

HONORARY DEGREE

CANDIDATE:
Karel Husa

NOMINATED BY:

John A. Duff
Director, School of Music, College of Fine Arts, University of Florida

LETTERS OF SUPPORT PROVIDED BY:

Lucinda Lavelli
Dean, College of Fine Arts, University of Florida

College of Fine Arts
School of Music

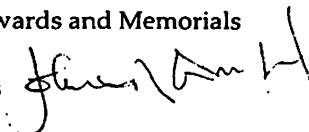
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1 March 2010

TO: Committee on Honorary Degree, Distinguished Alumnus Awards and Memorials

FROM: John A. Duff, Director, School of Music, College of Fine Arts



The School of Music in the College of Fine Arts is pleased to recommend Pulitzer-Prize winning composer Karel Husa for consideration of an honorary degree here at the University of Florida. Professor Husa was Professor of Music at Cornell University throughout his career, and upon retiring, resided in Florida. His music is a mainstay in late 20th century repertory in many genre, including band, orchestra and choir. As conductor of his own music, he has touched the lives of thousands of musicians both young and old, amateur and professional. Students here at the University have had the honor of working with him on many, many occasions as composer, conductor and musician. In September of 2007, the University Symphony Orchestra performed an all-Husa concert in his honor that Husa himself would have attended, had he not been ill at the time. Below I have provided a narrative describing his background, and I personally would be pleased to present this nomination to the committee on behalf of the School and College.

Born in Prague, on August 7, 1921, to two well-educated parents who provided Husa and his sister an excellent education for the times, ultimately preparing Husa for a career as an engineer. With the occupation of Czechoslovakia by the Nazis in 1939, and the changes this brought upon the Czech people, a student protest shortly after the occupation provided the Nazis reason for closing down all of the universities in Prague, including the technical institute where young Husa was enrolled in the engineering program. Most of the students were sent off to Dresden to work in munitions factories. However, and most fortunately for Husa, the conservatory of music was allowed to remain open, and he thus escaped being deported by his being accepted into the composition studio of Jaroslav Ridky. In the final year of the war, all classes were then suspended until the liberation of Czechoslovakia in 1945.

In 1946, he left Prague to study in Paris on a French fellowship, where he studied composition with Arthur Honegger and Nadia Boulanger, audited Darius Milhaud's composition class at the Paris Conservatory; he studied conducting with Jean Fournet at the Ecole Normale de Musique, and took private conducting lessons from Andre Cluytens. While in Paris his music began to be well-received, resulting in his winning the Lili Boulanger Prize for his First String Quartet. In 1953, Husa conducted the first professional recording of Bartok's ballet, *The Miraculous Mandarin*, with the Centi Soli Orchestra of Paris.

Hailed as "one of the greatest hopes for Czech music," by a music critic in Prague in 1948, by 1949, the Communist government revoked his passport upon Husa's refusal to return to Czechoslovakia. Now, a refugee without a country, he continued to conduct and compose in Paris on an income that was at best sporadic.

Then in 1954, Husa received an invitation from the American musicologist and chair of the music department at Cornell University, Donald Jay Grout, to come to Cornell to teach music theory and conduct the university orchestra as a sabbatical replacement. He accepted, and this short-term stint lasted for 38 years, when in 1992, he retired from Cornell University as Kappa Kappa Alpha Professor of Music.

Since arriving in this country, becoming an American citizen in 1959, his music has been hailed by critics and performed by musicians worldwide.

His music of the 1950s and early 1960s reflected the influences of neo-classicism found in the music of his teacher Honegger and that of Stravinsky, as well as elements of folklore similar to those found in the works of other Eastern European composers such as Janacek and Bartok. Husa's style was flush with the influences of Czech and Slovak folk music, elements which you will hear in tonight's performance of his First Symphony, from 1953. As the 1960s unfolded, he moved in a direction toward a more strict, atonal and experimental style of writing. In his works of 1960 and 1961, we hear the application of serial techniques and procedures based upon his studies of the music of Schoenberg and Webern.

And then, in 1968, Karel Husa's career took off with the writing of two very significant works: the Third String Quartet, which was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1969; and the Music for Prague 1968, which has been performed over 12,000 times. Of the String Quartet, Elliott Galkin wrote in the Baltimore Sun, "...in this Third String Quartet are some extraordinary and novel devices and techniques...all are bound together with a harmonic language flexible and dramatic, at times freely chromatic, at times implying serial techniques, always tinged with rhythms which are colorful and self-propulsive." The distinguished critic Malcolm Rayment wrote of the quartet (*Glasgow Herald*, 27 August 1971), "to say that it exploits the full colour range of four-stringed instruments is to do it scant justice. It is a work that creates its own logic, tending in each movement to move from complexity to simplicity, as if arguments were being resolved."

As for the Music for Prague 1968, inspired by the Soviet Invasion of Czechoslovakia, Byron Adams, in his composer essay on Husa, insists that it is more than a memorial to a tragic episode in the history of Prague, "its cries of anguish and indignation are relevant wherever the innocent are crushed and victimized by the strong." And then, Richard Dyer, in the Boston Globe writes, "Husa's work is bold in gesture and contemporary in its means, but it is music that also connects to tradition...the music builds on a Hussite hymn that will be familiar not only to Czechs but to anyone who values Czech concert music. It is also a work that connects to deep human values, as it sets sweeping tragic melody in the low strings amid the pealing church bells against a mockery of percussion and marching brass."

Music for Prague is the first of what Husa refers to as his three manifests, works intended to comment on serious issues of international concern. Husa himself wrote in 1974, "Musical notes become the sounds of protest; through these sounds music has its only power; it has no bullets or bombs or death danger; all it can do, perhaps, is warn what the future might be." His second manifest was written in 1971, Apotheosis of This Earth, as a commentary on the environment. In the score, Husa writes, "Man's brutal possession and misuse of nature's beauty—if continued at today's reckless speed—can lead to catastrophe."

The third manifest is a ballet based upon the Euripides play, *The Trojan Women*. This extraordinary work reflects that seemingly ever-present human trait, our inhumanity to one another. Again, Byron Adams in his essay, "Here the ghastly toll exacted upon the women and children by the ravages of war is played out upon the stage, evoking our horror and pity. Transcending the limitations of language, *The Trojan Women* delivers

its urgent message in a primal union of music and gesture." William Mootz, in the Louisville Courier-Journal, "Like the play, the ballet is a protracted lament for the victims of war. It is a desolate, angry and disturbing piece of theatre, and it moves to a moving climax with imagination and unmistakable artistic authority."

Over the years, Karel Husa has composed one masterpiece after another. In the 70s, he wrote three excellent works for the wind band: Concerto for Percussion and Wind Ensemble (1970-71), Concerto for Trumpet and Wind Orchestra, and Concerto for Wind Ensemble. All three highly challenging to the performer, and extraordinary contributions to the wind band literature.

