

THE OSCHOLARS

Vol. III



No. 11


issue no 30:

October 2003/October 2006

'MAD, SCARLET MUSIC'

A monthly page dedicated to Oscar Wilde and Music, compiled by **Tine Englebert**.

Click  to go to the Table of Contents; click  to jump the next section.

Click  to return to this edition's main pages.

To go to previous pages of **Mad, Scarlet Music**, click as appropriate:

October 2003	April 2003	October 2002
September 2003	March 2003	September 2002
August 2003	February 2003	August 2002
July 2003	January 2003	July 2002
June 2003	December 2002	
May 2003	November 2002	

Before July 2002, 'Mad, Scarlet Music' was incorporated in the main pages of **THE OSCHOLARS**.

I. Adaptations of Salome
II. Going to the Opera October 2003
III. Singing Salome



1. ABANDONED, UNPUBLISHED OR FORGOTTEN SALOME ADAPTATIONS

This month some attention for abandoned, unpublished or forgotten Salome adaptations: the incomplete cinema opera (1931) of John Becker, the unperformed operatic parody (1919-1930) of Slavko Osterc, Bernstein's incidental music (1955), the drama (1960) of Toshiro Mayuzumi and the ballet of Emil Petrovics.

1. John J(oseph) Becker

The American composer John Becker (*b* Henderson, 22 Jan 1886; *d* Wilmette, 21 Jan 1961) studied at the conservatories of Cincinnati (graduation, 1905) and Wisconsin (doctorate of composition, 1923). He was the only 'ultramodernist' composer associated with the American Midwest, where he held several academic and administrative appointments, including that of professor of music at Barat College in Lake Forest, Illinois (1943-57).

He belongs, together with Ives, Ruggles, Cowell and Riegger, to the group named the 'American Five' of avant-garde music. Over several decades he served as the group's militant crusader for new music in the American Midwest, seeking to establish a national music with experimental tendencies drawn from the American experience rather than from Europe.

After meeting Cowell in 1928, he became an energetic member of the newly organized Pan American Association of Composers. In addition to lecturing and writing (his writings include articles on 20th-century composers, the aesthetics of music and music education), he conducted Midwestern premières of works by Ives, Ruggles and Riegger in the early 1930s. His warm friendship with Ives, documented in a remarkable correspondence between the two men (1931-54), resulted in his orchestration of Ives's *General William Booth Enters into Heaven* for baritone, male chorus and small orchestra (1934). From 1935 to 1941 he was the controversial director of the Federal Music Project in Minnesota and was associate editor of the *New Music Quarterly*. A devout Catholic, he was chosen as the American musical representative to the First International Congress of Catholic Artists in Rome in 1950. His musical activity slackened somewhat in his later years because of declining health and the continual neglect of his music.

Becker's early symphonies and songs reveal the influence of German Romanticism and, to a lesser extent, French Impressionism. In the late 1920s his musical style underwent a radical change, leading to the highly dissonant yet lyrical *Symphonia brevis* of 1929. His creativity culminated in the 1930s in such works as *Abongo*, the Horn Concerto, *Concertino*

pastorale and a unique series of ‘Soundpieces’, abstract chamber works of diversified instrumentation.

His most significant contributions were large-scale stage works fusing dance, colour, mime, stage design and music into shapes prophetic of ‘mixed-media’ theatre. He wrote several pioneering multi-media stage works, but since none of them has been performed, he has had little impact on the modernization of opera.

Around 1930 he came under the influence of the ultramodernists and decided that opera was outmoded, that it would be replaced by ‘an entirely new form, which definitely coordinates all the arts – music, speaking, dancing, pantomime, and lighting’. Accordingly, he abandoned his unfinished operas *The City of Shagpat* (1926–7) and **Salome**, a cinema opera (1931).

The dance figure: *Stagework no.1*, a ballet on lyrics by Ezra Pound for soprano and orchestra (1932) included music from the unfinished cinema opera **Salome**.

From 1932 to 1943 he worked on *The Life of Man*, a ‘polytechnic drama’ using light, colour, sound, solo and group dance, dramatization and large orchestra. Though incomplete, it is notable for its abstract dramatic character and opening musical gesture of forearm clusters played on pianos placed around the audience. He considered his masterpiece to be his *Stagework no.3: A Marriage with Space* (1935), written in collaboration with the Chicago poet Mark Turbyfill. The music is dissonant and transcendental in style with a prominent trumpet solo; the poem is spoken over the music, and indications are given for abstract choreography. The score includes material from Becker’s Third Symphony, his most widely played composition.

