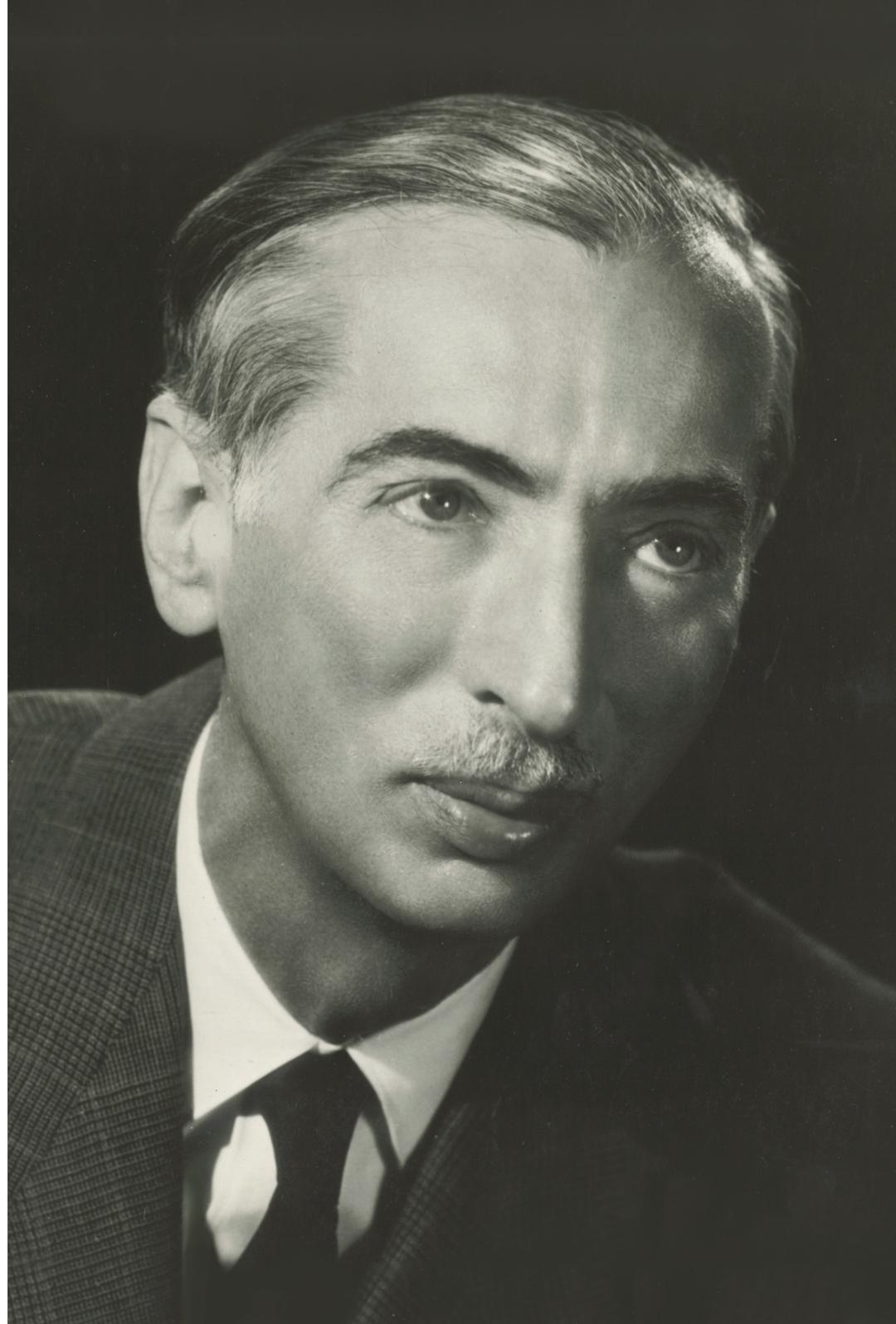


**Eugene  
ZÁDOR**

**The Plains of  
Hungary  
Fantasia Hungarica  
Variations on a  
Merry Theme  
Rhapsodies**

**Budapest Symphony  
Orchestra MÁV  
Mariusz Smolij**



## Eugene Zádor (1894–1977)

### Tarantella – Scherzo • Music for Clarinet and Strings • Trombone Concerto In Memoriam • Sinfonia Technica

In the first supplement to his classic reference book, *Composers Since 1900*, David Ewan wrote,

