

RTV Slovenia Symphony Orchestra

The Czech-Slovenian composer Emerik Beran (1868-1940) studied music in Brno, where he also taught music at the conservatory between 1890 and 1898. He was a student and a good friend of Leos Janachek. As a nationally-minded Czech at the end of the 19th century, the period marked with nationalist clashes, he could not get a regular job in any German musical institution in Bohemia, while Czechs resented him that he had passed the state examination in Vienna and not in Prague. From 1898 to 1926 he was a professor of music at the college of education of the Maribor Philharmonic Society, where Slavko Osterc was one of his students; from 1928 to 1936 he was a professor of cello at the Ljubljana Conservatory. He was also writing for the music magazine *Novi akordi* ("New Chords"). The heritage of Emerik Beran and his correspondence with Leos Janachek are kept in the University Library in Maribor. It was researched by the musicologist Jernej Weiss, who wrote about the composer in the Musicological Miscellany of the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana (Vol. 1, year 41). Beran created several compositions for symphony orchestra (*Mournful Symphony, Three Legends, Idyl, Dumka, Scherzo*), two string quartets, three *Slovenian Masses*, the cantata *Shoulder*, solo songs, salon compositions for piano, and the opera *Melusina*, which borrowed its story from an old Celtic legend. Beran wrote the opera in Brno in 1896 and then tried to get it staged without success for the rest of his life. It seems that Beran's *Melusina*, which still has not been performed, at least partially fell victim to the fact that neither Slovenian nor Czech national culture unreservedly accepted the composer as its own. The opera's carefully orchestrated overture in a free contrapuntal style for grand orchestra (the vivacious beginning is followed by the melodic introduction, the music then calms and after some short dramatic sequences ends in idyllic atmosphere) reveals the influence of Czech romantic music, while the flash from *Master Singers*, the rich orchestration of brass in the central part and the widely spread melodic ideas remind of Richard Wagner.

The composer, conductor, pedagogue and musical writer Lojze Lebič was born on the 23rd August 1934 in Prevalje. He finished Ravne Grammar School and took his degree in archaeology (1957) at the University of Ljubljana. He studied composition with Marjan Kozina and conducting with Danilo Švara at the Academy of Music (graduated in 1972). For three seasons (1960-62) he led the Academic Choir, from 1962 to 1972 the Ljubljana RTV Chamber Choir, which under his guidance reached a higher artistic level. Since 1986 he is a professor of theoretical subjects in music at the Musicological Department of the Faculty of Arts at the University of Ljubljana.

As a composer he emerged from the group Pro Musica Viva and improved his knowledge at the seminars in contemporary music in Darmstadt in the 70s and in the electronic studio of Radio Belgrade. After at first allowing for an intense yet critical confrontation with contemporary compositional tendencies, he went on to mould his personal language, stretched between massive blocks of sound alternating with meditative moments, cosmopolitan modernism and immense respect for the heritage of past cultures. Faithful to his artistic beliefs, he tends towards a musical universalism, but he creates out of an active social sensitivity and with awareness for the times he lives in. He composes for all kinds of ensembles. The most notable among his compositions are the vocal and instrumental pieces the Burnt Grass, November Songs, FAUVEL '86, Ajdna – the Music About Time, Myths and Apocrypha, the Symphonic Sentences for two Pianos and Orchestra, Korant, Nicina, Voices, Queensland Music, Overture for Three Instrumental Ensembles, Organ Symphony, Cantico I, Cantico II; the chamber pieces Tangram, the String Quartet, the Percussion Quartet; the

elektroacoustic Atelier II and III, solo compositions, pieces for solo singing, choirs, scenic music etc.

He is a member of the Society of Slovenian Composers. From 1982 until Slovenian independence he was the Secretary of the Yugoslav Section of the International Organisation for contemporary Music, ISCM, which after his argumentation accepted Slovenia as an independent national Section at its general meeting in Warsaw in 1992. He has sat on international juries and taught in seminars.

His compositions have been performed at many festivals such as the World Music Days of ISCM (Brussels 1981, Zurich 1991, Bucharest 1999, Yokohama 2001); the Music Biennials in Berlin and Zagreb; Musikprotokoll Graz; the Pan Music Festival Seul; the Warsaw Autumn; Trieste prima; Mittel Fest Čedad.

Lojze Lebič received the Prešeren Award three times (1967 for conducting, 1970 and 1987 for composition). In 1972 he won the first prize at the BBC's international competition Let the Peoples Sing. In competitions held by the Yugoslav radio Station (JRT) he won the first prize for his compositions Korant (1970), Voices (1975), for his electroacoustic works Atelier II and Atelier III (1976), as well as for his musical programmes, interpretations and musical plays. His symphonic work November Songs was chosen as one of the ten most successful works of the year at the Rostrum of Composers, IMC UNESCO, in Paris, 1985. In 1994 Lebič was awarded the Prešeren Award for his opus. From 30th of May 1991 he had been an associate member of the Slovenian Academy of Arts and Sciences (SAZU), on the 6th June 1995 he became a regular member.

