany during the 1920s and at the beginning of the 1930s above all as a theatre manager and conductor. Between 1915 (premiere) and 1933 (Max von Schillings' death) *Mona Lisa* was an internationally acclaimed opera with over 1200 performances. Schillings' overt attraction to the National Socialists prevented his greatest – and basically only – compositional success, the opera *Mona Lisa*, from returning to opera house schedules after the Second World War. *Mona Lisa* was Schillings' fourth and last opera. Although Schillings used few stylistic elements from Wagner's music, he took the story from the Italian verismo, which also served as his musical inspiration. This corresponded entirely with contemporary tastes around 1915 – not unlike the most successful works by Korngold and Zemlinsky.

Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa* only became one of the most famous paintings in the world when it was stolen from the Louvre in 1911. The painting was lost for two years and there was even suspicion that it had been stolen by an artist such as Picasso and Apollinaire. The international press reported very extensively on the theft and the investigations. Schillings also became fascinated by the material, whereupon he decided to write an opera about the enigmatic woman in the painting.

The Austrian writer, actress and author of children's books Beatrice von Dovsky wrote the libretto, which grants the story a mystic, supernatural aura. She achieves this by beginning and ending the storyline in the present day, while also including the original history of the Gioconda.

Synopsis: An unequal couple is visiting the Louvre on their honeymoon. Their guide through the museum, a monk, tells them about the many events that occurred in 1492 and also about the fate of the mysterious beauty named *Mona Lisa*. It is the story of an unhappy marriage, full of jealousy, parsimony, barbarousness; but also of forbidden romance that reveals the reason for her smile. Back in the present day, it becomes clear that the unhappy woman who is visiting the Louvre must be Mona Lisa.

Mona Lisa (1913/1915)

Opera in 2 acts | op. 31 | 150'

Libretto: Beatrice von Dovsky

Choir: SATB

3 3 3 3 - 6 4 3 1 - heckelphon, timp, perc(4), hp(2), cel, org, mand, str; on stage: bells, hp, mand, str.quartet

world première: 26.09.1915 Stuttgart (D), Hofoper, Max von Schillings

Available in bilingual German/Italian

Roles:

Francesco del Giocondo, Bar

Mona Fiordalisa, S

Giovanni de' Salviati, T

Pietro Tumoni, B

Arrigo Oldofreni, T

Alessio Beneventanorum, T

Sandro da Luzzano, Bar

Masolino Pedruzzi, B

Ginevra ad Alta Rocca, S

Dianora, S

Piccarda, A

Sisto, T

Also: People of Florence, nuns of Santa Trinità, monks of San Marco (including Savonarola), servant.

Kurt Weill (1900–1950)

After the incredible success of the *Dreigroschenoper*, the director of the Theater am Schiffbauerdamm at the time, Ernst Josef Aufricht, hoped to capitalise on this with a new piece by Kurt Weill and Bertolt Brecht. The same artistic cast as in the *Dreigroschenoper* was employed, such as the Lewis Ruth Band under Theo Mackeben and the set designer Caspar Neher. Brecht was not interested in writing the libretto himself, however, and asked his colleague Elisabeth Hauptmann to do this for him. He himself added a few striking lines and a series of lyrics for the songs. Hauptmann's name did not appear as librettist, however, but merely as translator of the work. Instead, there is the fictional name of a certain Dorothy Lane. The premiere of *Happy End* turned into a scandal and the work was torn apart by the press. After only a few performances, it was removed from the schedule and not performed again during the lifetimes of Weill and Brecht. The work only enjoyed renewed success starting in the 1970s.

Happy End is set on an evening at Christmas time in Chicago of the 1920s. In Bill Cracker's beer hall, there is a meeting of his gang which is led by the mysterious Lady in Grey, a.k.a. The Fly. The local Salvation Army has been trying to convert the gangsters, but so far without success. Lieutenant Lilian Holiday comes the hall to make another attempt. She and Bill flirt with each other over several glasses of whisky, whereupon she is dismissed from the Salvation Army. Bill, on the other hand, has fallen out of favour with The Fly and is supposed to be killed. But suddenly a member of the Salvation Army recognises the leader as his long-lost wife. The Fly gives the stolen goods to the Salvation Army, with which the gang now joins forces, in order to open new headquarters together. Bill and Lilian announce their engagement.

Happy End (1929)

Comedy with music in 3 acts | 120' (Music: 45')

Libretto: Dorothy Lane and Bertolt Brecht

Choir: SATB

1 0 0 0 - 0 2 1 0 - alto.sax(Eb), t.sax(Bb), perc, pno, band, bjo

world première: 02.09.1929 Berlin (D), Theater am Schiffbauerdamm, Theo Mackeben

Available in German and English

Roles:

The Lady in grey
Bill cracker
Lilian holiday
Sam Wurlitzer
Major Stone
Dr. Nakamura
Johnny Flint
Ben Owens
Jimmy Dexter
Bob Marker
Hannibal Jackson
Salvation Army Captain
Lilian holiday
the Lady in grey
Miriam
Jane
Mary
two strangers

The school opera *Der Jasager* enabled Kurt Weill and Bertolt Brecht to combine music education with opera. The work was supposed to be able to be performed by amateurs both scenically and musically, with the vocal parts sung exclusively by schoolchildren. The entire school choir was also supposed to be able to take part. Brecht's libretto is based on the Japanese fable *Tanikô or The Valley-Hurling*, a Noh drama by the poet Zenchiku from the 15th century which his assistant Elisabeth Hauptmann had translated into German. The story is about a boy who embarks on a dangerous journey with his teacher and a group of pupils in order to fetch medicine for his sick mother. While on the journey, he falls ill himself and is forced to decide whether they should all turn back or if he should be thrown into the valley in accordance with an old custom.

