TOCCATA CLASSICS

Fridrich BRUK

ORCHESTRAL MUSIC, VOLUME TWO

SYMPHONY NO. 19, TUNES FROM GHETTOES
SYMPHONY NO. 20
SYMPHONY NO. 21, PRESENTIMENT: IN MEMORY OF ANNE FRANK

Liepāja Symphony Orchestra
Lithuanian State Symphony Orchestra
Māris Kupčs

FIRST RECORDINGS

PREFACE: WHY MY SYMPHONIES HAVE JEWISH THEMES

by Fridrich Bruk

In the first decades of the twentieth century there were many outstanding scientists and artists on the European continent who lived in various countries but shared a Jewish background. Sometimes these famous and very different individuals did not know or did not observe the traditions of their people, sometimes they did not even remain mindful of their origins, and yet they were Jews by blood. But then the year 1933 came, with a terrible impact on the fates of these people. It became clear that no matter what they believed in, what their merits were or what honorary titles they held, they were all destined to meet the same fate as my old illiterate great-grandmother Sura-Feige from the small Ukrainian town of Kobelyaki: total and merciless extermination. Of course, there was the USA, a great country that saved many of them, including Albert Einstein, Arnold Schoenberg, Imre Kálmán, Lion Feuchtwanger, Marc Chagall, Gustav Mahler's family, etc…. But the USA was not a Jewish state, and the state of Israel didn't yet exist.

Tens of millions of people perished in the chaos and terror of the most brutal war in the history of mankind. Among them were six million European Jews. Obviously, such a terrible blow to the existence of a single people with its vibrant Yiddish culture turned out to be fatal, and now it's only the new culture of the state of Israel that has a real future. The main difference lies in its language: this is a Hebrew culture based on a language revived for a modern life and it is experiencing a natural development under different circumstances.

Unfortunately, over time it became clear that in Europe a huge and extremely dangerous vacuum emerged, now actively populated by representatives of extreme nationalist trends, militant atheists, preachers of drug addiction and terrorism. This is why I regularly turn to Jewish themes in my symphonies, to the best of my abilities, in order to recall the existence of a people within European culture

who spoke Yiddish and lived in many European countries not so long ago, because the extermination of this or any other culture of whatever ethnic group, big or small, is a tragedy for all mankind.

A META-SYMPHONIC DISCOURSE ON THE HOLOCAUST

by Tish Kennedy Davenport

Fridrich Bruk was born on 18 September 1937 in Kharkov, Ukraine. His father, Michael Bruk (21 February 1913–14 July 2013), studied with the influential Soviet economist Evsei Grigorievich Liberman at the Kharkov Institute of Economics and Engineering and had a successful career as an engineer in the Soviet Union; he relocated to Israel in 1989, where he lived until his death at the age of 100. His mother, Ada Bragilevsky-Bruk (30 June 1916–21 September 1943), a well-known concert pianist in Ukraine, was not so long-lived: she died during World War II from what seems to have been malaria. Bruk explains the circumstances as an unusual form of biological warfare. While fleeing the Nazis in June–July 1942, he and his mother were exposed to tropical mosquitos believed to have been released by the Germans. To the best of the composer's recollection, this operation affected many evacuee children seeking food at a camp located outside Ufa, the city on the opposite bank of the River Belaya. With the lack of available medication in the Soviet Union at that time, many who were infected ultimately perished – including Ada, who died about one year later. Bruk himself fought the illness for five years before he recovered.

Raised by his grandparents after his mother's death, Bruk attended the Kharkov Special Music School for Gifted Children, where he began playing the piano at age eight. In 1956 he graduated with a silver medal and went on to study at the Leningrad Rimsky-Korsakov State Conservatoire, where over the next five years he studied composition with Viktor Voloshinov and Boris Arapov and continued to hone his piano skills.