‘What most impressed me about Eugene Zádor whenever I spent an evening with him was his integration as a human being, his healthy sense of values, his capacity always “to see things steadily and see them whole.” ... When he was getting performed, he was quietly grateful, and when works lay silent on his shelf for years there were no audible complaints. He just kept on with his business of writing music the best and most honest way he could. ... As a composer, too, he was thoroughly integrated – all of one piece. He never tried to sail with the wind. ... From his beginnings, and up to the end, he adhered to his own artistic credo of writing only that music that moved him personally, using only those techniques he had faith in and which he had mastered and which could best serve his message, trying only to speak from the heart and reach the heart.’

This sixth volume in the ongoing series of Naxos recordings dedicated to Zádor’s music gives us further opportunities to explore this heartfelt musical legacy.

Zádor finalised the score of *Tarantella – Scherzo* not long after he had settled in Los Angeles – the manuscript is dated 11 July 1942. But a work of the same name had been performed at Chicago’s Grant Park in August 1941, and in a list of performances compiled in the composer’s own hand he cites a performance of *Pastorale and Tarantella* by the Chicago Symphony under Frederick Stock on 5 February 1942, and of the *Tarantella* by George Szell and the Los Angeles Philharmonic on 12 March 1942. The *Pastorale* portion of the work no longer exists and may, indeed, have been destroyed by the composer.

*Tarantella – Scherzo* is scored for large orchestra: woodwinds in pairs (plus piccolo), four horns, three each of trumpets and trombones, tuba, percussion, timpani, harp, piano and strings. The sonority is rich and full throughout, as is the rhythmic energy that propels everything forward – in that sense, it reflects well the notion that the dance may have

originated in people’s reactions to tarantula bites. The principal melody – a carefree tune in D major – does not appear initially: it is only hinted at until violins take it up at measure 29. There is a slight respite midway through the progress of the dance, where the metre changes from 12/8 to 6/8 and the orchestration thins out somewhat; prominent lines are initially given to solo woodwinds and horn. When Zádor returns to his main tune, he subjects it to further variation (note the horns trying to convert it to the minor mode) and drives the work to its frenzied conclusion – surprisingly in D minor.

*Music for Clarinet and Strings* was commissioned by the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra and premiered by The Little Symphony (the orchestra’s summertime moniker) at the end of its 1970 season. Zádor composed it in token of his friendship with conductor Amerigo Marino, a former violinist in the Los Angeles Philharmonic who went on to conduct the Alabama Symphony Orchestra from 1964 to 1984. Melvin Warner, associate principal clarinetist of the St. Louis Symphony and principal clarinetist for the Chicago Sinfonietta, was the soloist. The *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* remarked that ‘Zádor’s musical idiom resembles that of Bartók or Kodály, and this offering ... proved to be an enjoyable, not overly serious piece, rhapsodic in character, which relied heavily on Hungarian rhythms and gypsy-like melodic formulae.’ After a performance in the Los Angeles area 18 months later, notable music critic Martin Bernheimer described the piece as ‘an elegantly crafted little quasi-concerto’.

After a brief, cadenza-like passage from the soloist, Zádor introduces the principal melody of the first movement – a mournful idea that dominates most of the developing material apart from a perky, *scherzando* interlude. A more playful idea permeates the middle movement, where Zádor’s genius at balancing the roles of soloist and ‘accompaniment’ is on full display – motivic interplay engages the attentive ear throughout. The final movement, its obvious gypsy inspiration proclaimed in its title, *Alla zingaresca*, features a jolly march theme with contrasting episodes. Again, the easy-going interchange of melodic ideas between clarinet

and strings provides momentum and interest from beginning to end.

