

PAVEL KÜHN (1938-2003) shaped the choir singing in Czech Republic in the 2nd half of the 20th century. His **Kühn Mixed Choir** and **Czech Philharmonic Choir** under his leadership were as much in demand by the Prague Symphony Orchestra, the Czech Philharmonic



Orchestra, the Prague Spring Festivals, music and film studios, as by major orchestras and conductors abroad, be it Wiener Philharmoniker, Berliner Philharmoniker, Israel Philharmonic, Gewandhaus, Concertgebouw or Orchestre National de Lyon with conductors such as *Zubin Mehta, Claudio Abbado, George Solti, Lorin Maazel, Seiji Ozawa, Sir Simon Rattle, Riccardo Chailly, Wolfgang Sawallisch, Sir Libor Pešek, Jiří Bělohlávek, Serge Baudo* and many others.

Pavel Kühn was fortunate to be able to continue a great family legacy in more ways than one: his parents were opera singers, whose careers changed when his father Jan became a Music Director at the Czech Radio in Prague in 1931. He quickly founded two choirs, **The Czech Choir** and **Kühn Children Choir**, initially for the Radio needs.

As they grew in size and reputation, with Pavel's mother Markéta also involved as a second chorus master, **The Czech Choir** turned in 1952 into the world famous **Czech Philharmonic Choir** - with Pavel to become its chorus master in 1990 - and **Kühn Children Choir** split into two: opera and concert, both still alive and well in today!

Pavel studied cello, before concentrating on conducting in which he graduated at the Prague Academy of Music. Upon his father's death in 1958, Markéta took over both the **Prague Philharmonic** and the **Kühn Children Choir**, and Pavel founded first his **Kühn Female Choir**, which he expanded a year later into the **Kühn Mixed Choir**. He also, firmly in the footsteps of his father, became Music Director at Supraphon, East-European most prestigious record label, where he supervised recordings of hundreds LPs, including pop, rock and jazz. With his perfect pitch, great ear for music, conducting skills combined with vast knowledge of repertoire, he could have a rather intimidating presence, but was such a professional that music projects of all kinds and quality have always gained from his participation - and fast!

The same applied to work with his choirs where the singers always had to be *well* prepared and he honed them to perfection in no time. He knew intimately all the scores involving choirs; as for new ones, typically in film music, he could see instantly what was required, and his remarks/suggestions were always godsend. He was respected by everybody in the music industry, and his sudden death from a brain tumour at 64 was a cruel blow and a major loss for the music world.



JAROSLAV BŘEZINA was born in Prague in 1968. He progressed from playing violin and being a member of the Kühn Children Choir to study singing at the Prague Conservatory. A recipient of several prizes, he has appeared on concert stages in Austria, France, Germany, Holland, Italy, Japan, Norway and Spain. He has collaborated with celebrated conductors as *Jiří Bělohlávek, Serge Baudo, Sir Charles Mackerras, Zdeněk Mácal* or *Sir Libor Pešek*.

Since 1993 a soloist of the Prague National Theatre Opera, where he has sung leading roles as Vašek in Smetana's *The Bartered Bride*, Zinovij Borisovich in Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, Don Ottavio in Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, Count Almaviva in Rossini's

Il Barbiere di Siviglia, Benvolio in Gounod's *Romeo and Juliet*, the Monkey in Klusák's *Report for the Academy*, and also Harlequin in Ullmann's *Caesar of Atlantis*, Dancairo in Bizet's *Carmen*, Ferrando in Mozart's *Così fan tutte*, Beppo in Leoncavallo's *I Pagliacci*, Tinca in Puccini's *Il Tabarro* and Gherard in Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi*.

Jaroslav Březina is sought after as a concert singer of Baroque and Classical repertoire, but excels in 20th century music just as well.

His recordings include Ryba's *Czech Christmas Mass*, Zelenka's opera *Sub Olea Pacis et Palma Virtutis*, which won the 2002 Cannes Classical Awards, Dvořák's *The Stubborn Lovers*, Janáček's *Šárka*, Goldscheider's *Requiem* and *The Song of Songs*.