On 10 September 1959, Bruk married Nadezhda Mislavsky (b. 15 August 1940), a music teacher and choral conductor. For several years they lived and worked in Karelia,[1] where the folk-culture created interests and inspirations that would later blossom in Bruk's music.[2] These inspirations can be heard in compositions such as *Variations on the Karelian Folksong Strawberry* for piano[3] and Symphony No. 7, *Kalevala by Artist Axel Gallen-Kallela* (2006).[4] In 1964 the Bruks returned to Leningrad, where Fridrich became head of the music department at the Lennauchfilm studio. Ten years later, the Bruks moved to Finland, working together at the Conservatoire of Tampere for several years (1974–78), before Fridrich moved on to become a lecturer of piano and music theory at the Music Institute of Riihimäki (1980–86), and Nadezhda became a substitute teacher for choral conducting and for vocal and piano lessons. The Bruks established their own music college in Tampere in 1987, the Piano-Opisto Bruk, which they maintained until 1998, when Nadezhda fell seriously ill; fortunately, her health eventually stabilised. Their son, Alexander, is also musically gifted; he is an accomplished concert pianist who has recorded several of his father's compositions and is currently headmaster of the Institute of Community Education in Pori, on the Finnish west coast.[5]

Bruk has composed music for fifteen films and 30 theatrical performances, and is widely known for his popular songs, including the sultry tango *Soi maininki hiljainen* ('Waves played quietly'; 1984), first recorded in 1987 by the famous Finnish popular

[1] Most of the erstwhile Finnish province of Karelia, a large area straddling the current Finnish-Russian border, was ceded to the Soviet Union in 1940, after the Winter War between the two countries (1939–40). Finland thereby lost its second-largest city, Viipuri (Vyborg), and its industrial heartland, and 400,000 Finns became refugees.

[2] In his booklet notes for the album *In the Finnish Mode* (F&NB CD-12, 2009), Bruk writes that 'in general my interest in Karelian folk-art, traditions and life arose in 1961 when I started my composer's career in Karelia. Ever since then, I have frequently used Karelian songs in my works'.

[3] Edition Hellas, Helsinki, 1985.

[4] The Finnish painter Axel Gallén-Kallela (1865–1931) is famous for his illustrations of the Finnish national epic, the Kalevala. Bruk's Symphony No. 7 was inspired by three particular paintings: the first movement by *Aino Myth* (1891), the second by *Kullervo Cursing* (1899) and the third by *Theft of the Sampo* (1905). It was released on a double album, *Nordic Legends: Symphonies* (including Symphonies Nos. 1, 6 and 7), from Estonian Record Productions (ERP 1307) in 2008, in a performance by the Liepāja Symphony Orchestra conducted by Andres Mustonen.

[5] For instance, Alexander is the pianist on several tracks of the CD *Compositions by Fridrich Bruk: From Kalevala*, published in Tampere by Fridrich Bruk himself (FBCD-199411, 1994).

singer Eino Grön (known as 'the Tango King').[6] This immensely popular song has been recorded countless times by various other artists, including Saija Varjus ('the Tango Queen') and another award-winning singer, Kaija Lustila.

Bruk has also written a number of instrumental sonatas, including a *Sonata for Kantele* – the first sonata written for this folk instrument in Finnish music history (1986).[7] In other musical domains there are choral compositions and works for children, among them *The Hand of God* (2001–2), a Christmas oratorio with a libretto by Pertti Luumi.[8] Bruk has also created two operas for children, *Shining Booksign* (1984–85) and *Cat's House* (2004–5). *Shining Booksign* was premiered at the Municipal Theatre in Riihimäki (1986–87), with Sointu Angervo as both librettist and producer; and *Cat's House* is a Jewish opera with a libretto written around 1927–28, as far as Bruk can recall, by the esteemed Russian Jewish poet and children's author, Samuil Marshak (1887–1964).[9]

