

MARCO
POLO

Julius
FUČÍK
(1872–1916)

Dances and Marches

Czech Chamber Philharmonic Orchestra Pardubice

Marek Štilec



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Julius Fučík (1872–1916)

Dances and Marches

Julius Fučík was born on 18 July 1872 in Prague. He started his musical career learning the violin and piano, but added the bassoon and timpani while studying at the Prague Conservatory, and in his final year studied composition under Antonín Dvořák.

In 1891 he joined the 49th Austro-Hungarian regiment as a military musician. The regiment was posted to Krems in Austria under the band leader and march composer Josef Franz Wagner. The band shuttled between Krems (a city upstream of Vienna on the Danube) and Kahlenberg (which overlooks Vienna), and it was in Vienna itself that he played under Karel (Karl) Komzák. Military life was hard, as can be inferred from his letters home, which always expressed a longing to return. He not only played the bassoon but soon learned the other band instruments, including the bass drum. But he also played in a symphony orchestra, which was commonplace, as it was formed from the players in military bands in order to play at public events. He had little opportunity to compose and initially wanted to compose so-called 'serious music'.

After a three-year engagement he returned to Prague and founded a wind trio in 1895, for which he started composing. He was offered the position of second bassoonist at the New German Theatre in Prague, but instead took up the position of first bassoonist in a large exhibition orchestra for the Ethnographic Exhibition in Prague, later joining the Croatian National Theatre orchestra in Zagreb, with whom he played in the new City Theatre. But after only six months he gladly left the theatre business and moved on to nearby Sisak, where he took up the position of city bandmaster and choir master. He also composed, soon earning the respect of its citizens.

In 1897 Fučík won the position of bandmaster of the 86th Infantry Regiment which was based in Sarajevo, and was where he composed for many musical events, both for symphony orchestra and military band. He wrote many marches, including his most famous, *Entry of the Gladiators* – soon to be heard in almost every circus worldwide. In 1900 the regiment was transferred to Budapest where he continued to compose, play, and conduct for ten years, and with plenty of other bands to play his music and his wide knowledge and experience he had every opportunity to build on his fame, and he was also close to his publishers in Budapest and Vienna. Many of his best-known works were composed during this period.

In 1909 the regiment was moved on to a small provincial town in Serbia, which he hated as it was such a backwater, but was nevertheless where he wrote some of his successful works such as the *Uncle Teddy* march and the *Baletky (Balletratten)* waltz.

In 1910 Fučík joined the 92nd infantry regiment based in Terezín (Theresienstadt), about 60 kilometres northwest of Prague, which had one of the top bands in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The band frequently toured, including in the all-important cities of Berlin and Prague, and Fučík attracted huge audiences. But his popularity was not appreciated by the resident bandmasters in Prague, and he was banned from playing in his favourite city from fear of competition.

After much intrigue and infighting, Fučík decided to leave military life to settle in Berlin in 1913 and formed his own orchestra, the Prager Tonkünstler-Orchester. He also started his own music publishing company, Tempo Verlag, based in Berlin, but only managed to publish one work, and, also being an artist, he designed the front cover. But this brief happy period was brought to a rapid end with the outbreak of the First World War, the disbandment of his orchestra, and finally his ill health, which finished off his career.

After Fučík's death in 1916 squabbling in the family resulted in the breakup of his music collection, making it impossible to reassemble, and much has been lost. The National Museum – Czech Museum of Music has done its best to collect what remains, and about half of the contents of this album emanate from handwritten scores acquired by the museum but never performed, as there were no printed parts published as far as is known. What makes this album so special is that it contains dance forms for which Fučík was little known. This recording therefore contains the first ever original orchestral performances in addition to seven pieces that have had to have performing sets created by a team of specialists who painstakingly prepared them from often poorly handwritten scores. But it is all genuine, original Fučík, and so puts this recording into a category of its own.

Below is a summary of what little is known about the compositions. This recording would not have been possible without a dedicated team who worked on assembling and restoring many of the scores from original material. The team was led by John Diamond, chairman of The Johann Strauss Society of Great Britain, and thanks must go to firstly to Darina Svobodová, librarian of the Czech Museum of Music who also has undertaken research into the origins of the music and the history of the composer. Thanks are also due to Pavel Burdych, director general of the Béla Kéler Society; Bohumír Hájek, chairman of the Josef Labitzky Society; Per Anders Wiklund of The Johann Strauss Society of Great Britain; and the album producer Jiří Štilec, and his son, Marek Štilec, the conductor of this album. Last but not least, thanks are extended to Thomas Jelinowicz of the Czech Strauss Society, who coordinated the project in the Czech Republic. This album is dedicated to his memory, following his untimely death just before this recording was made.