In 1984, Husa was commissioned by the New York Philharmonic to write a concerto for Orchestra, which premiered in 1987, with Zubin Mehta conducting. Considered to be one of Husa's "most concentrated artistic statements," the Concerto displays an amazing level of virtuosity on the part of instrumentalists and conductor. Again, Elliott Galkin, writing in Musical America following the premiere, "This is a work fervent and luminous...there is much in this Concerto which recalls the intensity of Bartok and the mystical eloquence of Mahler...but there is no sense of the derivative in Husa's rhetoric; his language is personal and deeply felt."

In 1987, Husa composed Concerto for Organ and Orchestra for the renowned organist Karel Paukert, Curator Emeritus of Musical Arts at the Cleveland Museum of Art, and Organist and Choirmaster of St. Paul's Episcopal Church of Cleveland Heights, Ohio. This evening you will hear this work performed by our own organist extraordinaire, Laura Ellis. Of the work, music critic Wilma Salisbury of The Cleveland Plain Dealer wrote: "The organ becomes a rhythmic percussion instrument showing off its varied timbres over cushions of string sounds and rainbows of percussion colors."

Then in the same year, 1987, Husa was commissioned by the Chicago Symphony to compose a Concerto for Trumpet and Orchestra, dedicated to and performed by the orchestra's famous principal trumpet, Adolph Herseth. Its premiere took place in Chicago's Orchestra Hall in February 1988, with Herseth performing, and Geog Solti conducting.

The Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra was commissioned for Lynn Harrell, and premiered by Harrell and the University of Southern California orchestra, Daniel Lewis conducting. The work received the prestigious Grawemeyer Award in 1993. Also in that year, Husa completed his Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, commissioned as part of the 150th anniversary celebration of the New York Philharmonic, written especially for the orchestra's concertmaster Glenn Dicterow.

With the fall of the Communist Government in 1989, Husa made his triumphal return to Prague in 1990, conducting the State Symphony Orchestra in a performance of, none other, his Music for Prague 1968; the very first performance of his music in his native country in over forty years.

It is interesting to note in an article by Jan Ledec that with the political changes in 1948 Czechoslovakia, there came a different kind of music critic. Following the 1949 Prague premiere of Husa's Three Frescoes for Orchestra by the Prague Symphony Orchestra (during Husa's study in Paris), the official music magazine Hudebni stated: "Technically he already knows quite a bit, but he should hurry home to feel the pulse of life here, otherwise he will get lost forever and irretrievably in a jungle of decadent incomprehensibility..."

And finally, if I may again quote Byron Adams from his 1997 essay, "Karel Husa has had a uniquely 20th-Century career: exiled for forty years from his native country, he prevailed over the tyranny which disrupted

his life by summoning the quiet determination and fortitude to create a body of inimitable and imperishable music. This music, which by its originality and authenticity transcends the composer's own time and personal experience, inspires performers and listeners throughout the world and will continue to instruct and sustain succeeding generations. As the 20th century draws to a close, it is clear that Husa is an artist whose compassionate voice will resonate well into the next century and beyond."

Karel Husa is clearly one of the icons in the world of music. His compositions and his memory will continue to inspire musicians the world over well into the future. We as members of the School of Music all share in the honor of making this recommendation to recognize a great composer, conductor and humanitarian.

A Deserving Music Pulitzer Winner

By ELLIOTT W. GALKIN

TWENTY-SIX years ago, William Schuman won the first Pulitzer Prize for musical composition with his "A Free Song" for chorus and orchestra.

During the last quarter of a century, the Pulitzer Prize—in music as in other disciplines—has become this country's most prestigious award for creative accomplishment. It has been received by such personalities as Howard Hanson (1944), Aaron Copland (1945), Charles Ives (1947), Walter Piston (1948), Virgil Thomson (1949), Gian-Carlo Menotti (1950), Samuel Barber (1958), and Elliott Carter (1960), as well as by persons of more modest reputation: Leo Sowerby (1946), Quincy Porter (1954), John LaMontaine (1959), Robert Ward (1959), Leslie Bassett (1966), and George Crumb (1967).

In 1953, 1964 and 1965, no award was given, when it was decided by the Pulitzer Prize jury that no composition worthy of the distinction had been written.

Cornell Professor

The most recent recipient of the Pulitzer Prize for musical composition is 47-year-old Karel Husa, Czech-born professor of music at Cornell University. The prize was awarded for his String Quartet No. 3 which had been commissioned by the Fine Arts Music Foundation of Chicago, and received its world premiere last October in that city in a performance by the Fine Arts Quartet. This was the second time that a string quartet has been selected for such distinction; the first was Elliott Carter's Second Quartet nine years ago.

During the past quarter century, the Pulitzer Prizes have signified awareness in effect of a wide variety of musical attitudes and styles—from the conservatism of Sowerby and Moore to the experimentalism of Ives and Crumb.

With the award to Husa, a graduate of the Prague and Paris conservatories, and a former student of Nadia Boulanger and Arthur Honegger recognition has been accorded

practices during the first half of this century.

In addition, Husa is one of the few composers of today whose musical philosophy seems to be a practical one. He is what the Germans would call a *Gebrauchsmusiker*, a utilitarian musician, a craftsman able to fashion his product to meet the needs of the moment.

Unlike some composers who maintain that modern music, must by its intricate and experimental character, find itself isolated from the general public—"Who Cares If You Listen?" electronic composer Milton Babbitt has written in an article which has become famous)—Husa is anxious to make the most contemporary musical styles, and the most personal—his own—accessible to young and large audiences. He does not believe that the layman is incapable of being influenced and moved emotionally by musical sophistication.

Music For Students

Thus, like Bartok and Hindemith, who also believed similarly, Husa has written much music for students—a series of duets to be played four hands at one keyboard, Four Pieces for Elementary String Orchestra, Czech Folk-Songs, among others.

Wherever he has seen a need, or has recognized a demand, Husa, like the practical composers of the Baroque, has furnished the music. Like them prolific in his output, he has produced a variety of works for various instrumental and vocal media—a Divertimento for Brass Quintet, a Saxophone Concerto, "Music



KAREL HUSA

For Prague" for Wind Ensemble, "Poeme" for Viola and Orchestra, a practical edition of the music of early French composers with explanation of the ornaments, as well as string quartets, symphonic and other chamber music.

When Cornell University celebrated its 100th anniversary, Husa wrote a "Festive Ode for an Academic Occasion," to be presented by the university orchestra and chorus

under his direction. In it he placed the most contemporary dramatic devices within a context capable of being performed by student singers and instrumentalists.

Heard In Baltimore

The work is unique, perhaps the sole example of its kind in the literature. The Baltimore Chamber Orchestra and the Goucher College Glee Club performed it last year, joined by other collegiate vocal ensembles, when Goucher celebrated the inauguration of its new president, Marvin B. Perry, Jr.

