

FESTIVAL FORFEST CZECH REPUBLIC 2011

To the readers of *Composer* name of FORFEST is not already unknown. About this international festival of contemporary music and art we have already reported several times. Forfest is unique event in Europe by an extraordinary spiritual dimension of many introduced compositions. Festival takes place annually in late of June in the picturesque Moravian town of Kroměříž – town known for its precious cultural and artistic monuments registered on the UNESCO list. Some of the readers of *Composer* have already opportunity to be guests of FORFEST. Soaking up the atmosphere, meet with friends on the same wavelength - they had a chance to look around in Kroměříž, to see a rare works of art, architectural monuments, unique Baroque garden architecture and rare archival-music scores in the archives of the Archbishop's castle.

Music part of FORFEST - it was from the first years also participation of composers, performers, conductors and performers from the USA. From the beginning only rarely – later more and more American artists became co-artistic creators of achievements of FORFEST and bearers and propagators of its ideas.

This was also the main block FORFEST (18 to 26 June 2011).

On the Festival logically dominates the composers and artists from the Central Europe, mainly from the former Czechoslovakia. However, in wells - often with detail profile - are also presented artists and works from more distant European and overseas territories. Many foreign authors and artists receives grants and scholarships from their / native / countries to participate in FORFEST, many artists are content with a modest fee, and are still coming to Kroměříž with perfectly prepared and a representative program.

From the U.S. artists of the 22nd year of the Festival took participation by their recitals: multi-flutist, composer and conductor, professor emeritus of Music at the California State University, Northridge and president of the National Association of Composers of the United States, **Daniel Kessner**, his consort, a major pianist, harpsichordist and chamber musician **Dolly Kessner** and renowned guitarist William Feasley. By their composition have enriched this year's programming in addition to **Daniel Kessner** also **Dan Locklair** (his organ composition, however, was introduced at the concert, which I had no opportunity to attend) and **Peter W. Madlem**.

How, then, looked at this year's an American involvement on FORFEST?

Among exceptional events was happened the realization of chamber cantata by **Daniel Kessner** "*In the Center*" for mezzo-soprano, string quartet and piano (**Kristýna Valoušková**, **String Quartet** with first violinist **David Mimra**, piano **Helena Fialová**,). This composition, however, we had occasion to hear in the world premiere of FORFEST 2000 - I know it even from the author CD, but this time - although it was not a remake - like if it was a different composition: a masterly seated, tectonically balanced, with surprising turns of expression, with dramatic moments converted in expressions of angelic purity and peace.

No wonder that after the last tone prolonged applause exploded. Kessner's work "*In the Center*" almost overshadowed the compositions performed by **Daniel Kessner** and **Dolly Kessner**, which we heard before: first from another foreign author, a leading French composer of Georgian origin, **Nicolas Zourabichvili de Pelken**.

Grande Quinsonnade by **Zourabichvili** for solo flute is work with the prevailing sorrowing and meditative character, but also organically utilized rope-walking of technical finesse. Especially the amazing, transcendental, magical and melanotically dense *Terra Oscura* for solo piano by Zourabichvili, and *Epigraph Sonata* for Flute and Piano by **Kessner** new composed in 2010, were events that this author concert of the two friends transformed into unforgettable experience...

Let me guitarist **William Feasley** forgive that I did not make any single note during his appearance. No one estranged from my notepad nor I have not forgotten the alphabet. But looking at his concert programming, I wanted only one - just listen. Let the tones of beauty, quiet, intimate with the tools to run their own souls, as if it was a cleansing bath. I think, that a reviewer can afford such a luxury? May does not assess, not to seek evaluation words, not thinking about context, about where the cut has an article if the article is balanced and robust, if it is not incomprehensible? May reviewer do not do his work, and just to let captivate himself, wash and charming? I did it and felt blissfully.