Eugene Zádor took special pleasure in writing concertos for ‘overlooked’ instruments, including the accordion and cimbalom. Although the trombone is not exactly ‘overlooked’, trombone concertos are few and far between. Zádor composed his in 1966 at the suggestion of his publisher, Arthur Cohn of MCA Music, who sought to fill a need at universities and conservatories where trombone is taught for a new and ‘not too difficult’ concerto. Sixten Ehrling (who once described Zádor as ‘one of the most gentle, warmhearted and understanding human beings I have known’) conducted the Detroit Symphony Orchestra in the first performance on 20 July 1967. The composer and his daughter were in attendance.

Zádor, who studied trombone in his youth, left his own, detailed description of the work: ‘Flavoured by Hungarian folklore, the piece conveys a variety of moods in each movement. The first starts with the trombone solo in moderate tempo. This is followed by a faster middle theme, and, after repetition of the opening bars, another theme appears which brings the piece to a climax. A few slow bars of the middle section close the first movement.’ The composer described the harmonic vocabulary of this movement as ‘somewhat atonal’, although he felt that ‘the distinct profiles of the melodies make the progress of the movement perfectly clear’.

‘The second movement,’ he continues, ‘is a slow march in canon form. It sounds almost like a funeral march, with a chromatic middle part and a slow ending. The third movement is a dance; perhaps the first piece written in dance rhythm contrasting the solemn sound of a trombone. I always tried to retain the balance between the fast-moving strings, woodwinds, and the trombone. It has a slower middle part too, of course, after which the first *allegro* theme reappears and brings the piece to a strongly stated ending.’

There is no known record of when and for whom *In Memoriam* was written. The composer’s daughter, Peggy, says it could have been composed for ‘the many members of my dad’s family who died in the war’, but she thinks it more likely ‘that it was written for my mom’s father, who died in January 1962. He lived with us from the time he came to the US in the late 1940s. He was the family driver and a skilled handyman around the house. He loved living here and was

grateful to my dad for giving him a place in our home.’

Whoever inspired it, the tribute is impassioned and heartfelt. It begins with a sombre B flat minor chord, followed by a mournful melody that rises and falls in a manner not dissimilar to the music Miklós Rózsa had recently written for the *via crucis* scenes in *Ben-Hur* (1959) and *King of Kings* (1961) (both scores orchestrated by Zádor). It builds to a shimmering B flat major cadence that is followed by a contrasting, but equally sombre, melodic idea characterised by a dotted rhythmic figure and introduced on French horn. The opening motif returns and rises to an intensely powerful, searing climax in upper strings before subsiding and concluding on a dark E flat minor chord.

Zádor’s *Sinfonia Technica* was something of a one-off for the composer. 37 years old and based in Vienna, he decided to try his hand at ‘industrial music’, a genre previously represented by such works as Prokofiev’s *Le Pas d’acier* and Mosolov’s *Iron Foundry*. In Zádor’s case, however, the genre’s hard-edged angularity is softened by a bit of Respighian Impressionism. After the work’s premiere in Paris on 26 May 1932 (performed by the Orchestre Lamoureux under Ivan Boutnikoff), it was acclaimed in the world’s press. *Le Journal des débats* declared it ‘an enchanting work’; the *Neues Wiener Tagblatt* proclaimed it ‘a magnificent novelty’, ‘a great success’ and ‘a most ingenious work’. Even the Parisian correspondent for the *Chicago Tribune* reported that ‘the whole has a monumental feature testifying talent, invention and technique’.

The first movement, *The Bridge*, builds on an expansive theme constructed in fourths and fifths that recurs, rondo-like, between several episodes that also rely heavily on quartal harmony and reach a level of dissonance rare in Zádor’s work. The orchestra is huge: three flutes, two oboes, English horn, two clarinets, two bassoons and contrabassoon, four each of horns, trumpets and trombones (one doubling tuba), percussion, harp and strings. The latter are often divided into as many as eight parts, making a very rich sonority that gives the movement a thick, Romantic-era sheen.