He is the leading Czech tenor of his generation, appreciated by enthusiastic public as much as by music critics.

1. Stabat Mater

Stabat Mater dolorosa
Juxta Crucem lacrimosa,
Dum pendebat Filius.
Cujus animam gementem,
Contristatam et dolentem,
Pertransivit gladius.

O quam tristis et afflicta
Fuit illa benedicta
Mater Unigeniti!
Quæ mærebat et dolebat
Pia Mater, dum videbat
Nati pœnas incliti

Quis est homo, qui non fleret,
Matrem Christi si videret
In tanto supplicio?
Quis non posset contristari,
Matrem Christi contemplari
Dolentem cum Filio?

Pro peccatis suæ gentis
Vidit Jesum in tormentis
Et flagellis subditum.
Vidit suum dulcem Natum
Morientem desolatum,
Dum emisit spiritum

Eja, Mater, fons amoris,
Me sentire vim doloris
Fac, ut tecum lugeam
Fac, ut ardeat cor meum
In amando Christum Deum,
Ut sibi complaceam

Sancta Mater, istud agas,
Crucifixi fige plagas,
Cordi meo valide.
Tui Nati vulnerati,
Tam dignati pro me pati,
Pœnas mecum divide.

1. Stabat Mater

At the cross her station keeping,
Stood the mournful Mother, weeping.
Close to Jesus to the last.
Through her heart, His sorrow sharing,
All His bitter anguish bearing,
Now at length the sword had passed.

O how sad and sore distressed
Was that Mother highly blest
Of the sole-begotten One!
Christ above in torment hangs;
She beneath beholds the pangs
Of her dying, glorious Son.

Is there one who would not weep,
Whelmed in miseries so deep
Christ's dear Mother to behold?
Can the human heart refrain
From partaking in her pain,
In that Mother's pain untold?

For the sins of His own nation,
Saw Him hang in desolation,
Till His spirit forth He sent.
Bruised, derided, cursed, defiled,
She beheld her tender child:
All with bloody scourges rent.

O thou Mother! fount of love!
Touch my spirit from above;
Make my heart with thine accord.
Make me feel as thou hast felt;
Make my soul to glow and melt
With the love of Christ our Lord.

Holy Mother! pierce me through;
In my heart each wound renew
Of my Saviour crucified.
Let me share with thee His pain,
Who for all my sins was slain,
Who for me in torments died.

(Stabat Mater continued)

Fac me vere tecum flere,
Crucifixo condolere,
Donec ego vixero.
Juxta Crucem tecum stare,
Te libenter sociare
In planctu desidero.

Virgo virginum præclara,
Mihi jam non sis amara,
Fac me tecum plangere.
Fac, ut portem Christi mortem,
Passionis fac consortem
Et plagas recolare.

Fac me plagis vulnerari,
Cruce fac inebriari
Ob amorem Filii.
Inflammatum et accensus,
Per te, Virgo, sim defensus
In die judicii.

Christe, cum sit hunc exire,
Da per Matrem me venire
Ad palmam victoriæ.
Quando corpus morietur,
Fac, ut animæ donetur
Paradisi gloria. Amen.

2. Ave Maria

Sancta Maria,
Mater Dei,
Dominus tecum
benedicta.
Ora pro nobis peccatoribus
Nunc et in hora mortis nostræ.

Ave Maria
Gratia plena
Dominus tecum
Amen.

(Stabat Mater continued)

Let me mingle tears with thee,
Mourning Him who mourned for me,
All the days that I may live.
By the cross with thee to stay,
There with thee to weep and pray,
Is all I ask of thee to give.

Virgin of all virgins best,
Listen to my fond request:
Let me share thy grief divine.
Let me, to my latest greath,
In my body bear the death
Of that dying Son of thine.

Wounded with His every wound,
Steepest my soul till it hath swooned
In His very blood away.
Be to me, O Virgin, nigh,
Lest in flames I burn and die,
In His awful Judgement Day.