In his piano collections, Bruk shines as a master melodist. In *Winter: Suite for Young Pianists*,[10] poignant melodies in movements such as the opening 'Chorale' and the title piece 'Winter' contrast with other delightful and upbeat movements, as in the 'Dance of the Snowflakes' and 'Santa Claus'. *Sunflecks*: *Suite for Young Pianists*[11] is another charming set of picturesque movements, and a similar collection for more advanced students is entitled *Lyrical Images*.[12]

The heart of Bruk's music, however, lies in a series of (to date) 21 symphonies which are mostly programmatic. His narratives include the loosely autobiographical (such as Symphony No. 2), are inspired by major artists, musicians or scholars (Symphonies Nos. 3–15) and often protest what Bruk refers to as 'antihumanity in

[6] Recorded on the LP *Bandeon*, released by Fazer Finnlevy in 1987.

[7] The *Sonata for Kantele* is based completely on Karelian folksongs: I 'Etelästä tuulee' ('Wind has Come from South'); II 'Kehtolaulu' ('Lullaby Song'); III Variations on the Karelian Theme Veli-murhaaja ('Brother-killer').

[8] *The Hand of God* was commissioned by the Nokia Lutheran Church in honour of the twentieth anniversary of the Nokia Childrens' School Choir and was recorded in 2008 through ERP (Estonian Record Productions).

[9] *Cat's House* was composed in 2004–5 for YLE (Finnish Radio) but has yet to be performed, despite the two stipends Bruk received for its creation. The given date of the libretto is based upon the best recollection of the composer.

[10] *Talvi: Sarja nuorille pianisteille*, Fazer, Helsinki, 1988.

[11] *Auringonläikkiä: Sarja nuorille pianisteille*, Fridrich and Nadezhda Bruk, Tampere, 1990.

[12] *Lyyrisiä Kuvi*, Fazer, Helsinki, 1985.

our world'.[13] For instance, the narrative programme of Symphony No. 18, *Daugavpils*, is based upon a violent stripping-away of home and homeland, as in 1915 the entire Bruk family (Leiba and Genja Bruk – the composer's grandparents, with their son Michael and his seven siblings) were exiled and forcibly relocated from their home in Daugavpils (formerly Dvinsk) to Kharkov in Ukraine. The Bruk family was among the many civilian Jews who were forced from their homes by the Russian army during the years 1914–17.

In general, intonations and variations of folk melodies feature prominently in Bruk's symphonies, many of which are either Jewish-themed (Symphonies Nos. 3, 5, 10, 11, 18, 19 and 21) or Finnish-themed (Symphonies Nos. 1, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12 and 15). Other 'world themes' are found in Symphonies Nos. 2, 13, 14, 16, 17 and 20.[14] This album presents a recording of Bruk's three most recent: Symphony No. 19, *Tunes from Ghettoes*; Symphony No. 20, for clarinet (in B), two trumpets (in B), marimba, drums and string orchestra; and Symphony No. 21, *Presentiment: In memory of Anne Frank (1929–1945)*. Although listed as three different symphonic works, the composer sees them as a sort of tripartite meta-symphony, with Symphony No. 19 and Symphony No. 21 sharing a programmatic connection to the Holocaust: No. 19 depicts the earlier years of the Holocaust during which, in autumn 1941, Mordechai Gebirtig's family and tens of thousands of Jewish families were killed; and No. 21 is in memory of Anne Frank and other members of her family, who perished in a concentration camp near the end of the Holocaust (February 1945). Both Gebirtig, a Yiddish poet, and Anne Frank, a young Jewish girl who aspired to be a journalist, are important representations of the culture that was lost when the European Jewish community was eradicated. Symphony No. 20

[13] In an e-mail dated 5 January 2015 to Dr Timothy Jackson (the dedicatee of Symphony No. 11 and professor of theory at the University of North Texas), Bruk wrote: 'At the present time, I am composing my new Symphony N. 14: "The Scream" based on a painting (1893) by Norwegian artist Edvard Munch (1863–1944). This symphony is my composer's way of protesting antihumanity in our world'.