1 **Elbtalgruss, Marsch, Op. 246 ('Greetings to the Elbe Valley')** (1911–14)

A sketch of this exhilarating march was written in Theresienstadt in 1911. A full score for orchestra was printed in Berlin by August Cranz in 1914. The band version of this march has been recorded on a number of occasions.

2 **Lebensmärchen, Walzer, Op. 253 ('Fairy Tale')** (1912)

The score comes from Theresienstadt and was printed by C.M. Roehr in 1912. Only a handwritten score seems to have survived. With its grand opening and flowing melodies, the piece has been missing from performing repertoire until now, as it has been restored for this recording.

3 **Laban-Marsch, Op. 44** (1899) (original version)

A relatively early work written in Sarajevo in 1899. In 1910, the title was changed by the author to *Eiserne Brigade*. Later orchestral material was printed in 1934 by Edition Continental in Prague under yet another title – *Danubia, Op. 229*. A publishing contract for this printing exists from 1932. However, there remain major differences between this original composition with the much later and relatively well known posthumous *Danubia* march.

4 **In der Sternennacht, Walzer, Op. 242 ('Starry Night')** (1911)

In the same year as he wrote the *Elbtalgruss* march, Fučík produced this handwritten score in Theresienstadt. The title *In der Sternennacht* was originally used for another waltz, which was later published under the title *Poselství jara (Frühlingsbotschaft – 'Spring Message')*, which is not to be confused with the name of the waltz of the same name, also recorded on this album. Following a short introduction, the music opens up to a series of dreamy waltzes.

5 **Die Herzenskönigin, Mazur, Op. 70 ('Queen of Hearts')** (1899/1900)

The handwritten score was produced in Sarajevo in 1900, and a piano version under the French title *La Reine de coeur, Op. 143a* also appeared. This piece was the only mazurka written by Fučík that survives and was restored for this recording. It was played by the band of the 86th Infantry Regiment under the direction of Fučík around 1910 (according to programme notes).

6 **Frühlingsbotschaft, Walzer, Op. 114 ('Spring Message')** (c. 1900, pub. 1928)

The score originates from around 1900, originally under the title *Wie einst im Mai* ('As Once in May'), and renamed *Aus der Rosenzeit* ('When the Roses Blossom'). The piano edition dates from 1910. The orchestral parts were printed in Leipzig by Bosworth, 1928, under the title *Frühlingsbotschaft*. No orchestral recording has been made, until now, and it is one of Fučík's most characteristic waltzes.

7 Furchtlos und treu, Marsch, Op. 240 ('Fearless and Faithful') (1910)

The sketch of this march appeared in Szabadka in 1910 and was printed by Josef Blaha in Vienna in the same year. It was played by the band of the 92nd Infantry Regiment under the direction of Julius Fučík around 1910. Only arrangements for band have been recorded.

8 Karnevalskönig, Walzer, Op. 244 ('Carnival King') (1911)

The surviving handwritten score come from Theresienstadt, from 1911. It was played by the band of the 92nd Infantry Regiment under the direction of Julius Fučík in 1912, as annotated. It was restored for this recording. With a substantial regal introduction, the unfamiliar waltzes follow in typical Fučík style.

9 Im süßen Traum, Polka française, Op. 31 ('Sweet Dreams') (1899)

This lively *polka française* has been restored for this album from a handwritten score written in Sarajevo in 1899. It demonstrates that Fučík was quite at home with this dance form, and contains an unusually large number of attractive melodies.

10 Unvergeßliche Stunden, Valse lente, Op. 212 ('Unforgettable Hours') (1907)

The score appeared in 1907 and a piano vocal version (alto plus piano) including text was published in German by Karl Alois, also in 1907. The parts were published by Bosworth & Co., Leipzig in 1908. It was played by the band of the 92nd Infantry Regiment under the direction of Julius Fučík in 1911 according to an annotation. It has been played but never recorded. It is one of those waltzes that once heard is never forgotten, as is suggested in the title.

**11 Auf der Lagune, Venetianisches Ständchen, Op. 221 ('On the Lagoon, Venetian Serenade') (1908)
(version for flugelhorn and orchestra)**

The score emanates from Budapest in 1908. One of the sketches was marked as *Op. 173*. The parts were printed in Budapest by Klökner Ede in 1909. A cover design for this piece survives and it was written for solo flugelhorn, here performed by the Prague Philharmonic Orchestra's soloist Walter Hofbauer.

