



Recorded at the Fatra House of Art, Žilina, Slovakia, on 23 July, 31 October and 1 November 2011  
Recording engineer and mastering: Rostislav Pavlík  
Recording supervision: Peter Zagar

Recording released in association with the Music Centre Sloviakia

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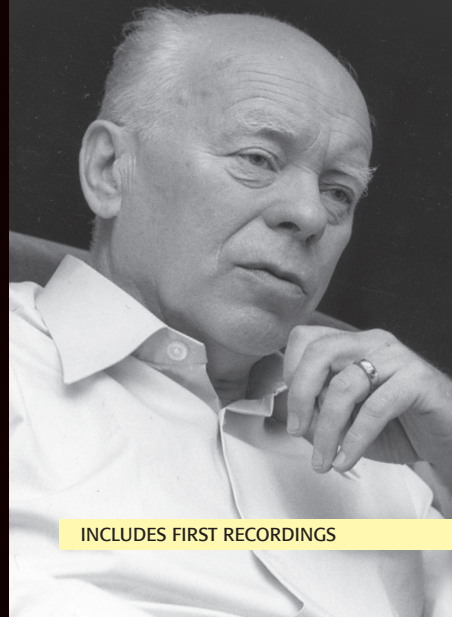
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# Ján CIKKER



**Piano Music**  
**Variations on a Slovak  
Folksong**  
**Two Compositions for Youth**  
**What the Children Told Me**  
**Theme with Variations**  
**Tatra Brooks**  
**Four Fugues**  
**Sonatina**  
**Lullaby**

**Jordana Palovičová, piano**

INCLUDES FIRST RECORDINGS

## JÁN CIKKER Piano Music

1	<i>Lullaby</i> (1942)	2:29
<b>Sonatina, Op. 12, No. 1</b> (1933)		11:57
2	I <i>Allegro fresco</i>	3:18
3	II <i>Andante sostenuto</i>	4:34
4	III <i>Vivo</i>	4:05
<b>Two Compositions for Youth, Op. 27</b> (1948)		3:16
5	I <i>Mama's Singing</i>	1:34
6	II <i>The Little Virtuoso</i>	1:42
<b>Piano Variations on a Slovak Folksong</b> (1973)		8:36
7	<i>Molto moderato, improvvisando</i> –	0:54
8	<i>Un poco più mosso, ma sempre moderato</i> –	0:33
9	<i>Con moto, corrente</i> –	0:31
10	<i>Moderato</i> –	1:07
11	<i>Animando. Un poco con moto</i> –	1:08
12	<i>Con moto moderato</i> –	1:09
13	<i>Con moto moderato</i> –	1:11
14	<i>Con moto. Moderato</i>	2:09
<b>Seven Fugues: Nos. 1, 3, 4 and 6</b> (1932–34)		7:33
15	I <i>Fuga 1, a 2 voci. Allegro vivo</i>	1:25
16	III <i>Fuga III, a 3 voci. Largo sostenuto</i> 2:24	
17	IV <i>Fuga IV, a 3 voci. Andante sostenuto</i>	1:54
18	VI <i>Fuga VI, a 2 voci. Andante</i>	1:48
<b>Theme with Variations, Op. 14, No. 1</b> (1935)		12:43
19	<i>Thema. Rubato quasi parlando</i> –	1:16
20	Var. 1: <i>Più mosso</i> –	2:03
21	Var. 2 –	0:58
22	Var. 3: <i>Allegretto grazioso</i> –	0:28



Photo © Rudolf Lengyel

Jordana Palovičová

International Radio Competition, Talent of the Year, Chappell Gold Medal Competition and Anglo-Czechoslovak Trust London Music Competition. Her recordings have been published by Musica, Music Fund, Slovak Radio, Slovak Television, Czech Radio, Czech Television and Norddeutscher Rundfunk. In the year of Cikker's centenary she recorded his Concertino for Piano and Orchestra, Op. 20, with the Slovak Sinfonietta in Žilina under Oliver Dohnányi (for Pavlík Records). She has appeared at many festivals at home and abroad both as a soloist and chamber player, among them the Bratislava Music Festival, Mozart Week, Melos-Ethos, the Central European Music Festival in Žilina, Music Spring in Košice, Levoča, Poprad and Trenčín, Music Autumn in Prešov, Nitra and Dolný Kubín, Music Gallery Nitra, Tadeáš Salva Days, Nice Music, 24 Hours Piano, Hammerklavier Festival, SPACE (Slovakia), Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy Music Days (Poland), Cambra de Música (Spain), Pulse Festival and Cheltenham International Festival of Music (UK). In January 2006 she represented Slovakia in the international radio project 'Euroradio Special Day – 250th Anniversary of Mozart's Birth'. In 2011 she gave a Cikker recital in Les Invalides (Paris) as part of the Vent d'Est – Vent d'Ouest series. She collaborates with a wide range of chamber ensembles, including the Moyzes Quartet and Solamente naturali, and with Ivan Palovič, Eugen Prochác, Michal Šťáhel and others, and with a number of national and international orchestras (the Slovak Philharmonic, Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra, Cappella Istropolitana, Slovak Sinfonietta in Žilina, Košice State Philharmonic, Moravian Philharmonic in Olomouc, Prague Chamber Philharmonic, Lambeth Orchestra, RCM Sinfonietta Orchestra, and Lübecker Philharmoniker) and conductors (Ondrej Lenárd, Oliver Dohnányi, Lubomír Mátl, Mario Košík, Rastislav Štúr, Vladimír Válek, Petr Vronský, Stanislav Macura, Jaroslav Kyzlink, Kirk Trevor, Neil Thomson, Charles Olivieri-Munroe, Paul McCreesh and others).