Husa is known to Baltimore's audiences for other compositions. The Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, under Peter Herman Adler, played his First Symphony at the Lyric Theater two years ago; and Husa conducted his "Poeme" for Viola and Orchestra with Guillermo Perich as soloist, last spring at Goucher College in the Rockefeller Foundation-sponsored American Composers' Project.

will be played by the Parrenin Quartet of Paris next October in the season's opening concert sponsored by the Chamber Music Society of Baltimore at the Baltimore Museum of Art.

But the Pulitzer Prize is awarded neither for practicality nor pedagogical sympathies; it is a prize for compositional skill and originality. And from this point of view, Husa is undeniably a personality of great vitality and individuality, gifted with the power of direct and dramatic communication.

In his Third String Quartet are some extraordinary and novel devices and techniques—freely bouncing bows, the weight of the bow determining the speed of the bounce—irregular tremolos, strings plucked with the nail of the finger rather than with the finger itself, strange and eerie harmonics, high and almost inaudible, playing with the bow behind the bridge, quarter-tones—these and many other new sounds and approaches to the string quartet are exploited in this new and powerful score.

All are bound together with a harmonic language flexible and dramatic, at times freely chromatic, at times employing serial techniques, always tinged with rhythms which are colorful and self-propulsive, recalling the barbarism of Bartok and the composers and dances of middle-Europe.

It is truly an impressive achievement, the expression of one of the most interestingly human—and humane—musical minds in this country's recent history.

Karel Husa

Talks About Composing

Michael L. Haithcock

The life of Karel Husa is a vivid example of how external factors have shaped the career of a creative artist: time and place of birth, pressures of society, advances in technology, and the problems of everyday existence offset by its triumphs. Born in Prague on August 7, 1921, Husa studied the violin and the piano at his parents' urging, merely for the enjoyment they intended to give him as he pursued the more appropriate and practical career of an engineer. He was enrolled in engineering school in Prague when the Nazi occupation forced the closing of all technical schools and caused many of their students to be shipped off to work in the factories of Germany. Since Husa had already developed his abilities as a painter, he applied to an art school — only to learn that the art academy could accept no new enrollees who had formerly been technical school students. The only institution to which this stricture did not apply was the Prague Conservatory; Husa applied and was enrolled in the composition department, the only opening available. Though he had attained a certain virtuosity as a violinist and had produced some compositions, up to that time he had had almost no formal training in harmony and counterpoint.

(From a brochure published by Broadcast Music, Inc. containing a complete biography and list of compositions; available from 40 W. 57th Street, New York, New York.)

It is now over 40 years after the young engineer began his study of composition (he never did finish his engineering degree). In addition to studying at the Prague Conservatory, Husa earned degrees in conducting from the *Ecole Normale de Musique* and the *Conservatoire National* in France, and a doctorate from the Academy of Musical Arts in Prague. He became a United States citizen in 1959 and is currently on the faculty of Cornell University. A composer of orchestral, band, choral, and chamber works, he often writes for student ensembles. In this interview, Husa discusses some of the ways his extra-musical experiences have influenced his music, gives tips for playing some of his works, and shares his thoughts on contemporary composition.

...

You have an extensive background in engineering. How has this affected your compositional process?

I would guess that it has helped me in the construction of music. Music, like engineering, has definite form guidelines. I think that form is probably the most important aspect in music. We can write a lot of interesting chords or melodies, but putting them all together so that the piece is not too short and not too long is difficult.

How has your knowledge of and experience in painting carried over into composing?

It has probably affected my ability to look at music, and of course musical color, with an overall view — a proportional, geometric outlook. A painter can look at the whole work and see its proportions. In music we can only see a certain number of measures before we have to turn the page, so it is more difficult to judge the work as a whole. Studies in painting and drawing have helped me be able to envision what I want to write before I actually write it.

Has your work with colors, shades, and hues in painting affected the use of color in your music?

Perhaps. I was always interested in tonal colors; and I admired the work of Mussorgsky, Bartók, Ravel, and the French impressionists. As I listened to the pieces of these composers, the unusual colors they created intrigued me. Also, I think that color in today's music has evolved naturally. First, we use the instrument, then we use the instrument with mutes, then we combine the sound of that instrument with others. You can see this evolution in all of music. If you look at the music of Bach, Haydn, and Mozart you will see that the string colors are different than those in the music of Debussy, Bartók, and Stravinsky.



Can we expect more new tonal colors from your music?

Oh, yes. There are many more colors that I would like to use; for example, quarter-tone deviations and more new percussion sounds. I would also like to transfer more electronic sounds to instruments. We cannot allow live music to be eliminated. Making music with other musicians is still very important to me. I have not been disappointed with musicians — Stockhausen, for example, was so dissatisfied with the live performances of his works that he went into electronic music. Musicians have improved so much that they are now capable of playing such difficult things as electronic effects on their instruments. I am amazed at how much more easily the high school and college musicians of today can play *Music for Prague*, the *Apotheosis of this Earth*, and *Al Fresco* than could the students of just a few years ago.

Nadia Boulanger taught many of today's composers. What was her influence on your music?

Her teaching was impressive not because of her own music, but because of her philosophy about music and her excellent suggestions. She knew much about music and she could quote examples by other composers that made me understand her points. Also, like a great designer she had the ability to see anything that was weak in a score and to know immediately what was wrong. She had a great mind, combined with humility, and I trusted her intelligence. I guess that the trust is what you finally have to feel in a great teacher.



Your study with Arthur Honegger has had an obvious effect on your music. Characteristics of his music such as classical forms, chords in fourths, and themes stated in unison are particularly obvious in Al Fresco. What led you to study with Honegger when you arrived in Paris?

When I was still in Prague in 1946 I heard some of Honegger's music and was extremely impressed with the *Symphony No. 2* and *King David*. I admired Honegger's music because of its construc-

tion, excitement, power, and orchestration. Also, when I went to Paris, Poulenc was not teaching and Milhaud had gone to America, so Honegger was the obvious person to study with.

Your more recent works, like Music for Prague 1968 and the Apotheosis of this Earth, had specific ideas that inspired their composition. Was there a specific idea behind Al Fresco?

No, not a specific idea. I remembered a lot of the frescoes [painting in colors on fresh plaster] that I had seen in Italy and France. The frescoes generally portrayed primitive ideas of the saints, biblical subjects, and wars. In my imagination I pictured a mysterious, primitive war, and perhaps that is why *Al Fresco* begins with somewhat of a wooden sound — the marimba coming from nowhere. Also, my first piece for Honegger in Paris was *Three Frescoes for Orchestra*. The piece was performed in Europe, including Prague. When I fell from favor with the Czechoslovakian government, my music was confiscated; unfortunately, the material for the *Frescoes* was in Prague. I had almost forgotten about them. Then, in 1975 I was asked to write a piece for the Ithaca College Walter Beeler Memorial Series. I did not have time to write an entirely new piece so I suggested reworking one of the *Frescoes* from 1946. *Al Fresco* was the result.