Weill composed the music in the first half of 1930. "When I write for schoolchildren, then I mainly focus on keeping myself under stricter control. This means that I have to achieve the greatest degree of simplicity when I write for schoolchildren and I want them to be able to understand. Despite all this simplicity, however, I still have to give of my best," explained Weill when he wrote about his aesthetic programme. The premiere was planned for the New Music Festival in Berlin during that same year, together with Bertolt Brecht's/Hanns Eisler's *Die Maßnahme*. When this work was going to be censored prior to the performance, the authors withdrew both pieces. Brecht was then able to organise a "counter-performance" that was not part of the Festival, at the Central Institute for Teaching and Education in Berlin. The premiere was the subject of controversial discussion in the press, which caused Brecht to rewrite his text. Weill did not make changes to his score, however. *Der Jasager* was still a success and was performed several hundred times before Hitler seized power in 1933. After he arrived in New York in 1935, Weill is said to have answered a question by describing *Der Jasager* as his most important European work.

***Der Jasager (The Yes-Sayer)* (1930)**

School opera in 2 acts | 35'

Libretto: Bertolt Brecht

Choir: SATB

1 0 1 0 - 0 0 0 0 - perc(2), harm, plucked instr., pno(2), alto sax, vln.I, vln.II, vc, cb

world première: 24.06.1930 Berlin (D), Central Institute for Culture and Education, Kurt Drabek

Available in German and English

Roles:

The boy, T or boy voice

The mother, MS

The teacher, Bar

3 students: 2 T, 1 Bar

Rediscovered

For a long time, Kurt Weill's single-act opera *The Tsar has his photograph taken* was the composer's most successful opera besides *Dreigroschenoper*, and it was performed in more than 25 stage productions. It is Weill's first comic opera and his last "complete" opera. Weill had planned to compose a full-length supplement to his *Protagonist* with the character of an opera buffa. He wrote about a "contradistinct work from a different genre, yet not inferior to it in terms of tension and effectiveness". The Deutsches Kammermusikfest Baden-Baden had commissioned a new work, whereupon Weill approached Georg Kaiser for a libretto, as he had already worked with Kaiser for his *Protagonist*. Weill remembered: "During a summer vacation at Georg Kaiser's house, I reminded him about an idea of a photographer's case with integrated 'machine gun', which he had once mentioned as a joke. [...] We conceived the scenerio together in only a few days." As the *Zar* ultimately exceeded the scope of the Baden-Baden Festival, Weill wrote the *Mahagonny Songspiel* for the festival instead.

In the same way as Ernst Krenek in *Jonny spielt auf*, Weill makes use of the era's new technical achievements in the *Zar*: a photo studio with its equipment, a telephone, a doorbell, and a gramophone which plays the *Tango Angèle* that was pre-produced especially for this purpose. Weill integrates elements of popular music into his composition, such as the foxtrot. A male chorus comments on the parodistic events.

The phone rings at Angèle's photo studio in Paris: the tsar wants to be photographed by her, ideally right away. When the doorbell rings shortly afterwards, it is not the tsar but a group of conspirators who want to seize this opportunity to murder the monarch. They overpower Angèle and hide a pistol in her camera. When the tsar comes to the studio, an interplay unfolds between him and the wrong Angèle, whose beauty bewitches him, until his bodyguards enter and warn him that he is about to be attacked. As their plot has almost been uncovered, the conspirators run away. The real Angèle is freed and the tsar can at last have his photograph taken.

***The Tsar has his photograph taken* (1927)**

Opera buffa in 1 act | op. 21 | 60'

Libretto: George Kaiser

Choir: TB

2 2 2 2 - 3 2 2 0 - timp, perc, pno, str, tape

world première: 18.02.1928 Leipzig (D), Neues Theater Leipzig, Gustav Brecher

Available in German and English

Roles:

The Tsar, Bar

Angèle, S

The assistant, T

The boy, A

The false Angèle, S

The false assistant, T

The false boy, A

The leader, T

The companion of the Tsar, B

Two law enforcement officials, speaking roles

When Kurt Weill composed *Royal Palace*, he hoped that it would capitalise on the success of his first opera *Der Protagonist*, which had been premiered shortly before. Weill had originally intended the work to be a supplementary piece for the premiere of *Der Protagonist*, and he therefore worked on the composition almost continuously. As there was insufficient time for rehearsals when the time came, the works were not performed together after all. The libretto for *Royal Palace* was written by the writer Yvan Goll, who came from Alsace. Weill had already set Goll's poem *Der neue Orpheus* to music for a cantata in the summer of 1925; the piece can be seen as a kind of "preliminary study" for the opera and it was ultimately premiered with this work as well. *Royal Palace* includes highly pronounced dance and popular music elements such as jazz, foxtrot, a tango for the finale and also a car horn, for example. For the first time, Weill also included a saxophone in the instrumentation and also integrated a film scene, thus creating a combination of ballet, film and opera. The premiere of *Royal Palace* was not a success, however. After one performance in Essen, both Weill's score and the parts were lost under Nazi rule. The score had unfortunately not been copied beforehand. Only a piano score of the opera survived, which contained precise details of the instrumentation. This was used by Gunther Schuller and Noam Sheriff to reconstruct Weill's orchestration, which serves as the basis for the present-day performance material.

As was previously the case in *Der neue Orpheus*, a mythological figure is also the focus of attention in *Royal Palace*: Dejanira, the wife of Heracles who inadvertently causes the hero's death and then takes her own life. The story in the opera is set in the present day, in a luxury hotel at an Italian lake. Dejanira is torn between three lovers: her husband, "yesterday's loved one", and "tomorrow's lover", whom she wishes to impress with various gifts. However, none of them really understands her, so Dejanira throws herself into the lake in disillusionment and drowns.