[14] As categorised by the composer in an e-mail dated 17 May 2019. For an overview of Bruk's earlier symphonic output and a closer look at several of his Jewish-themed symphonies, *cf.* my article 'Fridrich Bruk at 80: programmatic narratives and Jewish folk influences in Symphonies 3, 10 and 11', *The Musical Times*, Autumn 2017, pp. 19–36. The booklet text for Symphony No. 17 and Symphony No. 18, recorded on *Fridrich Bruk: Orchestral Music, Volume One* (Toccata Classics TOCC 0455), is a further source of information.

functions, on this larger scale, as a contrasting symphonic central panel – offering a brief respite from the darkness of the Holocaust theme.

Symphony No. 19, *Tunes from Ghettoes*

Symphony No. 19, *Tunes from Ghettoes* (2018), is dedicated to Ilkka Kuusisto, a Finnish composer and friend of the Bruk family. During his tenure as artistic director at Fazer Music (1981–84), it was Kuusisto who first opened the door to publication for Bruk's compositions for young musicians. In 1990 he also presented Nadezhda Bruk with an important award on behalf of the President of Finland, Mauno Koivisto.

Written for orchestra and a solo baritone saxophone, Symphony No. 19 is a stirring tribute to the European Yiddish-speaking culture which was eradicated in the Holocaust. Escorting the listener through this historical soundscape is the solo baritone saxophone, which represents the voice of a surviving witness. Each movement was inspired by a particular Jewish folk-melody: movement I – 'Es Brent'; movement II – 'Ele-bele' and movement III – 'O, Hemerl, Hemerl, Klap!'. Motivic ideas drawn from each folksong, along with familiar Jewish intonations, are featured prominently in the baritone saxophone solo, although found in other orchestral parts as well.[15]

The first movement in Symphony No. 19, 'Our Little Town [*Štettl*] is Burning' 1, captures the spirit of Mordechai Gebirtig's best-known song, 'Es Brent' (also known as 'S'brent, Dos Shtetl Brent' or 'Undzer Stetl Brent'). Often referred to as the 'troubadour of the Jewish people', Gebirtig was born into a poor family in Kraków, western Galicia, in 1877.[16] He earned his living as a carpenter but became known throughout the Yiddish-speaking world as a folk-poet and songwriter. His songs were extremely popular between the two World Wars and from the outset of the German occupation Gebirtig's songs were often sung in the ghettos.[17] 'Es Brent' was no exception: this song became 'one of the most popular songs in the ghettos and concentration camps and was subsequently

[15] In an e-mail dated 24 February 2018, Bruk explains that 'from the Jewish songs I use only some turns, some intonations, but not the Jewish songs directly'.

[16] https://www.ushmm.org/exhibition/music/detail.php?content=burning, accessed 31 August 2019 from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum website.

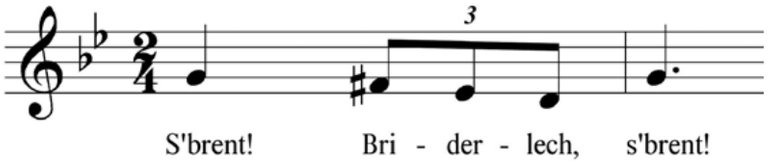
[17] Ruth Rubin, *Voices of a People: The Story of Yiddish Folksong*, Jewish Publication Society of America, Philadelphia, 1979, p. 429.

known to Yiddish-speaking Jews everywhere'.[18] Although accounts vary regarding the genesis of 'Es Brent', reliable witnesses report that it was written in response to the 1936 pogrom in the Polish town of Przytyk and those pogroms which followed (such as those in Pshitik and Minsk-Mazovetsk).[19] The lyrics of the song urge the Jewish people to take action; as the fourth verse begins:

S'brent! Briderlech, s'brent!	*It burns! Brothers, it burns!*
Di hilf is nor in aych aleyn gevendt.	*Help is contained only in yourselves.*
Oyb dos shtetl is aych tayer,	*If the village is dear to you,*
Nemt di keylim, lesht dos fayer...	*Take up arms, quench the fire…*[20]

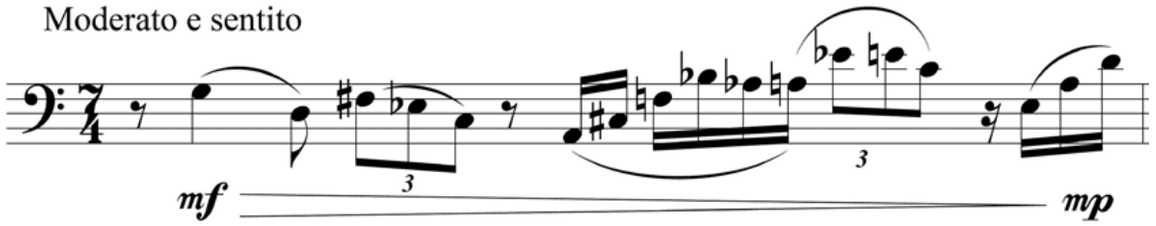
There is a brief sense of melodic kinship between the opening of Gebirtig's song and the first few notes of the baritone saxophone entrance. Both melodies highlight a descending fourth, G–D, and a descending augmented second, F sharp–E flat. The folksong begins on G and then descends through a quaver (eighth-note) triplet to D (Ex. 1(a)). The triplet contains the augmented-second interval between F sharp and E flat, a well-known Jewish intonation (appearing frequently in Jewish folksongs). The baritone saxophone solo (Ex. 1(b)) also begins with a descent of a fourth, although as an expressive sigh beginning on G and descending directly to D. Notably, a quaver triplet beginning with the easily identifiable augmented second follows, F sharp–E flat, similar to 'Es Brent'; rather than completing this triplet with a D, however, Bruk begins to spin out his free variation.

Ex. 1
(a)



[18] *Ibid*., p. 430.
[19] Sara Rosen, *Mordechai Gebirtig: His Poetic and Musical Legacy*, ed. Gertrude Schneider, Praeger, Westport, 2000, p. 33; Rubin, p. 430.
[20] *Ibid*., p. 77.

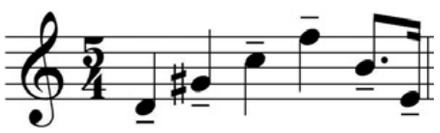
(b)



The first entry of the baritone saxophone (1:21) follows an introductory section; representing the voice of a surviving witness, the passionate prose style of this solo gives the impression of a speaker recounting past memories. 'Narrative' sections, featuring the baritone saxophone, alternate with intercalary stretches of music which, one might imagine, musically portray the memories/narrative of the witness. Bruk sets the tone for the form of the entire meta-symphony (I – Symphony No. 19, II – Symphony No. 20, III – Symphony No. 21) in this introduction; one might imagine Polish Jews going about their everyday activities during the instrumental dialogues between woodwinds and horns at 0:50. When the trumpets enter at 1:11, they are harbingers of doom – a foreshadowing, or 'presentiment', of the Holocaust. (Throughout this symphony – as well as Symphony No. 21 and other Jewish-themed symphonies by Bruk – the trumpets represent the Holocaust.) At 3:19, full orchestral outbursts interrupt the texture, dramatising the inflation of hostility and conflict between the Poles and the Jews. As the movement progresses, tension escalates gradually and bursts into a dramatic climax at 6:04, depicting the fiery theme of Gebirtig's 'Es Brent'.

Leading up to this climax, a new section (*Tempestoso*) begins at 5:26; bells play an ostinato pattern (Ex. 2), which lasts for four bars.