The swift change of moods, from violent to darkly tragic, is most clearly revealed in the brilliant Violin Concerto (1948), Becker’s last completed orchestral composition. His work, although occasionally gentle and serene, is frequently satirical and forcefully expressive of social protest. At a time when neo-classicism and a return to folk sources dominated American music, Becker insisted on the responsibility of the composer to ‘add new resources, evolve new techniques, develop new sound patterns’.

Source: www.grovemusic.com



2. Slavko Osterc



The Slovenian Slavko Osterc (*b* Veržej, 17 June 1895; *d* Ljubljana, 23 May 1941), along with Marij Kogoj, is one of the two seminal figures in twentieth-century Slovenian music. He studied in Prague in the 1920s with Vitezslav Novák and Alois Habá amongst others and later taught at the Ljubljana Conservatory until the outbreak of the Second World War. Osterc was a contemporary of Hindemith and a friend of Karl Amadeus Hartmann. His output features six operatic pieces, five ballets, orchestral and vocal pieces. His instrumental and chamber output includes pieces for organ, a Saxophone Sonata, a Sonatina for two clarinets and a 1928 piece for string quartet called *Silhouette*.

Osterc used a wide range of techniques, many of which are reflected in his operas. *Krst pri Savici* ('Baptism at the Savica Waterfall', composed 1921) is a through-composed, richly orchestrated tonal work in three acts. In direct contrast to this his next opera, *Iz komicne opere* ('From the Comic Opera', 1928), in one act, employs *Sprechstimme* and is atonally and polytonally linear. A similar, yet more homophonic and arioso approach is apparent in *Krog s kredo* ('The Chalk Circle', composed 1928–9). With his last three operas *Medea* (1930, after Euripides), *Salome* (1930), *Dandin v vicah* ('Dandin in Purgatory', a grotesque after Molière and H. Sachs, 1932) Osterc introduced into Slovene music the 'opéra minute' – a type of opera composed slightly earlier by Milhaud, with conciseness of libretto and musical treatment; behind their expressiveness lies an intellectual rigour. The mini-opera on the subject of **Salome**, an operatic parody in one act, composed between 1919-1930, was never performed.

Some of the music of Osterc is published by Breitkopf and Haertel.

Source: www.grovemusic.com

3. Leonard Bernstein



The American composer and conductor Leonard Bernstein (*b* Lawrence, 25 Aug 1918; *d* New York, 14 Oct 1990) was the most famous and successful native-born figure in the history of classical music in the USA. As a composer, conductor, pianist and pedagogue he bridged the worlds of the concert hall and musical theatre, creating a rich legacy of recordings, compositions, writings and educational institutions.

He began his musical education with piano lessons when he was ten, and continued at Harvard University (1935–9), the Curtis Institute (1939–41) and the Berkshire Music Center (summers of 1940 and 1941), where he studied composition (with Walter Piston among others), orchestration (with Randall Thompson) and conducting (with Fritz Reiner and Sergey Koussevitzky). His activities in the following years typified the variety of his interests and talents: in addition to serving as Artur Rodzinski's assistant with the New York PO, he worked as a publisher's arranger and with a theatrical group called the Revuers. In 1943 he conducted one of the orchestra's concerts at short notice, successfully enough to make his name in the New York musical world. Appointed principal conductor in 1956, he directed the orchestra with distinction until 1966; during this time he also made himself familiar to American television audiences with the 'Young Peoples' Concerts' series, knowledgeably and effectively combining performance with explication. From the late 1960s his conducting career became even more illustrious, Vienna serving as an especially important centre for his work. His operatic conducting engagements were relatively few in number, but invariably noteworthy.

As a composer-conductor, Bernstein came closer than anyone since Mahler to achieving equal eminence in both spheres. Further, among American composers only Gershwin was more successful in gaining a high level of recognition in both serious and popular music. Bernstein quickly made a reputation as a composer in 1943, only months after his first conducting success, with the ballet *Fancy Free*, its breezy manner and offhand assurance

showing his theatrical flair. Indeed all his music, including choral and vocal works, three symphonies and a variety of instrumental pieces, contains an unashamedly theatrical element in its extramusical inspiration and intended effect. As the composer himself accurately noted, everything he wrote, for whatever medium, was 'really theater music in some way'. His musical language varied through the years but never abandoned tonality, although in his later works he occasionally explored serial devices. His command of musical dialects from late Romanticism to Broadway was sometimes criticized but in fact proved a strength, as he was able to fit each dramatic moment with the kind of music best suited for it. He was also one of the few Broadway composers capable of orchestrating his own music (although pressures on his time generally dictated some delegation.)