He wrote about his composition Sentences for two Pianos and Orchestra: »The composition Sentence for two Pianos and Orchestra (woodwind, brass, percussion and only low strings) was made almost half a century ago. The essential characteristics of this work are described by the sentence of the ancient sage Heraclitus of Ephesos, which is written inside the front page of the score:

"The unlike is joined together, and from differences results the most beautiful harmony, and all things take place by strife."

The duality was there already when the work was made, already when parting with the inherited and the school, and setting off to the worlds of new sonority. Similarly dialogical – from different to harmonious – is also the pianists' playing. In the concentrated and slow beginning they emphasise two tonal types, then they – with bold perseverance – form the longest and the most dynamic central part of the composition by successively piling short terse sentences.

The sentences end the same way they begin – into a quiet, almost resigned conclusion.

The work was first performed in 1967 at the concert of Pro musica viva. The conductor was Darijan Božič, the soloists were Aci Bertonec and Igor Dekleva.«

Janez Matičič (born in 1926 in Ljubljana) studied piano under Anton Trost, composition under Lucijan Marija Škerjanc and conducting under Danilo Švara. From 1959 he has been living in Paris, where he continued his studies under professor Nadia Boulanger and later with the Groupe de Recherches musicales at the French radio. His musical style began with both late romantic and impressionistic elements when he – after a period of neo-classicism – in 1960 turned to a more radical modernism.

In France he underwent artistic transformation and became one of the most daring Slovenian avant-garde composers. Though his works preserved firm forms and neo-classical rational use of musical means, his music is particularly distinguished by an exceptional sense of colour casts. He was the first in Slovenia to explore the new sonority of electronic music. Besides a series of piano compositions (Matičič is considered the greatest Slovenian master of piano sentence; among his piano works are 12 études, preludes, two concerts for piano and orchestra, Intermittences, 3 sonatas, Suite, Pulses), he also wrote a number of works for violin (Chants for Violin Solo, Concert for Violin and Orchestra, Four Lullabies for Violin and Piano), as well as Concert for Cello and Orchestra, String Suite, Trans for Symphony Orchestra and two symphonies.

Janez Matičič was in Paris awarded the Croix de chevalier (1970), he received the Prince Rainier de Monaco Prize (1962), won the first prize at the Bourges Electroacoustic Music Competition (1990) and received the Prešeren Foundation Award for his Concert for Violin and Orchestra (1981). His works have been published at home and abroad, the recordings of his works for Slovenian and foreign musical publishing houses can be regularly heard on radios and in concert halls. In 1987 he was elected a corresponding member of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, in 2001 he became its associate member. In 2007 he received the Prešeren Award for Life Achievement.

Symphony No. 2 by Janez Matičič was first performed by the Slovenian Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra on the 14th of February 2001 under the baton of Marko Letonja. On this occasion the composer wrote: »I wrote the composition over a longer period (1996-1999), as to the chronological order of individual sentences: I first finished the fourth (last) sentence, only then did I completed the first sentence, which »foretells« the last, in the end I wrote both central sentences – their course, musical substance and themes had been set already in the beginning. The entire concept of the symphony does not follow any extra-musical pattern. I focused on the formal construction of both the whole and individual sentences, as well as on the balance among them. The instrumental approach is supposed to take into account the criterion of colour, mass and density of musical happening, which of course does not lack tension, relief, conflicts and other phases that in a way depict life.«

Milko Lazar studied jazz, classical piano and saxophone at the University of Music and Dramatic Arts Graz, and harpsichord at the Royal Conservatory in The Hague. He worked as the first alto saxophone, conductor and composer in the RTV Slovenia Big Band for fifteen years. In his jazz period he led many ensembles (among others Quatebriga, Royal Society, Štefbet Rifi, Milko Lazar Quartet) and played with them at many renowned festivals at home and abroad. Milko Lazar became famous for his distinct manner of composing which defies classification – he cannot be said to belong to any particular genre – neither jazz or ethno nor minimalism. He regularly writes compositions for the orchestra of the Slovenian Philharmonic and the RTV Slovenia Symphony Orchestra, and cooperates with the most eminent Slovenian musicians. His works have been performed all over Europe, in South America, China, Russia and the USA – also in the famous Carnegie Hall in New York. He writes music for film, theatre, dance and multimedia projects. He is about to publish his authorial CD with the latest works for symphony orchestra. For his work he has received numerous awards – in 2005 also the Prešeren Foundation Award for composing. The pianist Bojan Gorišek graduated at the Academy of Music in Ljubljana under professor Aci Bertonec, he pursued advanced studies with Herbert Henck in Köln. He focuses

primarily on modern music. He has cooperated with composers such as Luciano Berio, Vinko Globokar and George Crumb. He has performed all over Europe, as well as in New York, Washington, Caracas, Bogotá and Beijing. Between 1993 and 2000 he recorded for Blaricum Music Group the entire piano opuses by Erik Satie and George Crumb, and the piano sonata *Concord* by Charles Ives. In 1986 he received the Golden Bird Award, in 2006 the Prešeren Foundation Award. From 2007 he has been a professor for chamber music at the Academy of Music in Ljubljana.