23	Var. 4: <i>Poco allegro</i> –	0:31
24	Var. 5: <i>Allegro strepitoso</i> –	0:53
25	Var. 6: <i>Largo sostenuto</i> –	1:48
26	Var. 7: <i>Allegro gaio</i> –	0:30
27	Var. 8: <i>Vivo</i> –	0:40
28	Var. 9: <i>Vivo</i> –	0:38
29	Var. 10: <i>Molto moderato</i> –	2:01
30	Var. 11: <i>Presto</i> –	0:49
31	Var. 12: <i>Rubato quasi parlando</i>	1:18

**What the Children Told Me: Piano Aquarelles (1962) 15:58**

32	I A fairy tale, please	0:38
33	II Catch me!	0:20
34	III Why is the snow falling?	1:19
35	IV What is a forest?	1:03
36	V Dance with me	0:34
37	VI Why are you crying?	1:06
38	VII Where is the brook flowing?	0:34
39	VIII What's in the lonely castle?	1:13
40	IX A bogeyman's there	0:44
41	X We saw a roe deer	1:28
42	XI The train is moving!	0:57
43	XII Why is the sky blue?	1:50
44	XIII I let a butterfly go	0:59
45	XIV Must everybody die?	2:19
46	XV We've been to the circus	0:54

**Tatra Brooks: Three Studies for Piano (1954) 10:40**

47	I The Brook and the Breeze	3:39
48	II What the Brook Told Me	4:50
49	III The Brook and the Storm	2:11

TT 74:05

## JÁN CIKKER: WORKS FOR PIANO by Vladimír Godár

Jan Cikker (29 July 1911, Banská Bystrica–21 December 1989, Bratislava) was one of several Slovak composers who acquired a thorough musical education in Prague (the national capital during the 74 years of the existence of Czechoslovakia as a sovereign state): he was following the examples of Mikuláš Schneider-Trnavský,<sup>1</sup> Alexander Moyzes<sup>2</sup> and Eugen Suchoň.<sup>3</sup> From 1930 Cikker studied at the Prague Conservatoire: composition with Jaroslav Křička,<sup>4</sup> conducting with Pavel Dědeček,<sup>5</sup> organ with Bedřich Wiedermann<sup>6</sup> and piano with Růžena Kurzová.<sup>7</sup> He continued his compositional studies in the master-class of Vítězslav Novák.<sup>8</sup> After graduating in 1936, he completed

<sup>1</sup> Schneider-Trnavský (1881–1958) studied with Hans von Koessler in Budapest (1900–1) and Hermann Grädener in Vienna (1901–3) before studying organ, with Josef Klíčka, and composition, with Karel Stecker, in Prague (1903–5). From 1909 until his death he was choir-master of the Cathedral of St Nicholas in his hometown of Trnava. His output contains much choral music, both sacred and secular, often influenced by Slovak folk-music, and some orchestral, chamber and instrumental works with their starting-point in Dvořák.

<sup>2</sup> Moyzes (1906–84) was the major Slovak symphonist of the twentieth century, with no fewer than twelve to his credit. A student at the Prague Conservatoire from 1925 to 1930, he studied composition with Otakar Šín and Rudolf Karel, conducting with Otakar Ostrčil and organ with Bedřich Wiedermann and, from 1928, attending Vítězslav Novák's master-class. From 1929 he taught in Bratislava and also became an important musical administrator.

<sup>3</sup> Suchoň (1908–93) is best known as the composer of the first nationalist Slovak opera, *Krúžňava* ('The Whirlpool'), first performed in 1949. For three years (1931–33) he, too, was a student of Novák in Prague.