The opening of Al Fresco is, as you say, mysterious. Do you expect the average listener to be able to grasp that the main theme is hidden in the introduction?

By the time the piece is over, I suspect that he might. The procedure of introducing the main theme slowly has been used for many years since Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven. I introduced the first and second themes slowly, but they are hidden throughout the ensemble so they are not quite as obvious. The repetitions and the evolution of the themes toward their final statement is the important thing.

The main theme of Al Fresco has a jazz feel. Were you influenced by jazz when you were in the Paris of the late 1940s?

I have been influenced by jazz since I was about 16, especially the music of Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Count Basie, and many Czech jazz musicians. The theme sounds jazzy because of its syncopation, which is characteristic of jazz. I have always felt that rhythm has not been as well developed in Western music as harmony and melody, at least until Stravinsky and Bartók. We can still do so much more with rhythm. This is where many people have problems with my music — the rhythms are unusual and perhaps even difficult.

Do you still listen to jazz and incorporate it into your works?

Oh, yes. The high trumpet and trombone writing, the difficult saxophone lines, the percussion rhythms, and the use of many mutes have all been influenced by jazz. When I was in school the range of instruments was very limited compared



to what it is now. Because of the jazz musicians I can now use pedal tones, glissandos, mutes that create infinite shades of sound, improvisation, and many other devices.

Much of your music has stretched the technical limits of what musicians can perform. What further technical demands can we expect from you?

I don't know exactly, but there is still much that can be done. Rhythm will always be developed and expanded in my music. What I like in music is the excitement and exaltation of something going on. I like to write both powerful and gentle music. Also, as I grow older, I am more and more interested in our time. I want to write music of today. We live in what is probably the most exciting time ever. We've gone to the moon; and we have attained an incredible amount of knowledge, technique, and luxury. However we also have incredible hunger on this planet; we waste, we destroy, and we do not respect our environment. It is all so powerful, exciting, beautiful, and yet tragic when we stand so small in front of nature: the majestic mountains and forests that we are mining; the rivers, seas, and skies that we are polluting. Jazz has captured a tremendous amount of today's excitement and reminds me of much of the Czech music I learned as a young man. The constant rhythmic movement found in jazz is also characteristic of Czech composers like Stamič, Zelenka, Dvořák, Smétana, Janáček, and Martinů.

Music for Prague 1968, Apotheosis of this Earth, and your new ballet, The Trojan Women, deal with tragedy. Is this a reflection of Karel Husa or the world in which Karel Husa finds himself?

It is a reflection of what I've seen. Since I was in my 20s I've lived through both the occupation of Hitler and the incredible turmoil after World War II in Czechoslovakia. The question of freedom and preserving it is so important. I have written a lot of happy music, but unfortunately it is not played as much. My *American Te Deum*, *Sonatina for Piano*, *String Quartet No. 1*, *Concertino for Piano & Orchestra*, and *Divertimento for String Orchestra* are all happy pieces. I would like to write more happy music, perhaps music for student ensembles and even for children, like Kodály did. However, as a composer in today's society, I feel that I must also reflect what is happening around me.

What advice do you have for those of us who play or listen to your music?

Don't give up at the beginning. In order to know my music, you must persist to the end of the performance process. It looks difficult but it comes. You have to work hard on any piece and perform it the best you can; then you decide how you feel about it. That's what I do myself when I study a new work that I do not understand at first. Many new inventions seem impossible, ridiculous, and doomed at the start. Have you ever seen films of the Wright brothers' first attempts to fly? If they had given up, we would still have to walk or ride horseback from New York to San Francisco. The important thing is to persevere. ■

Michael L. Haithcock is assistant director of bands at Baylor University. He holds degrees in music education from East Carolina University and Baylor University.

When I mentioned that there were some misprints in *Al Fresco*, Husa enumerated them for readers interested in performing the work:

Measure	Problem
31	A slur is missing in the first oboe part over E, D, C.
46	Horns 1 and 2 have a misprint in the part but the score is correct.
52	Flutes 1 and 2 should have an E [♯] in the last beat.
58	The string bass should have a C, not a A.
59 & 62	Horns 1 and 4 should have a D [♯] on the fourth beat.
69	Trombone 2 should have an eighth note on the first note (E) of the measure.
80	Piano should have a B instead of the D printed in the part.
87	String bass and contrabassoon should have a C on the last eighth note of the measure.
96	Piano should add □ after the D [♯] in this measure and remove the □ in measure 99.
160	Piano should have octave G instead of B in the right hand (G1-G2) on the fourth beat.
191	All woodwinds should decrescendo to piano at measure 192.
224	The suspended cymbal and snare drum parts should be reversed in the score.
238	The piano cluster should be B ^b -D ^b -E ^b instead of C-D ^b -E ^b .
239	Piccolo should add flutter tongue.
250-255	The timpani part is missing one measure (see score).
258	String bass and contrabassoon part should have a D instead of E on the second beat.
265	The tenor and baritone saxophones, baritones, tuba, string bass, and contrabassoon should have a mezzo-forte dynamic level.
273	Horns should not flutter tongue in this and following measures as indicated on some parts.
276-279	Horns 3 and 4 should not flutter tongue.
280	Clarinet 1 should be tutti.

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC

ONE HUNDRED FORTY-FIFTH SEASON 1986-87

AVERY FISHER HALL
LINCOLN CENTER FOR
THE PERFORMING ARTS

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HOME OF THE NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC

Thursday Evening, September 25, 1986, at 8:00
Friday Evening, September 26, 1986, at 8:00
Saturday Evening, September 27, 1986, at 8:00
Tuesday Evening, September 30, 1986, at 7:30

*10,837th, 10,838th,
10,839th and 10,840th
Concerts*

Zubin Mehta, *Conductor*
ANDRÉ WATTS, *Pianist*

HUSA Concerto for Orchestra
(World Premiere; Commissioned by
the New York Philharmonic)
I Cadence
Interlude 1
II Fantasy
III In Memoriam
Interlude 2
IV Game
(Played without Pause)

Intermission

LISZT "Orpheus," Symphonic Poem

LISZT Concerto No. 2 for Piano and Orchestra,
A major (In One Movement)
Observing the 100th Anniversary of the Death of the Composer

This concert is being recorded for broadcast on the nationwide EXXON/NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC Radio Network, on a date to be announced.

André Watts' appearances with the New York Philharmonic are made possible through the HEDWIG VAN AMERINCEN Guest Artists Endowment Fund.

This concert is supported by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts in Washington, D.C., a Federal agency. This concert is made possible in part with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts.

Steinway Piano

CBS Masterworks, Deutsche Grammophon, London, New World, RCA

The New York Philharmonic is a member of the American Symphony Orchestra League.

Wireless headsets for the hearing-impaired may be rented at the center of the Grand Promenade, Orchestra Level. Please make certain the electronic signal on your watch or pager is switched off during the concert.