Aside from incidental music for two Aristophanes plays composed for Harvard, Bernstein's first piece of sung theatre was a musical comedy, *On the Town*. This successful excursion into the commercial theatre used the same basic idea as the ballet *Fancy Free*. Bernstein's belief in the possibility of developing an operatic repertory from the American musical was first put into action in the popular-flavoured *Trouble in Tahiti*, a one-act opera. Further efforts to use the musical-comedy styles of the 1950s in a stage work that could carry the weight of a tragic theme resulted in *West Side Story*. This adaptation of the Romeo and Juliet story using youthful gang rivalry in New York City as the backdrop, finally gave Bernstein a satisfaction that had eluded him – the experience of hearing his songs widely performed and enjoyed, a genuine part of the popular culture. The musical was groundbreaking not only for its tragic tone, but for its full integration of dance and its unified musical material. Bernstein's other theatrical works include incidental music for *Peter Pan* (1950), Anouilh's *The Lark* (1955) and **Oscar Wilde's Salome** (1955). Projects that never reached completion included *The Skin of our Teeth* (after Thornton Wilder's play; begun and abandoned in 1964, attempted briefly again in 1969) and *The Exception and the Rule* (lyrics by Sondheim, book by John Guare, after Brecht; abandoned in 1968). Success returned to the composer with the *sui generis* theatre piece *Mass*, which attracted extraordinary attention in its first years of existence. Its framework is the celebration of a Roman Catholic mass with vernacular interpolations (somewhat in the manner of Britten's *War Requiem*), its subject the nature of faith. After an unsuccessful return to Broadway in 1976, Bernstein reaffirmed his dramatic skills with the opera *A Quiet Place*, which began as a sequel to *Trouble in Tahiti* and eventually incorporated it. Here he showed once again his ability to seize the potential of a scene and make it vivid through music that reveals what words cannot. His command of the possibilities of the stage, his structuring of scenes to be both formally satisfying and emotionally immediate, his feeling for the variety of texture and pace necessary to sustain a full-length work, and not least his melodic inventiveness are as evident in this opera as in his more familiar earlier works. These gifts confirm Leonard Bernstein's high place among American composers for the operatic stage.

Source: www.grovemusic.com



4. Toshiro Mayuzumi

The Japanese composer Mayuzumi (b Yokohama, 20 Feb 1929) studied with Tomojiro Ikenouchi and Akira Ifukube at the Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music, from which he graduated in 1951. He went to Paris (1951–2) to study at the Conservatoire with Aubin and familiarized himself with the activities of Messiaen and Boulez and with *musique concrète*. Returning to Tokyo he founded (with Akutagawa and Dan) the Sannin no Kai (Group of Three) and began composing in earnest. He consistently experimented with new ideas and techniques, introducing many of the new trends in postwar European music into Japan. The more important of his works in those years include the orchestral *Bacchanale* (1953) and *X, Y, Z* (1955), the first Japanese example of *musique concrète*.

With his *Nehan Kokyokyoku* ('Nirvana Symphony') in 1958 Mayuzumi began to show particular interest in traditional Japanese music, in this case Buddhist music.

Many of his works are based on Buddhist philosophy and music, among them *Sange* for male chorus, the *Mandala Symphony*, the symphonic poem *Samsara* and the cantata *Geka (Pratidesana)*. At the same time he developed interests in traditional Japanese music, such as *gagaku* and *shomyo* (Buddhist chants), the *no* drama and the *gidayu* singing which accompanies *bunraku*. In *Bugaku* for orchestra (1962), which won an Otaka Prize in 1967, he attempted to imitate the sounds and rhythms of the music for the court dance after which the piece is named, while *Showa Tenpyo-raku* (1970) was written for an actual *gagaku* ensemble. *A hun* for three *no* instruments (1958) explores the rhythmic structure of the traditional play, and *Bunraku* (1960) is an evocation for solo cello of puppet drama.