Christ, when Thou shalt call me hence,
Be Thy Mother my defence,
Be Thy cross my victory.
While my body here decays,
May my soul Thy goodness praise,
Safe in Paradise with Thee. Amen.

2. Ave Maria

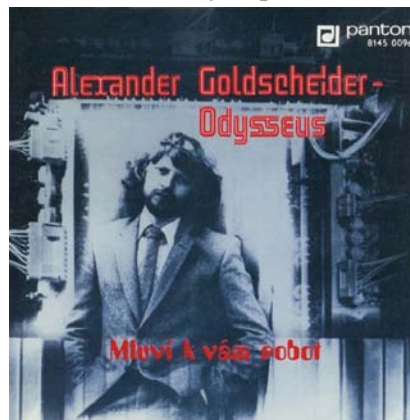
Holy Mary,
Mother of God,
The Lord is with thee
Blessed art thou.
Pray for us sinners
Now and in the hour of our death.

Hail Mary
Full of grace
The Lord is with thee
Amen.



ALEXANDER GOLDSCHIEDER was born 1950 in Prague. He studied piano and music theory and began to write about pop/rock/jazz music since 17. After the Soviet-led invasion in 1968, he went for a year to New York where he continued with music journalism, as he did upon his return to Prague with a series of radio and club shows as well as written articles. He studied musicology & aesthetics at the Charles University and got a PhD for his analysis of the Beatles' songs - not an easy task in a political system opposed to the "Western" culture. Having completed his studies so that he could write about pop/

rock/jazz from a proper musicological perspective, he decided to move from "an observatory onto the battleground" and began to write songs and produce records instead of criticising others. He further studied orchestration and conducting and became staff producer at Supraphon, the best known and respected East-European record company, where he produced numerous records, while successfully continuing with songwriting and arranging. Because of acute shortage of music studios and recording time in Czech Republic, he became interested in new technology, above all synthesizers and home recording equipment, and was one of the first East-European owners/users of at the time ground breaking instruments like ARP Odyssey, Roland Jupiter, EMS Vocoder or the first truly revolutionary (West German) sequencer Mr. Lab. He started using electronic instruments in his scores, as well as writing and recording for TV/film, until he fully concentrated on making his own instrumental music. With the Iron Curtain heavily in place at the time, access to new technology was very restricted, but with the help of inventive and resourceful Czech friends there were remarkable achievements in Prague, like the linking of machinery via the same connectors that were later adopted in the "West" for MIDI. Even the first 16-track in Eastern Europe was the first ever recorder adapted so that it was controlled by the Mr. Lab sequencer...



Ultimately, though, the technology and the recording techniques were far more advanced in the West and A. Goldscheider decided to work abroad and has come to London in 1981 - where he has lived since. He recorded two instrumental albums for **Red Bus Records** entitled "*Themes for a One Man Band, Volume 1 & II*" and then worked on an assignment at the pioneering **BBC Radiophonic Music Workshop**. He became convinced that music could greatly benefit from the brand new world of microcomputers, with the UK made Sinclair leading the revolution, and he started in 1983 a computer company, named after his song, **Romantic Robot**. Together with a Czech partner and computer specialist, they designed and manufactured both software and hardware, and Romantic Robot enjoyed instant and lasting success.

However, not being involved in making music for what turned out to be nearly a decade, while following the progress in music technology, he turned Romantic Robot fully back to where it came from: music. He first produced, partly as a Kaddish to his father who died in 1991, a 2-CD set with music from Terezín, which in the same year marked 50th Anniversary of its being turned into a concentration camp. After releasing another CD, this time with a remarkable historical recording by Aaron Copland and the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, "*An American in Prague*", he felt that running a music company was a welcome, but still not fully satisfying turn, and he went all the way back to writing and recording his own music.