Royal Palace (1925–1926)

Opera in 1 act | op. 17 | 50'

Libretto: Ivan Goll

Choir: SA

3 2 3 3 - 4 2 2 1 - timp, perc(6), hp, cel, keyb.glock, pno, alto sax, str
world première: 02.03.1927 Berlin (D), Staatsoper Berlin, Erich Klieber

Available in German

Roles:

Dejanira, S

The husband, B

The lover of yesterday, Bar

The lover of tomorrow, T

The young fisherman, T

The old fisherman, B

Soprano solo behind the scene

Kurt Weill predicted that one day his American opera *Street Scene* would be seen as his principal work. Since his arrival in the USA, Weill had been wanting to compose an American opera and a music theatre which integrates drama and music, spoken word, song and movement. The text that serves as a basis for the opera is the novel or rather the drama of the same name by US playwright Elmer Rice, who was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1929 for this work which Weill had seen in 1930 in Berlin. Rice wrote the libretto and Langston Hughes, one of the most significant black poets in the USA at the time, contributed several song texts. In *Street Scene* Weill combines current hits and dance music with traditional forms such as arias and duets. The opera was finally premiered on Broadway in New York and was well received by audiences. The New York Times, for example, described it as "A brilliant score of kaleidoscopic invention." and wrote: "The more one sees this opera, the more one is touched by the richness and variety of its musical inspiration, the direct honesty of its sentiments and the sheer skill that creates such a vital piece of musical theater."

Street Scene is set in Manhattan during the mid-1940s, in one of the streets of a slum district. The storyline begins on a bright summer's evening and ends in the afternoon of the following day, passing through various events that take place in the street during this time period. Anna Maurant's extra-marital affair with milkman Sankey is secretly the talk of the street. She is frustrated by life, but has not yet given up hope that things will improve. Her young neighbour Sam Kaplan and Anna's daughter Rose are secretly in love with one another and dream of escaping the humble apartment building. Anna's brutish husband Frank is entirely unaware of his wife's affair, but is suspicious so he comes home earlier unexpectedly, catches the two of them, and shoots them. Together with his brother Willie, but without Sam, Rose leaves her parents' apartment in shock in order to seek a better life far away.

Street Scene (EAMC) (1946)

American opera in 2 acts | 150'

Libretto: Langston Hughes

Choir: Ensemble - Policeman, Milkman, Old Clothes Man, Music Pupil, Interne, Ambulance Driver, Married Couple, Passerby, Neighbors, Children etc.

1 1 3 1 - 2 2 2 0 - perc(2), hp, pno, str

world première: 09.01.1947 New York (USA), Adelphi Theatre, Maurice Abravanel

Available in English and German

Roles:

Abraham Kaplan, T

Greta Fiorentino, S

Carl Olsen, B

Emma Jones, MS

Olga Olsen, A

Shirley Kaplan, actor

Henry Davis, Bar

Willie Maurant, boy soprano

Anna Maurant, S

Sam Kaplan, T

Daniel Buchanan, T

Frank Maurant, Bar

George Jones, Bar

Steve Sankey, actor

Lippo Fiorentino, T

Jenny Hildebrand, S

2nd Graduate, S

3rd Graduate, MS

Mrs. Hildebrand, MS

Charlie Hildebrand, child

Mary Hildebrand, child

Grace Davis, child

Rose Maurant, S

Harry Easter, Bar

Mae Jones, singer/dancer

Dick McGann, singer/dancer

Vincent Jones, actor

Dr. Wilson, actor

Officer Murphy, actor

City Marshal, actor

Fred Cullen, actor

First Nursemaid, S

Second Nursemaid, MS

Opera Milestones

TO DISCOVER

Luke Bedford (*1978)

"Lying through his teeth" - on this English idiom is based the title of Luke Bedford's second chamber opera *Through His Teeth*. The story is narrated in the form of individual flashbacks, framed by interview scenes. From the retrospective parts of the story and in particular reflections on the situations and feelings of its characters, this journalistic format serves not only as a framework for the actual action, but also for the objectivity of an individual's destiny, by raising it from a single concrete event to one that is generally observable and socially relevant.

Claudio Monteverdi's dramatic madrigal *Il Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda*, with which the German premier of *Through His Teeth* was modernistically combined with, uses a similarly epic narrative procedure. Musical protagonist is an eyewitness: a "testo" that narrates the actions, annotates, linguistically decorates, and accompanies them emotionally – through whose narrative the action arises.

"David Harrower and I had been speaking to the Royal Opera House about doing this piece, and they asked whether we'd be interested in doing on the subject of Faust, which initially we weren't over the moon about, because a sort of traditional telling of the Faust stories has been done so many times, we were quite unsure about what we could add to that. So we knew that we had to find our own take on that, a different way of doing it.

The piece is scored for eight instruments; it's quite a small ensemble, but I tried to get as big a range of colours and sounds as I could out of that, and it has 16 scenes, which is a lot for one hour of music. But most of them are only a couple of minutes long. Of the music that I've written, the longest scene is about five or six minutes, so within that, getting the pacing is very important: even before the libretto was finished. That was something I spent a long time myself working on, how to move between scenes, in which scenes I had to slow it down, and where to go faster. I tried to get as many contrasts between the different scenes as possible."

-Luke Bedford, August 2013

Through His Teeth (2013)

Chamber opera | for 3 singers and eight players | 60'

Libretto: David Harrower

clarinet in Bb (+bass cl(Bb), cl(Eb)), trumpet in C, percussion, harp, accordion, violin, violoncello, double bass

world première: 03.04.2014 London (GB), Linbury Studio Theatre. Chroma Ensemble, Sian Edwards

Available in English

Roles:

Interviewer and Sister, MS

A (woman), S

R, Bar

Sir Harrison Birtwistle (*1934)

After *The Mask of Orpheus*, Sir Harrison Birtwistle returns to the Orpheus myth in his opera *The Second Mrs Kong*, which he – together with his librettist Russell Hoban – transfers to our modern world of technology with telephones, televisions, computers and videos. Birtwistle commented that his intention behind *The Second Mrs Kong* was to set a modern myth to music: “Although many people haven’t seen the film, King Kong must surely be regarded as one of the myths of our century”. The opera was described in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* as “one of the most outstanding opera scores of recent times”. It is about an unequal couple whose love transcends time and place: the giant ape Kong or rather the idea behind this character from the 1933 movie *King Kong*, and Pearl, the girl that Jan Vermeer eternalised in his painting *Girl with a Pearl Earring*. Vermeer himself also plays a role, along with other illustrious figures such as Orpheus and later just Orpheus’ head, his wife Eurydice, and the jackal-headed ferryman Anubis who guards over the underworld.