Mayuzumi has often collaborated with and provided incidental music for such theatrical groups as the *Bungaku-za* or the *Haiyu-za*. In some dramatic ventures he worked with the novelist Y. Mishima, whose nationalist ideology was similar to his own; their joint projects included a drama, *Bara to kaizoku* ('Roses and Pirates', 1958), and a version of **Wilde's Salome** (1960), as well as *Kinkakuji* (1976) which Mayuzumi set to a libretto in German by Claus Henneberg based on Mishima's novel. His two operas, *Kinkakuji* and *Kojiki*, both commissioned by European opera theatres, reveal his nationalist learnings. He has also composed much music for films, including *Akasen-chitai* ('Red District'), the first Japanese film with electronic music, *Tokyo Olympic*, which won the Mainichi Music Prize for a film

score in 1964, and *The Bible* (1965). In his later years he composed only occasionally, presenting for many years the popular TV programme *Dai mei no nai ongakukai* ('The Concert without Title').

Source: www.grovemusic.com



5. Emil Petrovics



The Hungarian composer (*b* Nagybecskerek [now Zrenjanin, Serbia], 9 Feb 1930) studied with Farkas at the Liszt Academy of Music (1952–7). One of his most notable professors was Zoltán Kodály. His first international success came when a string quartet won a prize in the 1959 Liège competition. From 1960 to 1964 he was musical director of the Petofi Theatre. In 1964 he was appointed Professor of the Academy of Dramatic and Film Arts, a post he holds to this day. In 1968, he received Professorship at the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music. From 1978 to the present, he is also Department Chair for Composition and Conducting at Music Academy.

Petrovics's first instrumental pieces, notably the Flute Concerto and the String Quartet, show an absorption of influences from Falla, Prokofiev and Ravel as well as the Hungarian tradition. His first great success internationally was *C'est la guerre*, an opera in one act. Broadcast in 1961, the work was staged at the Hungarian State Opera in the following year and enthusiastically received. It was followed by a comic opera, *Lysistrata*, written in 1962 for concert performance but staged in Budapest (1971) and East Berlin (1972). After developing his style in a series of instrumental works, Petrovics produced the large-scale oratorio *Jónás könyve* ('The Book of Jonah'), a work which displays his lyrical vein. He returned to composition for the stage with a full-length opera based on Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, produced in Helsinki in 1970 and Wuppertal in 1971. The music is freely atonal with more or less serial episodes; the polyphonic textures owe much to the Second

Viennese School. His operas and ballets were produced for television and enjoyed world-wide viewing. He wrote **Salome**_(a ballet after **Oscar Wilde**) for flute, trumpet, harp and percussion in 1978.

Aside from his work as composer and professor, Petrovics wrote numerous movie scores and incidental music for plays, TV and radio shows. The most outstanding among these was the film “Pál Utcai Fiúk” (The Boys of Paul Street) directed by Zoltán Fábry. This film, adapted from a novel by Ferenc Molnár, was an Oscar nominee in the midseventies, for best foreign film.

His public life is also notable. He often gives lectures, writes studies and articles for newspapers and journals. He is president of the Hungarian Copyright Association. From 1967 until 1985, he was member of the Hungarian Parliament.

Petrovics has been awarded numerous prizes. His chamber, symphonic choral works were published by **Editio Musica Budapest** and recorded by **Hungaroton**. They are often performed in Europe as well as overseas, both in the concert hall as well as on radio.

Source: www.grovemusic.com



6. Dalhousie Young

Every Oscholar knows the name of Dalhousie Young. Although there is little known about Dalhousie or Dal Young.

While living and working in Berneval, various friends paid Oscar Wilde vissts. There was Adey and Turner, then Ross and Lugné-Poë, André Gide and Vincent O’Sullivan from Paris, the poet Ernest Dowson, the painters Will Rothenstein and Charles Conder from London and the composer and pianist Dalhousie Young.

On 3 June 1897, Wilde reported to Ross: “Ernest Dowson, Conder and Dal Young came out here this afternoon to dine and sleep ...” Wilde had not previously met the musician Dalhousie Young, and the occasion enabled him to thank Young for his courage in publishing a pamphlet in his defence shortly after the last trial. Following Wilde's imprisonment, the composer had published *Apologia pro Oscar Wilde* (London, W. Reeves: June 1895).