The audience is cordially invited to visit the Green Room, where artists frequently greet visitors and guests following performances. The Green Room is located on the First Tier level on the west side of Avery Fisher Hall.
(Avery Fisher Hall usher or attendant will be happy to direct you.)

Patrons are reminded that, in deference to the performing artists and the seated audience, latecomers will not be allowed in the hall during the first work. Also, those who leave during the performance will not be readmitted until the end of a work or at intermission.

The use of photographic or recording equipment is prohibited in the concert hall.

Notes on the Program

Concerto for Orchestra

KAREL HUSA

Born August 7, 1921, in Prague
Now living in Ithaca, New York

Although he had had both violin and piano lessons as a child, in 1938 Karel Husa was enrolled by his parents in a Prague engineering institute rather than a music school. The following year, however, saw the Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia, during which all technical schools were closed. The young Husa subsequently entered the Prague Conservatory where, from 1941 to 1945, he studied composition with Jaroslav Řidky and conducting with Pavel Dedecek and Vaclav Talich. During that period Husa wrote a piano sonatina that was published and had several performances, in

PHILLIP RAMEY, Program Editor

addition to an overture he himself conducted with the Prague Symphony Orchestra, another orchestral piece entitled *Sinfonietta* that later won a Prague Academy of Arts and Sciences Award, and three chamber works.

After a year of graduate study at Prague's Academy of Music, Husa went to Paris on a French Government scholarship. There, he studied composition with Arthur Honegger and conducting with Jean Fournet from 1946 to 1948 at the Ecole Normale de Musique, and conducting the next year with Eugene Bigot at the Paris Conservatory. Husa also worked privately with Nadia Boulanger (composition) and André Cluytens (conducting).

The composer first came to international attention with his String Quartet No. 1 (1948), introduced in Paris and then performed in Brussels and at Darmstadt and awarded France's

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Lili Boulanger Foundation Prize along with the first prize at Holland's Balthoven Contemporary Music Festival. By 1948 his reputation in Czechoslovakia was so high (due both to his compositions and to his conducting activities at concerts and on the radio during occasional visits) that Husa was proclaimed by a Prague newspaper as "one of the greatest hopes of Czech music."

Husa remained in Paris until 1954, conducting (concerts and recording sessions, including the first European recording of Bartók's *Miraculous Mandarin*) and composing (Symphony No. 1, String Quartet No. 2, *Portrait* for string orchestra). During the early 1950s, the essentially Slavic-eclectic style of his compositions—influenced primarily by Janacek, Bartók and Stravinsky—began to display an increasing level of dissonance; subsequently, there was a move toward atonality and serialism. In 1961, on commission from the Hamburg Radio, Husa produced *Mosaiques* for orchestra, a work he has described as being written, in part, "in a strict serial system."

Husa came to the United States in 1954 to accept an appointment to the music faculty of Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. At Cornell, he conducted the university orchestra and taught composition, theory and conducting. He became an American citizen in 1959, and continues to teach at Cornell, in addition to appearing as a guest conductor with orchestras in the United States, Europe and Asia.

A *gebrauchsmusik* (that is, practical music) area in Husa's work, dating back at least to the 1953 *Musique d'amateurs* for oboe, trumpet, percussion and strings, was stimulated by the composer's long teaching career and has resulted in numerous pieces, performable by students, for band, for chorus and for various ensemble mixtures of brass, woodwind and percussion. In many of these scores, Husa's intention was to present contemporary compositional techniques in a practical setting. His well-known, often-played *Music for Prague, 1968*, for instance, was one of the first band works to use aleatory, or chance, procedures (*Music for Prague* has also been successful in an orchestral transcription, and this version is scheduled for performances during the present season by the Philadelphia Orchestra, Chicago Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra and Saint Louis Symphony).

Conversely, Husa has written a good deal of music for virtuoso players. An example is the Pulitzer Prize-winning Third String Quartet of 1968, which makes a point of exploiting unusual string techniques and color devices.

In summing up his musical philosophy, Husa once stated:

I have been trying to preserve what little is still visible and useful from the past, but mostly my concern is to write music of today and, also, find some new paths for tomorrow. Most of the works of the past and present mirror the period in which they were composed, so I hope my music can reflect the exciting, passionate and also tragic times of today.

Echoing that preoccupation, Husa's *Apotheosis of*

This Earth (for chorus and orchestra, or for band) of 1970 was written as a reaction to the, as he put it, "desperate state of mankind" and as a "manifest" against worldwide problems such as hunger, pollution, murder and war.

To observe the 1976 United States Bicentennial, Husa composed two works: *An American Te Deum* for mixed chorus, baritone solo and orchestra, commissioned by Coe College; and Piano Sonata No. 2, commissioned by the Washington Chamber Music Society. Among his other works of the last decade are *Landscapes* for brass quintet (1977), *Pastoral* for string orchestra (1979), the ballet *The Trojan Women* (1980), *Fanfare* for brass and percussion (1981), *Recollections* for woodwind quintet and piano (1981), *Concerto for Wind Ensemble* (1982), *Cantata* for men's chorus and brass quintet (1983), *Symphony No. 2 (Reflections)* (1983), *Smelana Fanfare* for band (1984), *Symphonic Suite* for orchestra (1984) and *Intrada* for brass quintet (1984). Husa is presently at work on his String Quartet No. 4, commissioned by the National Endowment for the Arts for the Colorado, Blair and Alard Quartets, and an organ concerto for the AKI Festival in Cleveland. During the 1986-87 season, concerts of his music observing his sixty-fifth birthday will be given at Cornell University, Harvard University, the University of Massachusetts, the University of Nebraska and the University of Alaska, among others.

Commissioned by the New York Philharmonic with a gift from Francis Coelet, Husa's *Concerto for Orchestra* has a duration of approximately thirty-eight minutes. The work was written from 1983 to 1985 in Ithaca, New York, and orchestrated during the winter of 1985-86. The scoring is for a large orchestra consisting of 2 piccolos, 3 flutes (including bass flute), 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 5 horns, 4 trumpets in C, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (vibraphone, marimba, xylophone, glockenspiel, antique cymbal, suspended and crash cymbals, snare drum, tom-toms, bass drum, temple blocks, tam-tam, Javanese gamelan gong, hand bells), 2 harps, piano, and strings.