Following his death in the film, Kong finds himself in the underworld and attempts to find out what he is. In a different time domain, Pearl is sitting as a model for Vermeer in the 17th century as he paints his famous painting, when she hears Kong calling from the underworld. Another time leap takes the action into the 20th century, where Pearl is hanging as a print in the office of a stockbroker, with a screen showing the film *King Kong*. Pearl and Kong can communicate with one another at last, via a computer. Kong promises to find the way to her out of the underworld, and sets off with the boat that he has stolen from Anubis. After overcoming several obstacles during the journey, only a mirror now separates Kong from Pearl, but he cannot pass through it. And so, they are forced to continue existing in their separate worlds, still yearning for each other.

***The Second Mrs Kong* (1993–1994)**

Opera in 2 acts | 120'

Libretto: Russell Hoban

Choir: SATB

2 2 2 2 - 4 2 0 2 - perc(4), acc, sax(2), cimb, str(16 0 6 6 4)

world première: 24.10.1994 Glyndebourne (GB), Glyndebourne Opera. Glyndebourne Touring Opera, Elgar Howarth

Available in English and German

Roles:

Kong, T

Perl, S

Anubis / death of Kong, Bar

Vermeer, Bar

Mirror / mirror echo, S

Inanna (Mrs. Dollarama), MS

Mr. Dollarama, Bar

Swami Zumzum, T

Orpheus, T

Madame Lena, A

4 models / doubt / fear / despair, terror, MS, MS, S, S

Eurydice, S

The monstrous Messenger / Joe Shady, B

Paganini, violin

Chorus of the Dead

Victoria Borisova-Ollas (*1969)

Dracula is the first opera composed by Victoria Borisova-Ollas. It is based on the world-famous, spine-chilling novel of the same name by the Irish author Bram Stoker, written at the end of the 19th century, which tells the story of probably the most famous vampire in the history of literature, Count Dracula. It is the first classical opera to be based on this story, which has already been used for numerous films, ballets and musicals. The original idea for *Dracula* as an opera was proposed by Swedish librettists Claes Peter Hellwig and Kristian Benkö. In an interview, Victoria Borisova-Ollas describes the work: "It's a very intense drama, it's about blood, revenge and passion. I liked the idea of working with all these gothic ideas in the Victorian era, because as a composer I started to immediately imagine castles, ruins, fields of echoes, which you can fill with music to create a very theatrical atmosphere. There is a lot of action and movement happening on stage. We have the solo singers, dancers and a choir. We have various crowds, vampires, vampire hunters, spectators. There will also be electronics to create some special effects, like the sounds of bats screaming. The tempo of the performance is very high. The orchestra's part in the opera is very important. It reflects the brutality of the story."

The opera closely follows Bram Stoker's novel: the lawyer Jonathan Harker sets off on a journey to Transylvania in order to see Count Dracula, who has bought a house in London and is now planning to move there. Having arrived at his castle, strange things soon start to happen; Jonathan is scared to death of the sinister Count. He finally manages to escape and Count Dracula sets off for England. Dracula's first victim there is Lucy, friend of Jonathan's fiancée Mina, after which he targets Mina herself. Meanwhile, Prof. van Helsing has undertaken to put an end to the undead Count and takes up the chase...

Dracula (2013)

Opera in 2 acts | for soli, choir and orchestra | 120'

Libretto: ClaesPeter Hellwig and Kristian Benkö

Choir: SATB (30-40 people)

3 3 3 3 - 4 3 3 1 - timp, perc(3), hp, keyb, keyb, tape, str

world première: 28.10.2017 Stockholm (S), Kungliga Operan Stockholm, Karen Kamensek

Available in Swedish

Roles:

Mina, S

Jonathan, T

Dracula, Bar

Elizabetha, A or MS

Lucy, S

Mrs. Westenra, MS

Quincey, T

Holmwood, Bar

Dr. Seward, Bar

Dr. Van Helsing, B

Renfield, T

1st and 2nd Vampires, S

3rd Vampire, T or S

Maria, A (choirsoloist)

Priest, B (choirsoloist)

Dracula's servant, silent role/dancer

2 pallbearers, silent roles (background actors)

Christoph Willibald Gluck (1714–1787)

Gluck composed two full versions of the opera (“azione teatrale”). The first was in Vienna in 1762 for contralto castrato Orfeo with a Baroque orchestra and an Italian libretto. He composed a second longer expanded version in Paris in 1774 for tenor Orfeo with a more contemporary orchestra and a French libretto. During the 19th century, these two versions became obsolete; the first due to end of the use of castrati and Baroque instruments and the second due to the raising of the standard of pitch. In 1859, Hector Berlioz edited, re-orchestrated and transposed Gluck’s French version back to the mezzo-soprano key for a female Orfeo. Berlioz also altered the French libretto, made significant cuts to the music and reorganized the opera into four acts.

Despite its popularity a complete critical performing edition of the 19th-century versions of the opera has not existed so far. For the last 100 years, conductors have been required to prepare a conglomeration of at least two of the published versions for performance. Consequently, this has been a deterrent to regular productions of 19th-century editions of the opera.

This scholarly edition fills this much-needed gap in the opera repertory for a complete practical edition with modern orchestra, mezzosoprano Orfeo and libretto in Italian. It also includes all the music of Gluck’s extended version of the work composed for the Paris Opera in 1774. It provides options for instrumentation and orchestration where appropriate from the different versions of the opera. This edition makes *Orfeo ed Euridice* finally more accessible. It includes libretti in Italian and French.

Synopsis: Orfeo laments the death of Euridice. He descends into the underworld and plays for the gods, asking for Eurydice’s return. The gods cannot resist Orfeo’s music and return Eurydice with one condition: that he would not look at her until they have reached the upper world. Euridice panics at the thought of a life without the love of Orfeo. In desperation he turns to her. She dies, again. Orfeo wonders how he can live without her. He decides to kill himself. Amor appears and stays Orfeo’s hand. In response to Orfeo’s deep love and devotion, Amor revives Euridice. The three return to Earth and celebrate the power of love.