His first project, a 100-minute *Requiem* for five soloists, two choirs and a symphony orchestra, turned out to be a lot more involved than he ever feared, or more exactly its recording has done, mainly because of new approach and technology, heavily dependent on computers. And so while the recording of vocals & choirs had long been finished, the instrumental part - a combination of a symphony orchestra with sampled sounds - is yet to be added, as hard to believe as it may be. Meanwhile, whilst waiting for the technology to actually do what it has been promising to, and having had the pleasure of working for the first time with a large classical choir and opera singers, he decided to turn to somewhat smaller projects that could be fully accomplished. He wrote and recorded three compositions for a choir, the a cappella *Stabat Mater* and *Omnia Tempus Habent*, plus *Ave Maria* which also has a real - and marvellous - tenor with an entirely sampled orchestra. A computer controlled orchestra, this time with very prominent and fabulous solo singers, can be heard on *The Song of Songs* CD. And to put everything into a context, the *Stabat Mater* CD also contains 12 instrumental tracks from 1978-96, which are described next.

My first commercially released synthesized track dates back to 1976, when I had just a monophonic ARP Odyssey synth, no sequencer and only 4 hours of studio time for all the overdubs.

Prague music studios had a sound engineer and a music director, and most were the Masters of the Universe. Newcomers were not welcome, especially with electronic instruments that were a completely unknown entity and suspicious as such. I managed to sway the sound engineer to the extent that I could humbly mention which of the recorded voices should be panned to the right, left or center, and occasionally ask for a change in the volume.

The music director was more antagonistic and nearly refused to allow the session to go ahead, as the score looked simple and he could not imagine that the raison d'être of it all were completely revolutionary sounds. He was an alcoholic, and accepted a deal whereby he would go away, leave me alone for the session and then just say yes or no to the result - it had to have his approval. Both music and alcoholic sessions went well, and he offered me a deal: I would ask for him to be my music director at my future sessions - he accepted the result warranted further recordings - and he would not be physically there, unless I wished him to be. When the sound engineer learned about the deal, he offered to familiarise me with the mixing console, so that he could pop out.

That only left the tape operator, who actually had a tough time as there were frequent and complicated overdubs - it took four tracks to get a 4-part chord - and he had to be alert all the time. He jokingly asked whether I could not control the tape recorder electronically, at least the drop ins and outs (turning recording on/off). My best friend Mirek Lab, the Prague Hi-Fi guru No. 1, happened to know Willi Studer, whose 16-track recorder was installed at the Czech Radio, and approached him for the circuit diagram and advice. I was planning to acquire a sequencer that would control my equipment, or at least trigger the notes at their right pitch, time and with the right duration, and we thought it could possibly trigger the recording on the tape machine as well.

We did receive the full details of the machine with Willi Studer's suggestions how it could be done, and a mention that it was a great idea, well worth implementing.

It all clicked into place when I learned about a sequencer in West Berlin, that turned out to be called Mr. Lab - i.e. my best friend's initial and surname! And so I did get the sequencer, for an absolute fortune at the time, and I talked the maintenance engineers into secretly adapting the 8-track for my needs.

It worked like a dream: they even installed a hidden connector at the back of the machine, with a cable running into my sequencer for absolutely perfect, and completely effortless drop ins/outs. From then onwards, even the tape op could take a full session break, and I had the studio to myself, if I wanted to. But by then there was a true camaraderie among us all which I fondly remember, as we felt we were at the forefront of technology, it was fun, and it worked. And there always was an extra dimension to any achievement in a Socialist country, where everything was regulated, restricted and censored, especially in pop/rock/jazz - it was the satisfaction of beating the system.

There are 3 tracks on the Stabat Mater CD from the early days: Love Theme of a Robot, Just for the Trill of it and Conquistador.

Admittedly, a part of the object to record everything on synths, and later samplers as well, was to be completely self-sufficient. It was not such a challenge when one was using completely new, previously unheard sounds, but it became understandably more difficult, especially before the sampling era, to imitate acoustic instruments on electronic ones. Not just for sonic qualities alone, but also for the variety of playing techniques and interpretative skills of individual players. It is impossible to replace it all...

And thus Love Theme of a Robot starts by human whistling, fittingly provided by the very same Pavel Kühn some 25 years ago. He was not just a great chorus master, singer and music director, but could also produce the best whistle in Czech Republic. If you think it is easy, try whistling along!