Ex. 2



This figure begins with an ascending augmented fourth, D–G sharp, conceivably an intentional alteration of the descending motivic fourth from the opening of 'Es Brent' (G–D, as discussed in relation to Ex. 1). Here, the ascending tritone creates a sense of deep foreboding. The tension continues to increase, as at 5:38 the voice of the witness (the baritone saxophone) foreshadows the upcoming climax with glissandos and trills. A dramatic escalation occurs at 5:50 (brass and percussion) and the ominous bell ostinato returns briefly, before raging tongues of fire fully engulf the texture at 6:04, depicted by frantic orchestral *tremoli* and *glissandi*, with trills in the solo baritone saxophone. The emotional urgency continues with furious semiquavers (sixteenth notes) in the strings, punctuated by brass and percussion, and concludes with full-throated orchestral shouts at 6:53.

In this striking section, the prophetic insights from Gebirtig's folksong musically come to life. In describing 'Es Brent', Isaac Kohn writes: 'It was a desperate and anguished call for the Polish Jews to wake up from the deep slumber and realize that *the scorching fire of anti-Semitism* is burning all around them [emphasis added]'.[21] With such a deeply personal connection to anti-Semitic persecution in Bruk's own family history – the forced deportation of his father's family from Latvia and the horrors he experienced as a young child fleeing the Nazis (resulting in the death of his mother) – the import of this folksong expands considerably. As Sara Rosen writes:

> Every time the song ['Es Brent'] is heard, it brings to mind the flames in every ghetto in every town and in every *Shtetl*. It also brings to mind the smoke arising from the five chimneys of Auschwitz where millions of Gebirtig's fellow Jews were turned into ashes. It is a painful reminder of all the homes burned to the ground, of an entire people and their way of life wiped out, and of the world of European Jewry that went up in flames.[22]

Following the symbolic tongues of fire, the voice of the baritone-saxophone witness returns at 7:04 with a deeply expressive melodic line (*sentito molto*), understandably grief-tinged, for the witness knows that this is only the beginning.

[21] Isaac Kohn, '"Es brent. breederlech, es brent!" (It burns, brothers, it burns)', *Israel National News*, 12 June 2018, http://www.israelnationalnews.com/Articles/Article.aspx/23121, accessed 26 January 2020.
[22] Rosen, *Mordechai Gebirtig*, p. 35.

For Shoshana Kalisch, a survivor of Auschwitz, 'Es Brent' is one of many songs which 'expresses the Jewish experience during the years of Nazi oppression':

> 'S'brent,' written in 1938, anticipates the tragic epoch that followed. *Shtetl*, a diminutive of shtot, the Yiddish word for 'town,' meant more than just 'small town' to the Polish Jews. It represented a unique way of life centered around family, synagogue, and marketplace, focused on *Yiddishkeit* (Jewishness) and *menshlikhkeit* (humaneness). Characterized by struggle and more often than not by great poverty, the shtetl was nonetheless a colorful world full of music and love of life.[23]
>
> At the time Gebirtig wrote 'S'brent,' he sensed the end of the shtetl era and of Jewish life in Poland – a premonition that was realized during the Nazi occupation.[24]

In March 1942, the Gebirtig family was relocated to the ghetto in Kraków, where they would spend their final days together. In June, they were rounded up to be transported to the death camp of Belzec along with thousands of other Jews; Mordechai, however, was shot and killed before even making it to the train.[25] In the closing bars of this movement, the orchestral chords resonate unpredictably with a fateful finality (*ffff*) – perhaps symbolising the gunshots which ended Gebirtig's life, and the subsequent death of his family and friends as well.

[23] Shoshana Kalisch and Barbara Meister, *Yes, We Sang! Songs of the Ghettos and Concentration Camps*, Harper & Row, New York, 1985, p. 2.

[24] *Ibid*., p. 14.