Orpheus and Eurydice (1762*–1774**)

Opera in 3 acts | 19th Century Critical Performing Edition

Arranged (2016) by John P. Leonard

Libretto: Ranieri de' Calzabigi

Choir: SATB

world première (*Original Italian version): 05.10.1762 Vienna (A), Burgtheater

world première (**Revised French version): 02.08.1774 Paris (F), Paris Opera

world première (this version): N/A

Available in Italian and French

Roles:

Orpheus, MS

Amore, S

Eurydice, S

Chorus and dancers, shepherds, shepherdesses, nymphs, demons, furies, happy spirits, heroes and heroines

Georg Friedrich Haas (*1953)

She was the love of his life. When he loses this love, everything collapses: Lars Hertervig, a promising young painter, sinks into depression and nearly loses his mind as well, along with his self-confidence as an artist. In the asylum his thoughts only revolve around himself – and with him Jon Fosse's text, going around in his mind again and again.

In his much-acclaimed novel "Melancholia" set in the 19th century, morbid depression – defined by Freud as total disinterest in the outside world – has been discovered by Fosse, who is one of the Europe's most performed dramatists, as a pathological counterpart to his motif of continuously circulating repetition. The composer Georg Friedrich Haas, who was born in Graz, Austria and whose musical style is characterised by filigree sound structures, experimentation with overtone constellations and microtonal shifts, condensed the text for his opera, and Fosse himself reworked it as a libretto.

"Melancholia" thus forms part of a series of compositions such as the ensemble composition "Nacht-Schatten" (1991) or the Hölderlin chamber opera "Nacht" (1995/96), in which Haas focused on central themes of romanticism from a contemporary perspective. The metaphorical fear and transcendental hope that pervade Fosse's text are conveyed in a hypnotic, musical form.

The sounds here are almost closer to the paintings, the light and the inner world of Lars Hertervig than the happenings in the outside world that become an increasing imposition as he is unable to fight back. In the third part it is the transcendence, the transition from one world to the next, which Haas traces with music's own very special means, themselves explored using microscopy.

Melancholia (2006–2007)

Opera in 3 parts | 90'

Libretto: Jon Fosse

Choir: 6-voice Chamber choir (S MezzoS A T Bar B)

world première: 09.06.2008 Paris (F), Palais Garnier. Klangforum Wien, Vokalensemble Nova, Emilio Pomàrico

Available in German

Roles:

Helene, S

Lars, Bar

5 smaller roles (singers from the chamber choir):

Frau Winckelmann, S

Kellnerin, S

Alfred, T

Bodom, T

Herr Winckelmann, B

Cristóbal Halffter (*1930)

In *Schachnovelle* Stefan Zweig formulates his loathing of the National Socialist takeover of control and also the despotism of state power. Zweig's novella recounts a happily successful escape and a journey into a new world. On the way to an interrogation, the persecuted and imprisoned attorney Dr. B. is able to purloin a book from the jacket pocket of one of the guards, hoping to gain food for thought from it. To his immeasurable disappointment, it is a documentation of legendary chess games.

To avoid utter despair, the prisoner passes the time in total isolation by replaying the masters' duels on the checkerboard pattern of his bedspread, with pieces taken from a tin of rock candy. During the journey to South America, Zweig's protagonist Dr. B. then happens to meet Mirko Czentovic, the world chess champion. His professionalism is challenged by the hitherto purely theoretical game intelligence of the attorney who is departing into exile, although the memory of the time of torture is also reawakened.

The decisive battle begins: materialism versus idealism. A formal error ends the game in a draw. In the final scene, Dr. B. calls for a life in dignity and freedom – also meaning his own inner freedom.

Cristóbal Halffter's tonal language took shape in the 1960s, honed in opposition to the Franco regime which suppressed constructive modern music, just like the other totalitarian systems in the mid-20th century. Although some details have developed, the Madrid composer's style has remained principally the same over the last six decades. Halffter links up most audibly to Alban Berg's operas.

Cristóbal Halffter

Schachnovelle (Chess Story) (2010–2012)

Opera in 1 act | opera | 115'

Libretto: Wolfgang Haendeler

Based on text by: Stefan Zweig

Choir: Chess Ghosts (Opera chorus), SATB

4 3 4 3 - 4 4 4 1 - perc(4), alto sax(Eb), t.sax(Bb), e.pno - vln. I (12-16), vln. II (12-14),
vla. (10-12), vc. (8-10), cb. (6-8)

world première: 18.05.2013 Kiel (D), Opernhaus Kiel. Philharmonischer Orchester and
Chor Kiel, Georg Fritzsch

Available in German

Roles:

Dr. Leo Berger, Bar

Gestapo officer, T

Mirko Czentovic, B

nurse, S

first lady / chessman, S

second lady / chessman, S

third lady / chessman, A

Koller, agent / chessman, T

first Gestapo man / Mario Lotto, T

first reporter / Ingmar Soderström, T

Scott McConner, T

pastor / chessman, Bar

Graf Simczik, Bar

second Gestapo man / José Burgos, Bar

second reporter, Bar (choir soloist)

Paul Teller, Bar

Boris (innkeeper) / chessman, B

the attendant / captain / the waiter (choir solo), B

third reporter (choir solo), B

first Kiebitz (children's and youth choir), S; second Kiebitz (children's and youth choir), A

Mirko Czentovic (child), silent role

Kron (extra), silent role

medic, photojournalists, newspaper man, telegraph boys, delivery boys, sailors with their brides (extras), silent roles

Claudio Monteverdi (1567–1643)

“Monteverdi’s music – especially his music for the stage – was played prior to the advent of historical performance practice, always in performing versions expressly prepared for the occasions. Thus, the Monteverdi Complete Edition (published between 1926 and 1942) by the Italian composer and musicologist Gian Francesco Malipiero, however highly meritorious, must be defined as a child of its time, since it appears historically “incorrect;” dynamic indications, phrasing marks, etc. are rife in his edition, all of which contradict the originals. Nevertheless, it contributed decisively to Monteverdi’s rediscovery, and it is still in widespread use today.