At the beginning of the second movement, *The Telegraph Pole*, one can sense an electric current suffusing the ethereal, muted first violins (divided into six parts). Soon, woodwind figures begin to dominate, as though birds are sitting on the buzzing wires. Piano enters and plays against string glissandos – a striking anticipation of the exotic sound

world of Olivier Messiaen. In the symphony's *scherzo*, *Water Works*, melodic ideas are virtually abandoned in favour of motoric rhythms reflecting the creation of hydraulic power. Violins attempt to generate a longer line about midway through the movement, but never quite succeed in taking the focus away from the propulsive rhythmic force.

The concluding *Factory* movement opens, like many symphonic finales, with an *Andante* section – in this instance led by French horns. But the succeeding *Allegro* quickly establishes that Zádor's factory is a very busy place. Gears constantly grind against one another, with woodwinds and brass seemingly always in opposition. Strings again attempt to oil the proceedings with a smooth melodic line – in C major, no less – that sounds much more like the congenial

Zádor we know, and this time they are more successful. But the abrupt ending in a sonorous A minor leaves one wondering ...

David Ewan's tribute to Zádor, quoted above, concludes: 'It probably never occurred to him that he was old fashioned or behind the times; and if it ever did occur to him, I am sure it did not bother him overly. He pursued his artistic career with dignity and the highest integrity. Because, in the last analysis, this was the kind of man he was, and with him artist and man were one.' Those of us who never knew Eugene Zádor personally can now better appreciate his warm humanity by being able to hear more of his music than ever before.

**Frank K. DeWald**

### **Pál Sólyomi**

Pál Sólyomi was born in 1971 in Budapest. He started playing the clarinet at the age of ten, and studied at the Bartók Béla Secondary School of Music with László Horváth and the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music with Béla Kovács. In 1988 he was the youngest in his field to qualify for the final of the Hungarian Radio Woodwind Competition, and in 1989 he was the First Prize winner of the János Richter Woodwind Competition. He has served as a member of the Kovács Clarinet Quintet, which was founded in 1993, and played in many concerts and on numerous recordings released on Naxos. Since 1994 he has been the solo clarinetist of the Budapest Symphony Orchestra MÁV. He has appeared several times with the orchestra as soloist in concerts and has regularly appeared in solo and chamber concerts, including on Hungarian Radio.

### **András Fejér**

Born in Budapest in 1967, András Fejér studied with István Farka at the Béla Bartók School of Music and Ferenc Steiner at the Ferenc Liszt Academy of Music, where he also taught from 2001 to 2006. He served as principal trombonist of the Hungarian National Philharmonic from 1987 to 1997 and subsequently the Berliner Symphoniker. András Fejér has a busy career as a chamber musician, joining with others in 1983 for the foundation of the Budapest Academia Wind Quintet, the recipient of various international prizes, and since 1998 he has collaborated with Joachim Pliquet and Arvid Gast to present chamber concerts. His discography includes his award-winning debut recording *Name Game* (2000) and *C'est la Vie* (2011), both released on Hungaroton Classics. A number of Hungarian composers have dedicated concertos and works to him. In 2007 he was a member of the jury for the ARD International Music Competition in Munich and in 2010 at the Instrumental Competition Markneukirchen. He has won numerous international competitions as a soloist and with the Academia Wind Quintet, and in 2012 he was awarded the Franz Liszt Prize.