Young also offered to build Wilde a house at Berneval, so that Wilde could have a permanent home, at a cost of £700. This offer Wilde declined, as he afterwards told Ross. Wilde thought it a piece of generous but quixotic enthusiasm, but hardly knowing Young at the time, he did not think it right to accept such an offer. Young then proposed to Wilde that he should write the libretto of an opera to be called *Daphnis and Chloë*, but nothing came of the idea, although Wilde seems to have accepted an advance of £100 from Young. In Villa Giudice, in fashionable Posillipo, north of the city of Naples, Wilde and Alfred Douglas produced a few lyrics for *Daphnis and Chloë*, but Dalhousie Young gave up the project.

Dalhousie Young (1866-1921) was born in India and was a concert pianist and composer. Young studied with Leschitzky and composed several works.

His orchestral *Christmas Hymn* and *Suite* were both performed at Bournemouth under Dan Godfrey. The *Rustic Suite* and *Five Bagatelles* for string orchestra, were also both premiered at Bournemouth. His stage music included the "gesture plays" *Prince Pierrot*, *Pierrot on Toast* and *Robe of Feathers* and incidental music to Netta Syrett's *Six Fairy Plays*. He wrote *The Blessed Damozel*, a cantata for soprano solo, tenor solo, chorus and orchestra on a poem by D. G. Rossetti. Young was best known for smaller scale vocal items like *Bredon Hill* and other Housman songs, *Four Geisha Songs*, songs on poems of W. Blake, the eight piece *In a Gondola* cycle, the *Six Oriental Epigrams* and the intriguing *Dithering Ditties*, ridiculous rhymes set for singing: *Antigua*, *Kidderminster*, *Calcutta*, *Spain* and *Powder and Paint*. He also composed several piano pieces: *Chinatown (humoresque de concert)*, *Paraphrase on a Japanese tune*, *Prelude in D minor*, *Rigaudon (sailors' hornpipe)*, a *Siciliano* and more. Some of his printed music can be traced in the catalogue of The Library of Congress and in the Public Catalogue of the British Library. There are no recordings found of the works of Dalhousie Young.



II. INTERESTING OPERAS IN EUROPEAN OPERA HOUSES, AUTUMN 2003.

Die tote Stadt

Erich Wolfgang Korngold after Georges Rodenbach's novel *Bruges-la-Morte*.

Royal Opera, Stockholm 11th, 14th, 17th, 25th, 27th October; 5th, 20th, 28th November; 4th December 2003.

www.operan.se

Opera in three acts

Music: Erich Wolfgang Korngold

Libretto: Paul Schott after Georges Rodenbach;s novel *Bruges-la-morte*

Paul	Richard Decker
Marie/Marietta	Carol Wilson
Frank	Anders Bergström
Brigitta	Ingrid Tobiasson
Juliette	Lena Hoel
Lucienne	Eva Pilat
Gaston	Alexander Maksic
Victorin	Niklas Björling Rygert
Fritz	Karl-Magnus Fredriksson
Greve Albert	Ulrik Qvale
Lennart Mörk	Décor and costumes
Hans-Åke Sjöquist	Lighting
Ann-Margret Pettersson	Director

With the Kungliga Hovkapellet directed by Dietfried Bernet.

Die tote Stadt by Erich Wolfgang Korngold is a musical adaptation of the novel by the Belgian symbolist poet and novelist Georges Rodenbach. Living in Paris from 1887, Rodenbach wrote about Flemish life. His works include the poems *Le Foyer et les champs* (1877), *La Jeunesse blanche* (1886), *Les Vies encloses* (1896) and the novel *Bruges-la-morte* (1892).

Bruges-la-Morte was immediately acknowledged, by Huysmans and Mallarmé among others, as one of the greatest achievements of the Decadent movement in French literature. *Bruges-la-Morte* concerns the fate of Hugues Viane, a widower who has turned to the melancholy, decaying city of Bruges as the ideal location in which to mourn his wife and as a suitable haven for the narcissistic perambulations of his inexorably disturbed spirit. Bruges, the 'dead city', becomes the image of his dead wife and thus allows him to endure, to manage the unbearable loss by systematically following its mournful labyrinth of streets and canals in a cyclical promenade of reflection and allusion. The story itself centres around Hugue's obsession with a young dancer whom he believes is the double of his beloved wife. The consequent drama leads Hugues onto a plank walk of psychological torment and humiliation, culminating in a deranged murder. This is a poet's novel and is therefore

metaphorically dense and visionary in style. It is the ultimate evocation of Rodenbach's lifelong love affair with the enduring mystery and haunting mortuary atmosphere of Bruges.