No less a musical figure than Luciano Berio arranged Monteverdi’s *Combattimento* in a similar manner in 1966, scoring it for soprano, tenor, baritone, harpsichord and strings (three violas, violoncello and contrabass). Published by Universal Edition, it is still performed today by such ensembles as the Munich Philharmonic and the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra.

Therefore, the question inevitably arises as to whether it is reprehensible or even hubristic to produce yet another version which, once again, is not historical: why, when there are top-class Baroque orchestras everywhere which can play Monteverdi historically “correctly?”

In the spring of 2015, when stage-director Hendrik Müller and I decided to find a piece to complement Luke Bedford’s short opera (ca. 55 min.) *Through his Teeth*, we ended up selecting Monteverdi’s *Combattimento*; we liked its stylistic contrast along with the simultaneous contextual parallels. As with *Through his Teeth*, *Combattimento* has three singers whom we could adopt quasi identically.

...it is a testimonial to Monteverdi’s genius; the three singers’ music is 100% Monteverdi, the spirit of the early Baroque is not broken but merely dramaturgically reinforced – nothing more and nothing less.”

-Klaus Simon, July 2016

***Il Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda* (1624)**

For chamber ensemble | 25'

Arranged by Klaus Simon (2016)

Text Author: Torquato Tasso

0 0 0 0 - 0 1 0 0 - perc, hp, acc, vln, vln, vc, cb

world première: N/A

Available in Italian

Roles:

Clorinda, S

Testo, MS

Tancredi, Bar

Nigel Osborne (*1948)

The opera *The Electrification of the Soviet Union* by Nigel Osborne is based on two semi-autobiographical works by Soviet writer Boris Pasternak which he wrote during the 1920ies: his prose work *The Last Summer* and the verse novel *Spectorsky*. Both were formed into a libretto by English author Craig Raine. Pasternak, who is nowadays mostly known for writing the novel *Doktor Zhivago*, also plays a role in the opera itself and functions as a kind of narrator through the story. The main character though is a young poet and Pasternak's alter ego, Serezha Spectorsky, who is torn between the love for the governess and widow Anna who lives at the bourgeois home where he is a tutor and the prostitute Sashka as well as politics, war and revolution and his own artistic creativity. The story is based before and after the Russian Revolution, jumping in flashbacks between the years 1914 to 1920.

Nigel Osborne, Craig Rain and the director of the world premiere, Peter Sellars, collaborated closely on the creation of the opera since 1984. It was premiered at Glyndebourne in 1987, four years before the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The opera's title is taken from Lenin's 1920ies dictum "Communism is Soviet power plus the electrification of the whole country". Peter Sellars described Raine's libretto as "a series of hot flashes, a set of songs and brief encounters mixing metaphors and common sense. Nigel Osborne's score envelops these with evocations of trains, machinery, shops sinking in the night, and falling in love. The music is lush, fragile, politically committed, and painfully honest."

***The Electrification of the Soviet Union* (1987)**

Opera in 2 acts | 120'

Libretto: Craig Raine

2 (1. also picc., 2. also alto-fl.)·2 (2. also c.a.)·2 (2. also bass cl.)·2 (2. also cbsn.) - 3·2·2·1
- perc.(2) - hp., pno. - str.: 6. 6. 4. 5. 3 - tape

world première: 1987 Glyndebourne (GB), Glyndebourne Touring Opera

Available in English and German

Roles:

Boris Pasternak, Bar

Serezha Spectorsky, Bar

Frestln, Bar

Fardybassow, B

Anna Arild, S

Saschka, S

Mrs. Frestln, S

Natasha, S

Lemokh and Harry Frestln, speaking roles

Wolfgang Rihm (*1952)

Wolfgang Rihm's version of the final scene from Botho Strauss' three-part play *Schlusschor* is titled *Das Gehege* and the composer also gave it the subtitle "A nocturnal scene". *Das Gehege* is a single-act opera that was premiered with *Salome* by Richard Strauss.

A woman comes out of the darkness. It is night and the woman is alone. She arrives at the zoo and speaks to an eagle in its aviary, takes a knife, frees the bird and admires the eagle's body. She challenges the eagle to attack her. The more she irritates the eagle, the closer it comes to her. When the woman realises that the bird is old and powerless, she feels superior to it. The eagle pounces on her; she kills it.

In this final scene, Botho Strauss integrated subtle references to Arnold Schönberg's monodrama *Erwartung*. Rihm felt this intuitively: "The interest of the listener is directed at what the wild animal is doing to her, but instead she does something to him. This course of events alone is really enough for music theatre," says Rihm.

Even though he did not change the text, the music in this single-act opera is nonetheless pervaded by harsh cuts and elements of fragmentation, by techniques used to fade in and out, by tearing apart and overwriting musical processes.

Rihm works with an orchestra that enjoys rich instrumentation and displays a masterly command, not accompanying but rather finding itself in busy interaction with the soloist on the stage – a soloist who sings the text word by word, besides a few repetitions.

The eagle as the German heraldic animal with a sombre past lends an additional dimension to this nocturnal scene. Rihm's reaction is a grim allegory of German reunification in which grotesque elements come to the fore alongside musical reflections on the "old spectre" of the German essence.

Das Gehege (2004–2005)

A nocturnal scene | for soprano and orchestra | 45'

Libretto: Botho Strauß

3 3 3 3 - 4 4 3 1 - timp, perc(3), hp, pno, str

world première: 27.10.2006 München (D), Bayerische Staatsoper München. Bayerisches Staatsorchester, Kenta Nagano.

Available in German

Roles:

The woman, S

The eagle, silent role

The story was well known, about Prince Hamlet and his unhappy bride Ophelia. The playwrights of the 1970s and 1980s were not in the mood for telling stories, however, particularly because so much was going wrong at the time. Well-trodden behavioural patterns therefore had to be broken apart, and the same old paths of causality demolished. To be or not to be: who was seriously interested in that kind of a question when there was a completely irrational possibility that our world would be destroyed by an atom bomb? A kind of theatre that is now called "postdramatic" was created on stage – a form of presentation where little is explained but there is still a lot of talking. One of the first texts for this kind of play is Heiner Müller's *Hamletmaschine*, which was written in 1977. After that, stages were never the same as before.