—Phillip Ramey

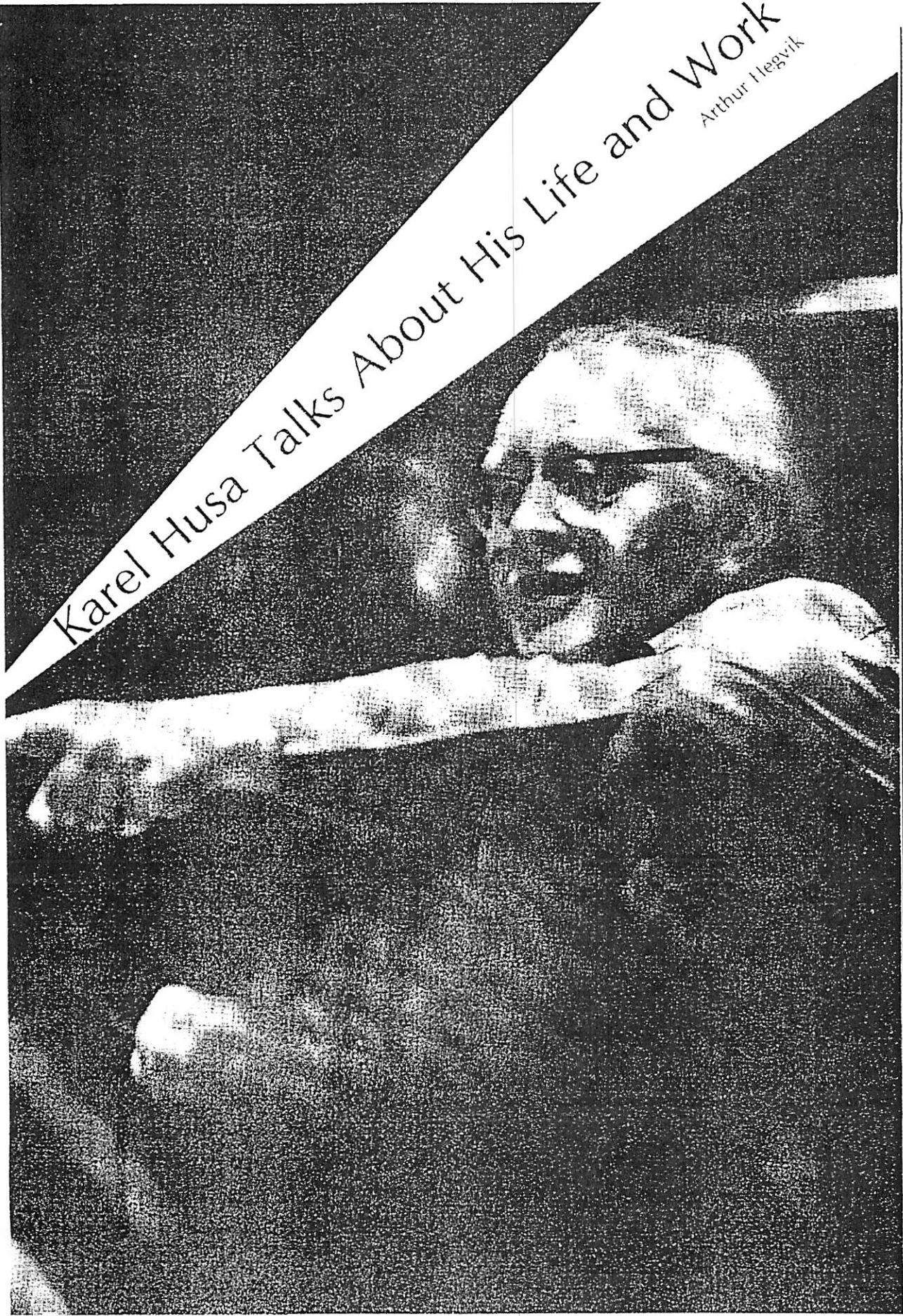
The following commentary is by the composer:

Above all, my *Concerto for Orchestra*—as the title indicates—concentrates on virtuosic orchestral playing, featuring not only soloists, but also various sections and the entire ensemble as well. Because every member of a great orchestra such as the New York Philharmonic is a virtuoso artist, I felt justified in writing extremely demanding and challenging passages. As important, this work acknowledges the art and mastery of the virtuoso conductor. The *Concerto for Orchestra* is dedicated to Zubin Mehta and the New York Philharmonic.

The strings of the orchestra are featured in the first movement, *Cadence*. The concertmaster opens with the first solo and is joined by the leaders of each section; one by one players

Karel Husa Talks About His Life and Work

Arthur Hegvik



It will be many years before we can assess the work of Karel Husa objectively. But while his mastery and production continue to grow, it is apparent already that he will be one of the major composers of this half of the century. A large body of masterworks exists even now, stretching back over 3 decades. And all, even the earliest, bear the unmistakable mark of total craftsmanship.

The following remarks by Karel Husa — comprising his thoughts about his early life, his "road" to music, and the compositional process — stem from several interviews which took place beginning in the summer of 1973 at various locations.

Early Life

As a boy, I attended a school for the technical sciences — engineering, mathematics. My parents, especially my mother, dreamed of my becoming an engineer, so all of my training was in technical schools.

I was very interested and absorbed in my studies and did a great deal of thinking in terms of geometry and mathematics, but I also did a lot of painting. I seemed to need it as an escape from that mathematical strictness.

My parents were not musical at all, but they wanted my sister and me to learn music — they wanted us to have it as an enjoyment in our lives.



Karel Husa at the age of 3 with his sister (1½) and father.

Arthur Hegvik has appeared as saxophone soloist throughout most of the United States. He is the author of a method series for saxophone and is currently teaching at West Chester (Pennsylvania) State College.

I still find this incredible: they were from very modest families, but they paid for 9 years of lessons, twice a week, for 2 children. It was expensive, but they felt it was important (even for an engineer!); so I started the violin at 8 and, at my mother's urging, learned the piano from my sister when I was 13.

Both painting and music fascinated me. I even began "composing" some music at the age of 12. But would you believe that until the age of 18 I never went to a concert? I suppose this was because my parents didn't go; my father had a shoe business that kept him at work from 7:00 in the morning to 8:30 at night. I also had the impression that one didn't go to a concert without a tuxedo, that concerts were for high society only.

Then came the occupation by Hitler. I had entered college as an engineer, and one of our students was killed by the Nazis. We all protested. Three days later they closed the school and shipped most of the students to Germany to work in factories. The technical schools at the University level were closed for the rest of the occupation, all 5 years, but the conservatories and art schools were not.

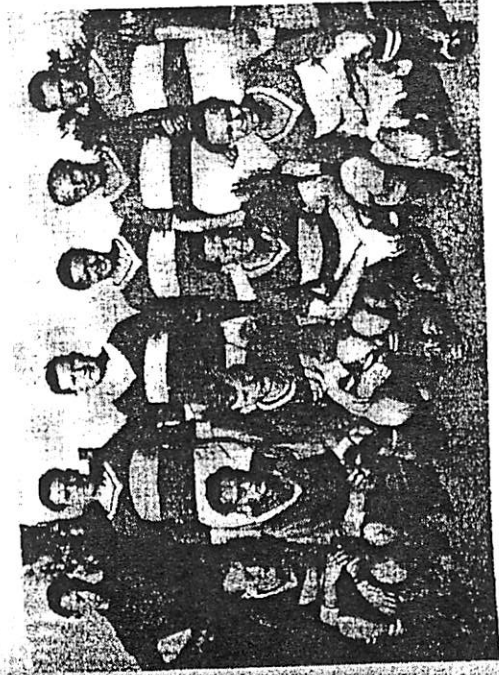
To save myself, I applied at a school for painting and was accepted. Suddenly, the school had to prove that none of the new students had previously been enrolled at a technical school. I didn't know where to turn.