The dream-like evocation of the "dead city" Bruges, a city of silence, ennui and of desolation, whose "shadows lengthen across the text", and which dictates the inevitably fatal events of the narrative, is very important.

Korngold's adaptation of the novel became his fourth and most celebrated work for the stage. The opera came about at the suggestion of Siegfried Trebitsch, who had recently completed a translation of Georges Rodenbach's play *Le mirage*, itself an adaptation of a novel by the same author. (Trebitsch was also the German translator of George Bernard Shaw.) Korngold quickly drafted a one-act scenario, before seeking the advice of Hans Müller, the librettist for his earlier one-act work *Violanta*. Müller urged the composer to turn it into a full-scale opera and began work on the libretto, but other commitments obliged him to withdraw, and in the end the libretto was provided by Korngold and his father, working under the pseudonym of Paul Schott. A number of factors held up progress on the opera, but it was eventually completed on 15 August 1920. Its simultaneous premières later that year in Hamburg (under Egon Pollak) and Cologne (under Klemperer) were successful, and during the next decade the work received performances on famous opera stages.

Bruges-la-morte was a symbolist-inspired work showing the influence of Maeterlinck and, beyond that, of Poe. Essentially it is a dream-tale in which the images of death and decay are uppermost; throughout, the image of the dead city is no mere backdrop but a living presence, a protagonist that controls and determines the actions of those who live in her. The Korngolds wrought profound changes, however, by pushing the city into the background and concentrating on greater realism and dramatic characterization.

Korngold was one of the finest orchestrators of his day, and the vivid, sumptuous sound of the Straussian-sized orchestra is one of the major splendours of the opera. The other is the vocal writing, which permits the grandest opportunities for bel canto brilliance and display yet is carefully woven into the orchestral tissue.

The Austrian composer Erich Wolfgang Korngold (*b* Brno, 29 May 1897; *d* Hollywood, CA, 29 Nov 1957) was the second son of the eminent music critic Julius Korngold (1860–1945), he was a remarkable child prodigy composer. In 1906 he played his cantata *Gold* to Gustav Mahler, who pronounced him a genius and recommended that he be sent to Zemlinsky for tuition. At the age of 11 he composed the ballet *Der Schneemann*; he followed this with a Piano Trio and a remarkable Piano Sonata in E that so impressed Artur Schnabel that he championed the work all over Europe. Korngold was 14 when he wrote his first orchestral work, the *Schauspiel Ouvertüre*; his *Sinfonietta* appeared the following year. His first operas, *Der Ring des Polykrates* and *Violanta*, were completed in 1914. With the appearance of the

opera *Die tote Stadt*, completed when he was 23 and acclaimed internationally after its dual première in Hamburg and Cologne (1920), his early fame reached its height. After completing the first Left Hand Piano Concerto, commissioned by Wittgenstein in 1923, he began his fourth and arguably greatest opera, *Das Wunder der Heliane* (1927), and started arranging and conducting classic operettas by Johann Strauss and others. He also began teaching opera and composition at the Vienna Staatsakademie and was awarded the title professor *honoris causa* by the president of Austria.

Max Reinhardt, with whom Korngold had collaborated on versions of *Die Fledermaus* and *La belle Hélène*, invited him to Hollywood in 1934 to work on his celebrated film of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Over the next four years, Korngold pioneered a new art form, the symphonic film score, in such classics as *Captain Blood*, *The Prince and the Pauper* and *Anthony Adverse* (for which he won the first of two Academy Awards). The Anschluss prevented him from staging his fifth opera, *Die Kathrin*, and he remained in Hollywood composing some of the finest music written for the cinema. *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (1938, winner of his second Academy Award), *The Sea Hawk* (1940) and *Kings Row* (1941) are his greatest works in the genre. Treating each film as an 'opera without singing' (each character has his or her own leitmotif) he created intensely romantic, richly melodic and contrapuntally intricate scores, the best of which are a cinematic paradigm for the tone poems of Richard Strauss and Franz Liszt. He intended that, when divorced from the moving image, these scores could stand alone in the concert hall. His style exerted a profound influence on modern film music.