Wolfgang Rihm read Müller's *Hamletmaschine* shortly after it was published, and he recognised something crucial: this meta-text for Shakespeare's tragedy *Hamlet*, which itself hardly conveys any action and ultimately even promotes freeing the actor from his role and the supremacy of the author, contained a solution for the crisis experienced by contemporary music theatre at the time. Its best representatives were still backing literature-based opera, but Rihm had something different in mind than cohesive structures for the storyline: "total theatre", which retains its proximity to Wagner's idea of the overall work of art, in which the music creates the drama out of itself, as it were.

Rihm's setting, or rather his comprehensive musical version of Müller's *Hamletmaschine*, which was premiered in 1987 in Mannheim, is therefore a milestone of recent opera history.

Die Hamletmaschine (1983–1986)

Opera in 5 parts | 90'

Based on text by: Heiner Müller

Choir: SATB (also chanting): at least 12S, 12A, 12T, 12B

2 2 2 2 - 4 3 3 1 - timp, perc(6), pno, str(14 12 10 8 6)

world première: 30.03.1987 Mannheim (D), Nationaltheater Mannheim. Orchester and Chor des Nationaltheaters, Peter Schneider.

Available in German

Roles:

Hamlet I (aged actor)

Hamlet II (young actor)

Hamlet III, Bar

Ophelia, S

3 Ophelia-Doubles: Marx, Lenin, Mao - 3 "naked women", "voices from the casket" (S, S, MS)

4 laughing people (2 women, 2 men)

3 screaming people (men)

some silent roles

Wolfgang Rihm has always been fascinated by the world of the late works of Friedrich Nietzsche – and here it is above all the visionary power of the enigmatic Dithyrambs of Dionysus that sparks the Rihm's creativity.

Nietzsche identified strongly with Dionysos, even signing his letters with the name: he believed in the Dionysian mission to change the world and bring peace. Nietzsche considered himself to be as strong as Dionysos. "He superimposed Dionysos over his own personality," says Rihm. They melted into a single person, like a double-exposed film.

Thus, we can see the writer himself in "N", the main character of Dionysos, the poet. Some scenes also have parallels with his life: a journey over Lake Lucerne, a scene in a brothel, the famous meeting with the horse on the marketplace in Turin. But *Dionysos* is not a biography of Nietzsche. This operatic fantasia is more of a game, on many levels: playing with the operatic genre itself. But also a playful exploration of the Dionysos myth, and what it might mean for us today.

Just as it is possible to think further at every point in the libretto, the music also captures the imagination with its "incredible beauty" (Neue Zürcher Zeitung) and with its richness of sounds. Rihm offers manifold opportunities for historical associations, without pandering excessively to tradition. The opening scene undeniably hints at the Rhine maidens in Wagner's "Ring" with its laughing women, whereas the second scene plays with the "Alpine Symphony" by Richard Strauss and the third serves up a waltz.

At the end, however, there is a big surprise: out of nothing, there is the sound of menacingly glowering drums, followed by eruptions that get straight under your skin. It is typical Rihm.

Dionysos (2009–2010)

an operatic fantasy based on texts by Friedrich Nietzsche | 150'

2 2 3 2 - 4 2 3 1 - timp, perc(5), hp(2), cel, pno, str

world première: 27.07.2010 Salzburg (A), Haus für Mozart Salzburg. Deutsches Symphony Orchester Berlin, Ingo Metzmacher.

Available in German

Roles:

Dionysos

Four singing roles: 2 S, 1 T, 1 MS

David Sawer (*1961)

From Morning to Midnight is David Sawer's first full-length opera. The composition is based on the expressionist work of the same name by playwright Georg Kaiser from the year 1912. The opera is divided into seven scenes and accompanies the main character, a bank cashier who has run off with the money, on his journey for a day. There are eleven vocal parts in the work, of which most are doubled up due to the large number of different characters.

David Sawer began work on the libretto at the beginning of 1997 and attempted to transform Kaiser's very wordy text into short, singable, rhythmic phrases. Sawer describes Kaiser's play: "It's written like a script for a film; the story can be told through music and images. And there are moments which cry out for music: a snow-covered field with a tree which turns into a skeleton; a storm; a bicycle race; a Salvation Army meeting". It is therefore unsurprising that director Karlheinz Martin had already used the work for a silent movie in 1920.

The opera begins in a bank, in a small town; a beautiful Italian woman enters. The cashier is enchanted by her charm, decides on the spur of the moment to pocket the money that he has counted, and runs away. He looks for the beautiful woman in her hotel room, assuming that she will run away with him, but she has other plans. Frustrated with life, the cashier sets off for the city, after paying a brief visit to his family. The next scene is at a bicycle race where the cashier offers his money as the prize money. After visiting a nightclub, he attends a meeting of the Salvation Army as an act of atonement for his deeds. When a girl who met him at the bicycle race gives him away and calls the police, he decides to end his life and shoots himself.

From Morning to Midnight (1998–2001)

Opera in 7 scenes | 100'

Choir: SATB

3 2 3 2 - 4 3 3 1 - timp, perc(4), hp, keyboard, strings - on stage players: cl, tpt, euph, tuba, perc(3)

world première: 27.04.2001 London (GB), English National Opera. Orchestra and Chorus of the English National Opera, Martyn Brabbins

Available in English

Roles:

3 S, MS, A, 3 T, 2 Bar, 1 B

Johannes Maria Staud (*1974)

On the 13th floor of an office building, the staffs from different departments are having fun at an office party. People are introducing themselves to one another, feeling important, drinking champagne and waiting for their boss. Victor, who is obviously reluctant to join in, is urged by a crowd of menacing, inebriated colleagues to relax and loosen up. The manager arrives and gives a speech that merely praises his own work. Just as the speech reaches its climax, when the sense behind his words is increasingly evaporating, the director is forced to stop due to a nosebleed.