Initially I had an impression as if the artist could not immediately find its correct position peace and security. But already in the composition *Impetus* by **Vojtěch Mojžíš** from Prague, which was featured in the author's presence in the world premiere, I was tuned in just the right wave. Even other compositions had created a constellation of idyllic tranquility. It is true that the program was deliberately composed by non-conflict compositions - that stroked, calmed ... and not forced to solve anything: *El Tango Negro* by **Marcel Ferraris**, From *Caprichos de Goya* by the American composer of Italian origin **Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco**, and *Homenaje a un Cubanaso* from Cuban-American composer **Jose Lezcano**. *The Pateroller Sonata* from one of the most respected of Hollywood composers **Peter W. Madlem** dedicated directly to **William Feasley**..

Forrest was this year - in terms of style and creative poetics - amazingly monolithic. Did not come creative exhibicionists from the ranks of conceptualists, did not come / neo / or minimalist artists from branches / neo / or / post / Darmstad composers.

Therefore lacked challenging genre and stylistic pluralism, although solid colors this year was not a bad thing.

Strongly touched me an extraordinary degree of spirituality in some other programs and compositions:

- The author's concert of professor of the Janáček Academy of Performing Arts in Brno, **František Gregor Emmert** /1940/, the character completely "non-US" Mr. composer - a humble, quiet, discreet, magically inventive, light and in the faith passionate and flame compositing. Who heard the *Veronica's veil dramma intimo* for solo violin / in interpretation of violin magician **Milan Paľa**, Slovakia - almost court-royal violinist of Prof. Emmert / or Hlas plesania a spasenia / *Voice of praise and salvation* / for soprano and violin (an amazing performance by **Janka Tajovska Krajčovičová** and **Milan Paľa** again), definitely give me a truth;

- on the author's evening concert of the first lady of Czech composer scene, professor of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague, **Ivana Loudová**: *the String Quartet No. 2 In memory of Bedrich Smetana's*, which was created in very young

years of composer (phenomenal performance of **FAMA Quartet** from Prague - primario **David Danel**), in *the Sonata for Violin and Piano* / **Anna Veverková, Jan Dušek**) or in the *Planet of Birds II* for violin and electronics dedicated to the memory of the author's teacher during her study in France, Olivier Messiaen;

- In the recital of Slovak pianist **Elena Letňanová**, to which may have some colleagues in the U.S. recalls as a lecturer and head of piano department at the University of Dayton in Dayton, Ohio, where she established itself after the forced emigration of communist totalitarianism. Maybe some readers remember her recital at the Carnegie Hall where she performed as the first Slovak artist. The soloist performed in the framework of FORFEST program also works of perhaps three of her favorite contemporary authors: *Semplice* by Slovak composer **Roman Berger**, *6 Epigrams* by Slovak composer and **Miro Bázlik** and *Brittle Relations* by composer **Peter Graham** from Brno;

- on the concert of the variable ensemble **Convergence** / **Kristýna Valoušková**-soprano, **Zuzana Bandúrová** - flute, **Ondřej Štochl** – viola / and their unique and compelling performance of *De Profundis* by Slovak composer living in Switzerland **Iris Seghy** - concert with warm, peaceful and resistant beauty revealing a deep intimacy of our dialogue with the Friend-God;

- besides of others, which I can not already mention, yet - the final concert of FORFEST with **Wallinger Quartet** and three compositions, spiritual in the best sense: *the 5th String Quartet "Tribute to Antonín Dvořák"* by composer **Jiří Matys** / Brno author 83 /, *2nd String quartet* by / also Brno composer / **Pavel Zemek**, whose surprisingly seized work is worthy of a separate study, and *5th String Quartet* by **David Matthews** / England /, which was personally present on this year Festival.

Forfest - it was also the opening exhibition of glass objects of Slovak-Czech artist **Marek Trizuljak**, works on paper Italian artist **Tommasino Squadrito** (she was present at any concert of FORFEST), paintings by **Dana Puchnarová** from Prague and **Bohuslav Reynek** books of poetry along with photographs of **Daniel Reynek**. Festival was also the venue for biennial of three-day **Colloquium** on the universal theme of spiritual currents in contemporary art.

The festival was held under the personal patronage of Mayor of the city Kromeriz Daniela Hebnarová , including the Minister of Culture of Czech Republic Jiří Besser, Czech Commission for UNESCO and the Archbishopric of Olomouc.

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