Milko Lazar and Bojan Gorišek have played in the piano duo since 2005. They play all over Slovenia and tour abroad. They have performed three times in the USA (New York, Washington, Chicago), also in Germany, Sweden and Austria.

Anton Nanut as a young conductor led the Choir of the Slovenian Philharmonic, in 1958 he became the conductor of the Dubrovnik City Orchestra. From 1975 to 1980 he was the chief conductor of the Slovenian Philharmonic Orchestra. In 1981 he became the chief conductor and artistic director of the RTV Slovenia Symphony Orchestra, investing into his work with the orchestra all his experiences and his immense artistic as well as human energy.

With our musicians he performed and recorded most of the symphonic opus of Slovenian composers, along with 150 CDs of the iron repertoire, which were praised by critics and are still admired by audiophiles the world over. His interpretations of all symphonies by Gustav Mahler are particularly appreciated. He has led the RTV Slovenia Symphony Orchestra on many concert tours – twice in the USA, at the Warsaw Autumn Festival; the Prague Spring Festival, the Venetian Biennale and Trieste Contemporanea, to name but a few.

Anton Nanut is internationally the most famous Slovenian conductor. He has conducted 197 foreign orchestras, among them are renowned ensembles such as the Leningrad Philharmonic, the Dresden Staatskapelle, the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, the Warsaw Philharmonic, the Prague Philharmonic, the West German Radio Symphony Orchestra, the South German Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Monterrey Symphony Orchestra, the Vienna Symphony Orchestra, the Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra; he conducted all Italian symphony orchestras.

Anton Nanut has been in the last decades among the central figures of Slovenian music. As a professor of conducting at the Academy of Music in Ljubljana he trained a series of excellent young conductors who successfully work in Slovenia and abroad. He founded the festival Kogoj's Days in Kanal, which has under his leadership become one of the most cosmopolitan musical events in Slovenia. He was an artistic leader of the Slovenian Octet in its most successful years.

For his work Nanut received a number of prestigious rewards – the Prešeren Foundation Award (for his interpretations of Beethoven), the Župančič Award, for his work in Croatia he received the Milka Trnina Award, the City of Split Award, a high state decoration of the Republic of Croatia, the Yugoslav award Lira and the Silver Sign of Liberty of the Republic of Slovenia.

RTV Slovenia Symphony Orchestra was founded in 1955. The orchestra soon achieved a considerable success by touring extensively throughout Slovenia and abroad; in the years between 1984 and 1985 it performed to great critical acclaim in the USA. The main activity of the orchestra is concert recording. It performs a vast and diverse repertoire, ranging from baroque to modern symphonic music, from operatic music to oratorios and cantatas, from incidental music to film soundtracks, always giving a special emphasis to the creativity of Slovenian composers. The orchestra has been awarded many prizes for the best performances of new Slovenian compositions. The majority of its recordings can be heard regularly at all radio and TV programmes in Slovenia, while its domestic and foreign discography is quite

extensive (more than 150 CDs). The orchestra regularly tours throughout Europe. The orchestra was led by the conductors Uroš Prevoršek (1955-1966), Samo Hubad (1966-1980), Stanislav Macura (1980-1981), Anton Nanut (1981-1998), Lior Shambadal (2000-2003) and David de Villiers (2003-2006). In September 2006 excellent Chinese conductor En Shao became the chief conductor. The attention the orchestra attracted in the past few seasons was due mainly to the conductors and soloists, such as: En Shao, Ralf Weikert, Walter Proost, Sian Edwards, Rossen Milanov, Angela Gheorghiu, Roberto Alagna, Marcelo Alvarez, Giora Feidman, Dmitri Sitkovetsky, Mischa Maisky, Stefan Milenkovich, Emanuelle Bertrand, Mate Bekavac, Aldo Ciccolini, Radu Lupu, Irena Grafenauer, and Ivo Pogorelich. The orchestra has recently become known to the wider audience through the so-called "crossover" projects, in which it combined classical music with other musical genres. In the last two seasons the orchestra performed at Music Festival Nomus in Novi Sad, the World Music Days in Zagreb, Festival of Lugano, Festival Gustav Mahler Wochen in Toblach, Belgrade Music Festival (Bemus) and at four concerts in the famous hall Concertgebouw in Amsterdam.