Photo: Máté Streier



Photo: Péter Adamik



Photo: Evin Thayer

### **Mariusz Smolij**

Polish conductor Mariusz Smolij has garnered much critical acclaim from the international press, and has led over 130 orchestras in 28 countries. In North America he has collaborated with the Houston Symphony (resident conductor, 2000–03), New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, Chicago Lyric Opera Orchestra, Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, Symphony Nova Scotia and Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra, among many others. He also enjoys a notable reputation performing with important orchestras in Europe, South Africa and China. He is the founding member of the Penderecki String Quartet and former artistic director of the Lutoslawski Philharmonic Orchestra, Wrocław, and the International Festival Wratislavia Cantans, Poland. He currently serves as music director of the Acadiana Symphony Orchestra in Louisiana, the Riverside Symphonia in New Jersey and the International Karol Lipiński Violin Festival and Competition in Toruń, Poland. His recordings for Naxos include releases of works by Andrzej Panufnik [8.570032], Tadeusz Szelligowski [8.570371], Eugene Zádor [8.572548, 8.573529, 8.573274, 8.572549, 8.573800] and Ernst Bloch [8.570829]. In 2015, his recording of music by female Polish composer Grażyna Bacewicz [8.573229] won the prestigious Fryderyk Award. [www.mariuszsmolij.com](http://www.mariuszsmolij.com)

### **Budapest Symphony Orchestra MÁV**

The Budapest Symphony Orchestra MÁV (MÁV Szimfonikus Zenekar) was founded in 1945 by the Hungarian State Railways. Since then, it has developed a wide-ranging repertoire from the music of the Baroque era to works by contemporary composers, and is currently ranked among the best professional ensembles in Hungary. The orchestra has performed worldwide, appearing at prestigious venues such as the Musikvereinssaal in Vienna, the Concertgebouw, Amsterdam, the Berlin Philharmonie, Suntory Hall in Tokyo, and the Shanghai Oriental Art Centre. The ensemble was the only Hungarian orchestra to participate in Tokyo's legendary Three Tenors Production in 1999. Throughout its history, the orchestra has established close connections with eminent artists such as János Ferencsik, Kurt Masur, Herbert Blomstedt and Yuri Simonov among many others. Renowned soloists such as Luciano Pavarotti, Plácido Domingo, José Carreras, Kiri Te Kanawa, Jenő Jandó and Kristóf Baráti have performed with the orchestra. The Orchestra's discography has been released on various labels. Since 2019, Daniel Boico has been the Orchestra's artistic director and chief conductor, and since 2014, Kobayashi Ken-Ichiro has been their honorary guest conductor. [www.mavzenekar.hu](http://www.mavzenekar.hu)



Photo © Gergő Kelemen

The music of Eugene Zádor is both warmly expressive and colourful. The composer took great delight in writing for overlooked solo instruments, as his *Trombone Concerto*, garnished with elements of Hungarian folklore, clearly shows. The easy-going, gypsy-influenced *Music for Clarinet and Strings* is a beautifully proportioned quasi-concerto. The *Sinfonia Technica*, composed much earlier when he was living in Vienna, and something of a one-off, is an enchanting and exuberantly orchestrated example of ‘industrial music’.

**Eugene  
ZÁDOR**  
(1894–1977)

<b>1</b> Tarantella – Scherzo (1942) 8:34	<b>8</b> In Memoriam (1962) 5:47	
<b>Music for Clarinet and Strings (1970) 13:47</b>	<b>Sinfonia Technica (1931) 27:42</b>	
<b>2</b> I. Andantino – Allegro 4:50	<b>9</b> I. The Bridge (Allegro moderato) 8:04	
<b>3</b> II. Molto moderato – Allegretto scherzando 3:40	<b>10</b> II. The Telegraph Pole (Andante) 6:00	
<b>4</b> III. Alla zingaresca 5:16	<b>11</b> III. Water Works: Scherzo (Allegro) 5:30	
<b>Trombone Concerto (1966) 14:12</b>	<b>12</b> IV. Factory (Andante – Allegro) 7:53	
<b>5</b> I. Moderato 4:06		
<b>6</b> II. Allegretto 5:12		
<b>7</b> III. Dance 4:48		

**WORLD PREMIERE RECORDINGS**

**Pál Sólyomi, Clarinet 2–4 • András Fejér, Trombone 5–7**  
**Budapest Symphony Orchestra MÁV**  
**Mariusz Smolij**

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