The track itself started its life as a song I sang via a Vocoder to sound like a proper robot. The lyrics by Michael Žantovský, later a top diplomat and politician, were a thinly veiled parallel about the Soviets who invaded us in 1968: the robot promises to serve us as best as it can, only to gradually take over our lives. If you e-mail me, I'll send you the vocal/Vocoder version.

Just for the Trill of it *has several real flutes played by Jiří Stivín, a terrific jazz flautist. His part was more of a trill than thrill, but at least he did not have to play chordal passages voice by voice, like I had to, still being without a polysynth then. I was proud about the falling massive sound which came out of a specially designed reverb by M. Lab, fully controlled by Mr. Lab.*

The reverb was also used for a rhythmically repeated chord in the chorus of Conquistador, another track which started as a song, this time about a space traveller who returns to Earth and is not quite sure whether there might be any life left. I recorded it before leaving for London, not being quite sure when I might return to Prague and what I may find there, eventually. At least I already had a 4-voice synth and could record 4 times as fast...

I came to London in June 1981 and recorded two instrumental LPs for Red Bus. I can't for copyright reasons feature any music from either, but there are 2 tracks from my early days in the UK.

Why Not Me has a simple structure: 22 bars which are first played with just a melody without any rhythm/bass, then with only simple bass & bells arpeggios, and finally with all together. Because of the harmonic progression, the 22 bars end up a tone lower; and to be linked together I had to use vari-speed to slowly raise the pitch by a tone at the end of the first two sections. All thanks to my new toy at the time, the Fostex 8-track.

Leaving Earth was a 1-minute theme for a nostalgic film about a departing spaceship. Nostalgia comes easy to most émigrés...

The 80's started a boom of great new synths at affordable prices and the era of sampling. Suddenly everything seemed possible and it was amusing to hit a key and hear a whole orchestra tuning, hitting another and have the 80-piece band playing and finally hearing applause by playing another key, for instance. I bought a CD with a specially recorded string orchestra that I could sample myself, and it had for a good measure sensuous female moans as well. And thus for the fun of it the track Yours is the Glory is framed by the unknown happy lady. Several new synths are featured as well, Roland D-50, Korg M1 and the great Korg Wavestation. The sax sampled on an Akai S1000 is more of a testimony to the era than the real McCoy as possible today...

Riff-Raff was written for a short film with the brief of having a rhythmical riff running underneath with minor chords above and an overall melancholic feel to it. It does what is on the tin.

Guitar Samba is more complex, as was the new machinery in the 90's. The acoustic guitar itself is a combination of my sampled sounds and various guitars available on so many synths. The Wavestation rumbles at the bottom and the choirs come from a CD of Zagorsk monks that I sampled and variously transposed. I also sampled the emotional electric guitar and added runs of violins, a down transposed lowest note of a Steinway, etc.

My wife organised an exhibition of British metals in Prague and Berlin in 1998 called Metalmorphosis and I wanted to show a bit of support by providing metal sounding environmental music. The track was looped and played throughout, with the faithful support of Wavestation, Waldorf Microwave and Zagorsk monks.

And just when all seemed possible on samplers, I decided to use humans again and in 1996 wrote a Requiem for 200 of them. I thought a demo would be a good idea, and so I asked my son, a professional viola player, to give a human touch to two opening passages, Requiem Aeternam and Kyrie. I used what may seem as a rather ill fitting title for the Requiem Aeternam - Kol Nidre. Both are very sacred for their respective religions, Christianity and Judaism, and seemingly incompatible. But I kept in mind the fact that Verdi's Requiem was memorably sung and played in the Terezín concentration camp by inmates, who were next day sent to Auschwitz and gassed upon their arrival. And so three crucial initial notes of Kol Nidre are linked to the initial word Requiem. My son plays mostly violin rather than viola in the two tracks and I could not have wished for a warmer human touch.

If you managed to read as far as here, many thanks for your kind interest! Please bear in mind that it is all about music, which can only be listened to. There are sample tracks of everything, but the instrumentals, which I described here instead.

Should you wish to have any more information, please do not hesitate to e-mail me!

Alexander Goldscheider