Victor then begins to speak: held in a fantasy language, his speech brings this content-free communication to a consistent conclusion. It is actually a collection and combination of names of different antelope species. Then Victor jumps out of the window – into an existence where time is suspended and which grants him new perspectives. On his nighttime walk through an absurdly distorted metropolitan area, the aimless searcher stumbles into situations that seem grotesque yet curious, which are always on the borderline between reality and fantasticism. The peculiar escape into an impossible situation turns out to be both an adventurous expedition and an inner journey – with an emergency landing in the here and now.

The lyricist Durs Grünbein developed six incisive tableaux for this surreal station drama, illustrating the bleak downside of affluence, wealth and careers. Johannes Maria Staud, whose works range from solo pieces to orchestral works with large orchestration, and who contributes many different ideas from various disciplines such as philosophy, art, literature and film, has written extremely original music that transcends all stylistic boundaries.

Die Antilope (2013–2014)

Opera | 75'

Libretto: Durs Grünbein

Choir: SATB (the choir and small supporting roles can be filled, as about all roles in the 3rd block, 1 image)

2 1 2 2 - 2 2 1 1 - perc(2), acc, pno, alto sax(Eb), str

world première: 03.09.2014 Luzern (S), Luzerner Theater. Luzerner Symphony

Orchestra, Chor des Luzerner Theaters, Howard Arman

Available in German

Roles:

Victor: Bar

Female colleague 1/young woman,/bystander: S

Secretary, woman 1/sculpture: S

Female colleague 2/woman 2/old woman: MS

Male colleague 1/young man/doctor 1: T

Male colleague 2/passersby/doctor 2: Bar

Chief, passersby/doctor 2: B

Woman 3: Voice (possibly a female from the choir)

Mother: Voice (possibly a female from the choir)

Child: Silent role

Doctor 3: Voice (possibly a male from the choir)

Richard Wagner (1813–1883)

Der Ring des Nibelungen (The Ring Cycle) for medium-sized orchestra

“A lifetime of involvement with Wagner’s work and coming to terms with his conception and influence over time led me to investigate and try out how Wagner’s scores could be compressed and consolidated in certain ways for smaller orchestra forces, using his music drama *Der ring des Nibelungen*.

It is a widespread mistake to believe that Wagner – the *Ring* in particular – is performed “the original way” in German-language opera houses; even the “big five/seven” opera houses in German lands play Wagner with a reduced number of strings.

...my central concerns when transcribing the *Ring* were both to create a practical alternative for performance and to find new sonic directionality for the piece – without, however, making it confusable with the approaches of so-called historically informed interpretational practice. This transcription consists of a not negligible transformation of the sound and thus the sonic structure within the orchestra and in the balance between the stage and the orchestra. The presumed loss of “grand opera sound” is countered with a more radical substance as regards both composition and sound, in the sense of finely attuning the interaction between the singers and the markedly reduced orchestra. The result is the option of greater flexibility in casting – lighter voices, more articulate and not from the highly dramatic *Fach*. Comprehensibility of the words and sonic transparency intensify the theatrical impact which was doubtless Wagner’s intention in writing his works for the musical stage.

Let it be expressly pointed out that the four operas were arranged **without cuts**. The effect of practical operatic consequences with regard to variable casting alternatives in the direction of more flexible, articulate voices will become apparent. Wagner’s operatic concern was for theatrical impact, which is increased when the words are comprehensible and the sound is transparent. It is always fascinating to experience and specifically follow in numerous performances the extent to which the transcription’s consequences can entail a new view and auditory perspective of Wagner’s work in general.”

-Eberhard Kloke, from excerpt from the catalogue *Richard Wagner – Der Ring des Nibelungen*

http://www.universaledition.com/tl_files/Komponisten/Wagner/Ring_Catalogue.pdf

Das Rheingold

Eve of the stage play "The Ring of the Nibelungen" | 140'
Arranged for medium-sized orchestra by Eberhard Kloke (2011)
Choir: SATB
2 2 2 2 - 4 2 4 0 - perc(2), hp, str(12 10 8 6 5)

Available in German

Roles:

Woglinde (Freia)*, S
Wellgunde, S
Flosshilde, MS
Fricka, MS
Freia (Woglinde)*, S
Erda, MS
Loge, T
Froh (Mime)*, T
Wotan, Bar
Donner (Fasolt)*, Bar
Mime (Froh)*, T
Alberich, Bar
Fasolt (Donner)*, Bar
Fafner, B

* These roles can be played by one performer, if necessary.

Die Walküre (in preparation)

First day of the stage play "The Ring of the Nibelungen" | 240'
Arranged for medium-sized orchestra by Eberhard Kloke (2011)
2 2 3 2 - 4 2 4 0 - perc(2), hp, str(10 8 6 5 4)
Available: Spring 2018

Available in German

Roles:

Sieglinde, S
Brünnhilde, S
Fricka (Waltraute)*, MS
Siegmund, T
Wotan, Bar
Hunding, B

Six Valkyries:

Helmwige and Gerhilde, S
Waltraute (Fricka)* and Rossweiße, MS
Grimgerde and Schwertleite, S

* These roles can be played by one performer, if necessary.

Richard Wagner

Siegfried (in preparation)

Second day of the stage play "The Ring of the Nibelungen" | 225'

Arranged for medium-sized orchestra by Eberhard Kloke (2012)

2 3 3 3 - 4 2 4 1 – timp, perc, hp, pno, str

Available: Autumn 2017

Available in German

Roles:

Siegfried, T

Mime, T

Wanderer, Bar

Alberich, Bar

Fafner, B

Brünnhilde, S

Erda, A

Forest Bird, S

Götterdämmerung (in preparation)

Day 3 of the stage play "The Ring of the Nibelungen" | 244'

Arranged for medium-sized orchestra by Eberhard Kloke (2012)

Choir: SATB

3 3 3 3 - 6 2 4 1 – timp, perc(2), hp, cel, str

Available: Summer 2018

Available in German

Roles:

Siegfried, T

Gunther, Bar

Alberich, Bar

Hagen, B

Brünnhilde, S

Gutrun, 3rd Norn, Woglinde: S

Waltraute, 2nd Norn, Wellgunde: S

1st Norn, Flosshilde: A

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