12 Terpsichore, Polka française, Op. 37 (1898)

This is the second *polka française* on this recording. The handwritten score was written in Sarajevo in 1898. It was never published so had to be been restored. Surprisingly, Fučík only wrote a few polkas, and the jolly tone of this piece is to be appreciated even more as its in his hand, reflecting his unique style of composition.

13 Traumland, Walzer, Op. 270 ('Dreamland') (1914)

The score was produced in Berlin in 1914 and parts printed by August Cranz in the same year. It has been played in the past, but never recorded in orchestral form. The opening certainly reminds one of awakening from a peaceful slumber, developing into a full-blown waltz with some very lively themes emerging.

14 Aus der Liederstadt, Marsch, Op. 126 ('From the City of Songs') (1903)

The score was written in Budapest in 1903 and printed by Josef Blaha, probably in 1905. This spirited march progresses relentlessly with a generous series of rousing melodies.

15 Im Adlerfluge, Galopp (Polka schnell), Op. 237 ('Eagle's Flight') (1909)

The score and sketch emanate from Szabadka in 1909. It was printed in Prague by Johann Hoffmann's widow in 1919 under the title *Im Falkenfluge*, and a Czech version was also published under the title *Vzletem sokola* ('Falcon's Flight'). It is the only galop known to survive in Fučík's hand, and has been restored for this recording. It stands up well among the best of the well-known fast polkas written by other composers, with some catchy moments.

John Diamond, Darina Svobodová

Czech Chamber Philharmonic Orchestra Pardubice



The Czech Chamber Philharmonic Orchestra Pardubice is valued for its stylistic interpretations and the extraordinary quality of its orchestral sound, and it is rightly ranked amongst the world's leading representatives of Czech musical culture. It often performs at the most prestigious festivals in the Czech Republic and venues throughout Europe such as the Concertgebouw, Amsterdam, the Grosses Festspielhaus, Salzburg, the Herkulesaal and the Gasteig, Munich, the Musikverein, Vienna, the Brucknerhaus, Linz, and the Meistersingerhalle, Nuremberg among many others. Outside Europe the orchestra has performed in Japan and toured extensively around America. The first principal conductor, Libor Pešek, quickly raised the orchestra to a high standard, and subsequent principal conductors have included Marco Armiliato and Mariss Jansons. The orchestra has also welcomed

numerous world-renowned soloists such as Isabelle van Keulen, Vladimir Spivakov, Ludwig Güttler, Radek Baborák, Gábor Boldoczki and Sergei Nakariakov. Aside from concerts, the orchestra regularly engages in operatic and theatre projects and has recorded dozens of successful albums on record labels including Naxos, ArcoDiva, Supraphon, Classico, Monitor-EMI and Amabile.

www.kfpar.cz

Marek Štilec



Photo: Antonín Bína

Czech conductor Marek Štilec is known as an interpreter of Classical orchestral repertoire and is a specialist in Czech Romantic and contemporary music. He has collaborated with orchestras the world over, including the New World Symphony, Ulster Orchestra, London Classical Soloists, Orchestra of the Swan, Berlin Camerata, Kammerphilharmonie Graz and Sinfonietta Bratislava. A prolific recording artist, he has made over 30 albums for labels including Naxos, ArcoDiva, cpo and Supraphon. In the field of historically informed performance Štilec has collaborated with ensembles including Czech Ensemble Baroque and Ensemble 18+. He is also the founder of the Wranitzky Kapelle and artistic director of Academy Prague Mannheim with Das Kurpfälzische Kammerorchester Mannheim. He attended the masterclasses of conductor Leonid Grin at the International Järvi Academy for Conducting, and has also taken masterclasses with Michael Tilson Thomas, Jorma Panula and Gerd Albrecht. Since 2020 he has been the permanent principal choirmaster of the Czech Boys' Choir, Boni Pueri.

www.arcodiva.cz/en/agency/instrumental-soloists/marek-stilec

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Julius Fučík studied composition under Dvořák at the Prague Conservatory but was soon to emerge as one of the great ‘march kings’ of his time. He gained worldwide fame for his immortal *Entry of the Gladiators*, but after the composer’s death in 1916 his music collection was acrimoniously broken up by his family, with many scores subsequently lost. Half the contents of this album come from handwritten manuscripts preserved in Prague that have no known printed parts. Painstaking editorial work has been carried out allowing us to hear the full range of Fučík’s works in these premiere recordings.

JULIUS FUČÍK

(1872–1916)

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*WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING

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Walter Hofbauer, Flugelhorn 11

Czech Chamber Philharmonic Orchestra Pardubice

Marek Štílec



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