Then, miraculously, I learned that this did not apply to conservatories, that I could possibly escape into music. I thought I would apply as a violinist, but it turned out that the only opening was in composition. Fortunately, I had already met the composition teacher, Jaroslav Ridky, so I went to him with some of the things I had written. He suggested I try for the opening in his class; I did...and this was how it began in music for me.

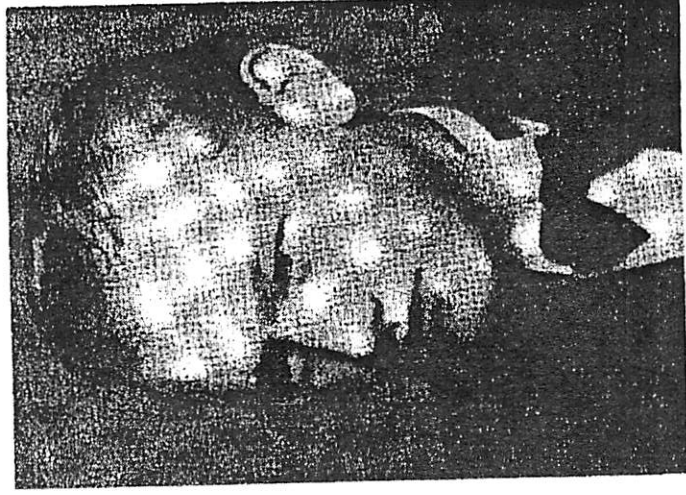
Prague

I entered the Prague Conservatory in 1941 at the age of 20. I had studied privately for a year, and went directly into the 2nd year of the 5 year program.

Ridky had said that he would teach me how to compose. I always thought this was incredible — that someone could teach someone else how to compose. It was a long process for me. Ridky insisted on tradition — *too* much; he was *very* traditional. (Some people in this country know his music; he



Above, Karel Husa is pictured (front row, far left) with the Czech Academic Sport Club Soccer team. At right, Husa at high school graduation, spring 1939.



wrote 6 or 7 symphonies — a sort of Czech Mahlerian kind of music, very well constructed.)

During this period, I lived only for music and I must honestly say that I was escaping. We did not consider the occupation to be a permanent state — we knew it would end someday. But that 6 years seemed incredibly long at that time. Still, life goes on under any conditions . . . if one wants it to.

I had so much to learn; I had no background in harmony, no counterpoint. My violin teacher had never given me exercises or training in harmony; in fact, he hadn't even given me great music, only virtuoso pieces. I must say that I had a very good technique, but I didn't know anything about music. I had a good ear for melodic line, and I could hear when anybody was even a little out of tune.

I was studying both composition and conducting, and I loved it. It was what I *wanted* to do, as opposed to the engineering, which I *had* to do. So I was relieved to be in music, it was a new world. I attended concerts for the first time in my life, and I listened to every piece with amazement. Some of my fellow students, who had already received musical training for many years, would often criticize performances and compositions. But I didn't do this. I heard Debussy — amazement. I heard Bruckner — amazement. Everything was new, everything was fantastic. And, as a matter of fact, it still is to this day.

During the occupation, all painting or music or poetry that was a little new was banished as decadent art. There was no music by Stravinsky, no Hindemith, no Schoenberg. There was a feeling that one could only write music like Richard Strauss. I can remember an illegal concert by a young Hungarian string quartet from Budapest. They were not allowed to play an open concert, but they came to

Prague unannounced and performed 3 Bartok quartets. I was completely bewildered. I didn't understand any of this music. I just knew it was incredibly beautiful.

While I was still a student, my *Sonatina for Piano* was given many performances and was also published. It shows a slight influence of Prokofiev, but mostly the Czech composers: Suk, Novak, perhaps a little Janacek. For my masters degree, I wrote an *Overture* for large orchestra and conducted it with the Prague Symphony Orchestra in 1945.

Finally, the war was over, my degrees were completed at the Conservatory, and I was accepted at the Academy of Musical Arts (equivalent to graduate school, the step above a conservatory). After one year (in 1946) I decided to go to Paris, to me the most exciting musical city in the world. The Prague Academy gave me credit for the work I did in Paris, and I received the DMA in 1947. My *Sinfonietta* for orchestra (written for my doctorate) was performed by the Prague Symphony Orchestra with Smetacek conducting.

Paris

Such a sense of freedom in Paris — the war was over, so many concerts of music I had never heard before . . . it was all a revelation. And part of the freedom I felt was a reaction to the very strict training in Prague. But that was a different period, and I don't think anyone teaches like that today. We have changed our methods.

I was in Paris 8 years. I had gone to study composition with Honegger and conducting with Munch, but then Munch left for Boston in 1947 and I went much more in the direction of composition — mostly

Drawings by Karel Husa

on my own. However, I was very interested in getting degrees in conducting; it was difficult to conduct in Paris, or even in Europe at that time, without having those French degrees — they were very important. So I studied a year at the Ecole Normale for that degree, and then at the Paris Conservatory for another degree — perhaps a total of 4 years.

A fellowship from the French government (about 5 years) helped immensely, and I was able to support myself with some commissions and some conducting. The life was not luxurious, but I had no family, and I didn't really need very much.

It was a tremendous experience. Everyone, especially an artist, should have a chance to live in Paris. And being alone is an adventure. I often think that it's necessary to be alone for some time to gain a better understanding of the world... and oneself.

Cornell

I think my eyes were always set on coming to the United States. As a matter of fact, in 1950 I was to be one of the student assistants studying with Koussevitzky at Tanglewood, but I got an ailment in my leg and went to the hospital instead (and they never did find out exactly what it was).

I was married in 1952 and was beginning to conduct for recordings and concerts. Many concerts were being planned with the Monaco Opera and Symphony Orchestras when I received a letter from Elliott Galkin.¹ Cornell wanted somebody to teach harmony for 3 years and take over the orchestra for a year while the conductor was on sabbatical leave.

So in March, 1954 I decided to go for a few years, and left with my family. We had 2 children. Three years later, the conductor left and I was named Director of the Orchestra. Five years later, in 1959, I became an American citizen, and my other 2 children were born here.

I have always regretted that my mother did not live to see this. She gave me all those music lessons even though she didn't want me to be a musician. And she often said that I should go to France; between the World Wars we all had great regard for that country, and she would constantly speak to me about visiting Paris. She'd laugh and say that when we won big in the Czech lottery we would travel to Paris and then visit our relatives in the United States. She also told me on many occasions that someday I could live in the United States if I wished.

So it is amazing to me how these things have happened. But she died too soon to see them.