<sup>4</sup> Křička (1882–1969), active also as a choirmaster in Prague, is best remembered as a composer for the stage, writing comic and children's operas, much influenced by Czech folk-music, of which he produced many arrangements.

<sup>5</sup> Dědeček (1885–1958) was a composer as well as an important conductor, teacher and choir-master. His students include Karel Ančerl, Karel Berman, Jarmil Burghauser and Jans Hanus.

<sup>6</sup> Bedřich Antonín Wiedermann (1883–1951) was a major Czech organist, touring internationally, to considerable acclaim, before the Second World War. His own organ music follows the late-Romantic tradition of Liszt.

<sup>7</sup> Růžena Kurzová (1880–1938), whose students included Rudolf Firkušný, was the wife of another esteemed Czech piano-teacher, Vilém Kurz. Their daughter, Ilona Štěpánová-Kurzová, herself became an important piano pedagogue.

<sup>8</sup> A major composer in the generation after Dvořák, Novák (1870–1949) wrote in a late-Romantic idiom influenced by Moravian folksong, his highly accomplished orchestral writing often used to express landscape and other natural phenomena.

arch of musical invention. The virtuosic texture often suggests the sound of an orchestra.

Cikker twice turned to piano works for children. In 1948 he wrote a small diptych ('Mama's Singing'<sup>[5]</sup> and 'The Little Virtuoso'<sup>[6]</sup>) which he called *Two Compositions for Youth*, Op. 27. And in 1962 he wrote a cycle of fifteen small piano compositions, *What the Children Told Me*, subtitled 'Piano Aquarelles'<sup>[32]</sup> – <sup>[46]</sup>. Here he joins the rich tradition of piano albums for children initiated by Schumann and Tchaikovsky.

*Vladimír Godár, born in Bratislava in 1956, is one of Slovakia's leading contemporary composers and is active also as a scholar and writer. His works include a Concerto Grosso and Partita, which have been recorded by Andrew Parrott. Since 2011 he has been a lecturer in the Department of Composition and Conducting in the University of the Performing Arts in Bratislava.*

**Jordana Palovičová** studied at the Bratislava Conservatory (with Juraj Mašinda), at the Academy of Music and Performing Arts in Bratislava (with Daniela Varínska), at the Royal College of Music in London (with Yonty Solomon) and at the Musikhochschule Lübeck in Germany (with James Tocco). In 2002–4 she was a fellow of the DAAD programme. She participated in the master-classes of a number of prominent pianists (among them Lazar Berman, György Sándor and Eugen Indjić). She is currently assistant professor at the Academy of Music and Performing Arts in Bratislava.

Jordana Palovičová holds several prizes from national and international competitions – the Slovak Conservatories Competition, Virtuosi per musica di pianoforte, Hummel International Piano Competition, Concertino Praga

which he combined under the name *Dans la solitude*, Op. 16, No. 2. In 1942 he wrote a Concertino for Piano and Orchestra, Op. 20 – the first Slovak *concertante* work for piano, which became a repertoire number for many Slovak and other pianists. In the same year Cikker composed a *Lullaby* for piano [1]. It is to some extent a variation on Chopin's *Berceuse* in D flat major, Op. 57, since there are common features in the left-hand ostinato (here in F major) and the variations assigned to the right hand. Cikker's *Lullaby* was originally a gift to a friend of his, the choral conductor Juraj Haluzický, to whom a daughter had been born.

Cikker loved nature and was an enthusiastic amateur mountaineer, and he spent much of his free time in the Tatra Mountains. In 1954 he captured this inspiration in a cycle of three studies, *Tatra Brooks* [47] – [49], the musical language of which develops Liszt's piano technique on the basis of post-impressionist harmonic thinking. At the same time, with its wealth of open-air associations the work evokes Debussy. The cycle is dedicated to the Tatra Mountain Service.

Opera was the genre to which Cikker devoted most effort, and by the early 1970s he had gained European recognition as an operatic composer; by the same token, he gave proportionately less attention to other musical forms. In 1973 he nonetheless returned to the keyboard, with the *Piano Variations on a Slovak Folksong* (the folksong in question being 'The Water's Flowing, Flowing'). This work is linked to his earlier piano variations by the simple diatonic theme and the dramatic conception of the cycle, in which the theme [7], seven variations [8]–[13] and coda [14] form an unfolding

his education in Vienna with conducting classes from Felix Weingartner.<sup>9</sup> Afterwards he taught at the Academy of Music and Drama at Bratislava, and with the foundation of the Academy of Music and Performing Arts in Bratislava in 1949 he taught composition there. He was also an important organiser and conductor. With these wide-ranging activities Cikker became a pivotal personality in Slovak musical culture.