After the war Korngold returned to absolute music, composing, among other works, a Violin Concerto (1937, rev. 1945) first performed by Heifetz, a Cello Concerto (1946), a Symphonic Serenade for string orchestra (1947) given its première by Furtwängler, and the Symphony in Fis (1947–52). His late Romantic style, however, was completely out of step with the postwar era and when he died at the age of 60, he believed himself forgotten. After decades of neglect, a gradual reawakening of interest in his music occurred. At the time of his centenary (1997) his works were becoming increasingly popular, appearing on major recordings and concert programmes around the world.



Der Kreidekreis

Alexander von Zemlinsky

Zürich Opera House, Switzerland

www.openhaus.ch

Première 16th October 2003, then 19th, 21st, 23rd, 26th October; 6th, 8th, 14th, 16th November

Tchang-Haitang	Brigitte Hahn, Aniko Donáth
Yü-Pei	Cornelia Kallisch, Louise Martini
Pao	Francisco Araiza, Bernhard Bettermann
Tong	Peter Keller
Tschang-Ling	Rodney Gilfry, Andreas Zimmermann
Tschao	Oliver Widmer, Horst Warnig
Ma	László Polgár, Peter Arens
Frau Tschang	Irène Friedli, Louise Martini
Hebamme	Katharina Peetz
Ein Mädchen	Christiane Kohl
Tschu-tschu	Peter Arens
Alan Gilbert	Musikalische Leitung
David Pountney	Inszenierung
Johan Engels	Ausstattung
Jürgen Hoffmann	Lichtgestaltung
Nicola Raab	Regiemitarbeit

Zemlinsky's opera in three acts to a libretto after Klabund's *Der Kreidekreis* was first performed in Zürich, in the Stadttheater, at 14 October 1933, conducted by Robert Kolisko. It is the first opera composed after the **Wilde** adaptations *Eine florentinische Tragödie* and *Der Zwerg*.

Der Kreidekreis ('The Chalk Circle') is an adaptation by the German playwright Klabund (1889–1928) of Li Hsing-tao's *Hui-lan-chi*, a play written during the time of the unpopular Yüan dynasty (1278–1368). Klabund altered and simplified Li Hsing-tao's depiction of injustice and corruption in order to heighten the element of social criticism; his version was later used by his friend Bertolt Brecht as the basis of *Der kaukasische Kreidekreis*.

In 1927 Zemlinsky joined Klemperer at the Krolloper in Berlin. Here he composed his next opera, *Der Kreidekreis* (1930–31). Zemlinsky's opera compresses the five acts of the original play into seven scenes divided into three acts. It is a work of great immediacy and represents a successful fusion of jazz (there is a striking similarity between the opening saxophone melody and a similar one in *Jonny spielt auf* of Ernst Krenek) and Chinese music



(pentatonic harmony and sonorities, as in the courtesans' music in scene i). Spoken dialogue and melodrama clearly set off the lyrical moments of introspection against the rest of the plot.




III. SINGING SALOME

We have begun to compile a list of those who have sung Salome. We will add to this and expand it with dates and a bibliography. Here is the first selection:

Aïno Ackté	Josephine Barstow	Gemma Bellincioni
Hildegard Behrens	Inge Borkh	Grace Bumbry
Elizabeth Byrne	Montserrat Caballé	Maria Cebotari
Monika Cichocka	Kristine Ciesinski	Alicja Dankowska
Lisa Della Casa	Emmy Destinn	Lily Djanel
Dorothy Dow	Maria Ewing	Olive Fremstad
Stephanie Friede	Mary Garden	Christel Göltz
Karen Huffstodt	Maria Jeritza	Gwyneth Jones
Ljuba Kazarnovskaya	Barbara Kemp	Marya Nikolayevna Kuznetsova
Salomea Krusceniski	Frieda Langendorff	Marjorie Lawrence
Marquita Lister	Göta Ljungberg	Catherine Malfitano
Eva Marton	Birgit Nilsson	Helge Pilarczyk
Leontyne Price	Maria Rajdl	Hildegarde Ranczak
Deborah Raymond	Jane Rhodes	Else Schulz
Anja Silja	Oda Slobodskaya	Teresa Stratas
Cheryl Studer	Stephanie Sundine	Astrid Varnay
Genviève Vix	Signe von Rappe	Nina Warren
Ljuba Welitsch	Marie Wittich	Liliana Zamorska

Click  to go to the Table of Contents; click  to jump the next section.

Click  to return to this edition's main pages.