¹ Now Chairman of the Department of Music at Goucher College (Towson, Maryland).



Composing

My travels do not interfere with my teaching (I am gone 3 or 4 days at a time or a week-end, so it works out very well), but with composing, it is a different thing; and as a result I must compose mostly in the summer.

I cannot sit down at the table, for example, when I have an hour and a half — let's say between 3:00 and 4:30 — and start to write music. It's not that I couldn't, it just takes me much longer to get warmed up. Of course, I can play with some ideas and find I can do this or that — but that isn't really composing.

One of the French poets, perhaps Baudelaire, said that if he starts writing in the morning, he feels warm by afternoon, and by evening the words start to flow. So it is with me. Once I start to compose, I just compose. I get into it and other things become less important.

When I start in the morning, I don't feel that I can go very fast. It takes me a while to get into the mood and into the work. But by afternoon I am working very hard, and I will continue through the evening until very late — usually 1:00 or 1:30. The next morning, I come in, look it over, see what I wrote, and start again.

The first physical contact with my own music usually comes when I conduct it — then I see if it worked... or if it didn't. I am not surprised very often, but sometimes it can take me several hearings to become accustomed to it. The biggest surprise, however, comes when I receive tapes of performances by other conductors. What a composer wants to say is not always transmitted by what is on that paper, or perhaps my indications don't always mean the same things to another person — the difference of conception can be startling.

I am not a composer who writes fast; working like this (all day) I do about 10 or 12 measures a day, and that's usually maximum. I wrote the *Apotheosis of This Earth* in 7 weeks during the summer of 1970.

In the last 10 years, everything I have written has been done under the pressure of time; I always work until the last minute. I have numerous commissions now, and it has become very hard to finish on time — 90% of the time I do but I feel very guilty about the other 10%. I have somehow broken my word. So now I do not accept an absolute date for a piece to be finished.

I think it might be good, and one can write fastest perhaps, when one is isolated for some time. This is not necessary in my case, but some composers cannot work any other way. I remember a student complaining to Nadia Boulanger that he lived on a noisy street with someone playing a piano over his head. She told him he would never find a complete vacuum in his life, and he must learn to write music even under those conditions. Both Honegger and Milhaud lived on the noisiest street in Paris. I myself lived at the University City Dormitories for 4 years and was not disturbed by the students' noise. I don't need that isolation.

And today the family does not disturb me. I suppose it would if I composed in the kitchen, but I have a studio to the side of the house above the garage. And we have a little cottage on a lake where I have written a lot of music in the summers, but my family is with me there also.

Let me put it this way: I am in my home, and my family is with me, but very often they tell me that I am not with *them!* I come to dinner, we speak, I



Photo by Louis Ouzer

go back to my studio, but I do not remember anything that happened. It is something that I unplug.

This summer (1973) I completed my trumpet *Concerto*. I had done sketches over the year, so I came home from a trip in the middle of May and worked on it as much as I could — all day long and into the night. I finished it July 6th. It turned out to be about 20 minutes of music, so actually that's not too bad for a composer.

Now I must return to my piece for violin and piano, a Koussevitsky Foundation commission.² I had nearly completed it last year, but our house was flooded in Hurricane Agnes and we were forced to leave. This cost me about 4 weeks of work (among other things), so now I'm hoping that 2 more weeks will see it through.

The Musical Idea

I do not have the form of a piece in mind when I begin to compose. Usually it is just an idea, perhaps a feeling of something I would like to do. For example, in the *Music for Prague*, I started with a timpani passage based on an old Hussite war song; as I continued to work on the piece I suddenly realized that I could use part of the war song in unison at the end.

The saxophone *Concerto* was exactly the same. I started with a few notes and jotted down some sketches. It became serial in a way, but very free, and as I progressed I began to get an impression of what the form would be.

2. *Sonata for Violin and Piano*, premiered March 31, 1974; Chamber Society of Lincoln Center at New York's Tully Hall, Ani Kavafian, violinist; Richard Goode, pianist.

In the *Apotheosis of This Earth*, I didn't know if I would put a postscript at the end or not; but when I had the sketches of the 2nd movement nearly completed, I knew that if I did add another movement it couldn't be loud, it couldn't be long, and so on.

So I don't start composing by setting something up in my mind — chords, form, anything. Rather, it just goes.

The sketches are usually done on 2 or 3 staves, like a piano reduction, with notations about instrumentation. But if I get tired and don't know where to go, if I come to an impasse in some way, I will go back and start to do the complete orchestration. Then, when I come to that same spot, it will open up and I will know how to progress. It is very different when you see music on 3 staves and when you see it in full score.

Many times, we fall into the trap of taking a good idea and going on too long, or too short, as the case may be; but usually it is too long. You hear music which strikes you as interesting, but it doesn't seem to go anywhere, it lingers too long, it just isn't right.

The Slavic people, for instance, will sometimes write music which is very emotional and descriptive; it becomes excited, even inspired, but perhaps a little too long.

I don't mind, I can live with it. But the French, it seems to me, have it just right. Their sense of criticism is so well developed that they can put themselves *outside* the music and see the form. They just make that cut, and it fits. That's probably why they are such excellent designers. And why French music rarely goes on too long — rather, it's shorter and more concise.

Listen to Debussy: many times you have the impression that it lingers. But when you analyze the score, you see that the construction is perfect, there is not a single extra measure. And, because the construction is so clear, his music is very easy to memorize. Ravel is the same. So is Roussel, a composer not played much anymore. So concise, so clearly cut, it's amazing.

Actually, composing is not an especially difficult process. One can learn how to compose as one can learn to write a poem or paint. And once we have learned it, we do it without thinking. You speak English, but you don't think about it. You write a letter, and you don't think about it.

I did not learn to compose at the piano; my teacher insisted that everything is in the head and in the pencil. (Also, piano was my second instrument, violin my first.) I do not even have a piano at the cottage; I can only play what I have written when I go home. And if it is for orchestra or wind ensemble, the piano cannot duplicate what I had in mind. I did not touch a piano once while writing the *Apotheosis* — not once.

If you know the sound of certain combinations, and if you put them together logically, then they should work. For me, there is much logic in composition and orchestration. Perhaps it is in my background... the engineering, or even the painting. ■

I heard music in my head, and I thought it was mine. But what I heard was really bits of Beethoven, or Mozart, or whatever else I had been exposed to. If I had been born in China, I would have heard bits and pieces of Chinese music. We take from what surrounds us.

Painting has this advantage over music: you can see the complete thing at any moment. Music, by passing through time, loses this. You must turn pages, and turning pages disturbs me — it prevents me from seeing the form. So I will usually put the transparencies on the floor, lay out the pages as I go, and I can evaluate everything much better. The form becomes clearer. And form, to me, is the most important aspect of the entire problem of composition.

The painting below was completed by Karel Husa when he was 18 years old. On the opposite page is his sketch for the beginning of the first movement of *Apotheosis of this Earth*.