He was particularly active as a composer of operas. He wrote his first, *Juro Jánošík*, between 1950 and 1953, and was to complete eight more. In particular, his *Mister Scrooge* (1958–59), based on Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, and *Vzkriesenie* ('Resurrection'; 1959–61), based on Tolstoy's novel, aroused attention across Europe. (The other authors on whose work Cikker operas are based are the Čapek brothers, Štefan Hoza, Peter Karvaš, Heinrich von Kleist, Kálmán Mikszáth, Romain Rolland, Shakespeare and Ján Smrek.) In his orchestral works Cikker adopted a form of modern dramatic symphonism, frequently marked by a synthesis with national elements, as in the *Jarná symfónia* ('Spring Symphony'), Op. 15 (1937), and *Symfónia 1945* (1974); the symphonic poems *Leto* ('Summer'), Op. 19 (1941), *Vojak a matka* ('Soldier and Mother'), Op. 21 (1943), *Ráno* ('Morning'), Op. 24 (1945–46); *Slovenská suita* ('Slovak Suite'), Op. 22 (1943), *Spomienky* ('Reminiscences'), Op. 25 (1947),<sup>10</sup> *Blaženi sú mŕtvi* ('Blessed Are the Dead', subtitled 'Meditation on a Theme of Heinrich Schütz'; 1964), *Orchestrálne štúdie k čirohre* ('Orchestral Studies for a Drama'; 1965), *Hommage à*

<sup>9</sup> Weingartner (1863–1942), a protégé of Liszt, succeeded Mahler at the Hofoper in Vienna in 1908 and conducted the concerts of the Vienna Philharmonic until 1927. Based in Basel from then on, he was nonetheless head of the Vienna Opera (now the Staatsoper) in 1935–36.

<sup>10</sup> Cikker stopped using opus numbers in 1950; Op. 31 was the last he ascribed.

*Beethoven* (1969) and *Variácie na slovenskú ľudovú pieseň* ('Variations on a Slovak Folksong'; 1970). Other works that attracted attention were his cantata *Cantus filiorum*, Op. 17 (1940), and oratorio *Óda na radosť* ('Ode to Joy'; 1982).

Cikker first became interested in music thanks to the piano at home. His widowed mother taught piano – at first privately and then at the musical school at Banská Bystrica – and guided her son to a love of music and piano-playing. Apart from his mother, Marie Kmoničková, a professor of piano there and herself a graduate of the Prague Conservatoire, also taught him piano, and it was she who prepared him for the entrance exams. The study of piano music by Romantic composers eventually inspired Cikker's own first juvenile piece for piano, the four-movement Piano Sonata in C minor, Op. 11, written in 1927, and orchestrated three years later as Cikker's Symphony in C minor.

During his first years of study with Kříčka Cikker wrote a number of fugues as contrapuntal and orchestration exercises. Seven are extant: two two-part fugues [15] – [18], four three-part (one with two themes) [16] – [17] and one four-part composition (with four themes). The manuscript does not define the instrumental medium and the fugues may be performed with wind or bowed instruments, but for the most part one may play them equally well on a keyboard instrument. They follow Bachian models, with striking themes, but the development and contrapuntal treatment are not Baroque; rather they follow contemporary approaches, like those of Hindemith and (later) Shostakovich.

The first composition from Cikker's time at the Prague Conservatoire to attract attention was the Sonatina for Piano, Op. 12, No. 1, of 1933. The sonatina has always been a favourite teaching genre, with its virtue of clarity (it is usually in three movements: short sonata form, song, rondo) and avoidance of virtuoso technique. Even at its school premiere Cikker's Sonatina [2] – [4] was admired for its clear and emphatic themes, which subject folk sources to masterly thematic development in resourceful piano textures. There are sonatinas from younger and older Slovak composers, but this school opus of Cikker's sees the star at its zenith.

Cikker wrote his *Theme with Variations*, Op. 14, No. 1, in the summer of 1935, before entering Vítězslav Novák's master-classes in Prague. Variations were a favourite form of Cikker's; he enjoyed improvising variations at the piano and he thought of variation as central to the composer's technique. The freely expressive theme [19], located in the upper voice, resembles a folksong; but its untraditional harmonic style indicates the route which the development of the subsequent eleven variations will take. The individual variations [20] – [31] are character pieces which attempt to diverge as far as possible from the original form, so that it is not so much the bond with the theme that links them but rather the diversity of the variation technique, which is well served by the kaleidoscopic changes in the piano texture. The work was premiered by Marta Kusá-Krňanová in Bratislava in 1941.

Having completed his military service in 1937–39, Cikker finally settled in Bratislava, which for him was a new and unfamiliar city. In 1940 he composed two fantasias for piano (*Andante tranquillo* and *Lento lugubre*),