[25] Rosen, *Mordechai Gebirtig*, pp. 35–37. The defeat of Poland by German and Soviet forces in September 1939 led to a division of the territory, with Kraków becoming the headquarters for German occupation forces. The Gebirtig family (minus daughter Shifra, who had travelled to Lwów (Lemberg, now Lviv in western Ukraine) with her husband and became trapped in the part of Poland occupied by Soviet Russia) continued to live in their home until January 1941, at which point most of the Jews in Kraków were ordered to relocate; the Gebirtigs were assigned to Łagiewniki (in the southern part of the city), where they lived in a peasant hut. In March 1942 the family was suddenly transferred to the Kraków ghetto, where their close friends Abraham Neumann (painter) and Julius Hoffman (a musician who had been instrumental in the development of young Gebirtig's career) also lived. Only two months later, the Gebirtig family, along with thousands of other Jews, were chased from their homes and led to freight cars, bound for the death camp of Belzec. Rosen cites the historian Josef Wulf in saying that Gebirtig and Neumann were shot down together on the way to the station.

The second movement of Bruk's Symphony No. 19 [2] is based on the Jewish folksong 'Ele-bele', written by Zelik (Zelig) Berditshever.[26] In the booklet text for *My Hometown Soroke: Yiddish Songs of the Ukraine*, Michael Alpert provides some historical context for this folksong:

> In the period between the two world wars, Jewish cultural life thrived in Bessarabia and throughout Romania, despite increasingly anti-Semitic government policies. Yiddish poetry and prose enjoyed a particular flowering in the towns and cities of Bessarabia and Bucovina, where the Yiddish-speaking population was concentrated. Yiddish education and creativity blossomed in large cities like Cernăuți (Chernovitz) as well as in small towns like Soroki, where folk poet/songwriters like Arkady Gendler's friend Zelik Berditshever poignantly depicted and commented on the world of ordinary Jews. Both personal and universal, romantic and biting, this is a repertoire remembered and carried on today by a mere handful of Yiddishist singers (and their descendants) […].[27]

The first phrase of the folksong is shown in Ex. 3.[28] 'Ele-bele' itself 'is a fighting word, that the Jew used to pick a fight with poverty', a sort of nose-thumbing gesture that says: 'Take that, or so there!'[29] When one hears Arkady Gendler singing 'Ele-bele', this

[26] According to a short biography listed on the website savethemusic.com (https://savethemusic.com/artist/zelig-berditshever – also found on http://yidlid.org/personnes/berditshever, in French), Berditshever (or Barditshever) was born in Beltz, Bessarabia, in 1903. As a composer and singer, he became popular in the 1930s but became ill and died in 1937 in Iaşi, Romania. This biography further states that much of Berditshever's music was preserved through the efforts of Leibu Levin and Hersh Segal, who published Berditshever's songs in *Zelik Barditshever, Lider mit nigunim* ('Poems with Melodies'), Hersh Segal, Czernowitz, 1939. A recording of Leibu Levin singing Berditshever's folksong 'Ele-bele' can be heard on the CD *Vemen Vestu Zingen, Vemen? Leibu Levin Performs in Yiddish: Selected Archival Recordings from Bukovina, USSR and Israel* from the series Anthology of Musical Traditions in Israel 25, The Jewish Music Research Centre, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, STM-333, 2016. The tracks from the CD are available for listening online: https://savethemusic.com/album/vemen-vestu-zingen-vemen-leibu-levin-performs-in-yiddish, accessed 30 January 2020.

[27] Michael Alpert, 'Notes on Bessarabia', booklet for *My Hometown Soroke: Yiddish Songs of the Ukraine*, performed by Arkady Gendler, produced by Donald Brody, Jeanette Lewicki and Ellie Shapiro for the Jewish Music Festival, a project of the Berkeley Richmond Jewish Community Center, translations by Jeanette Lewicki, Fantasy Studios, Berkeley, 2000, p. 14.

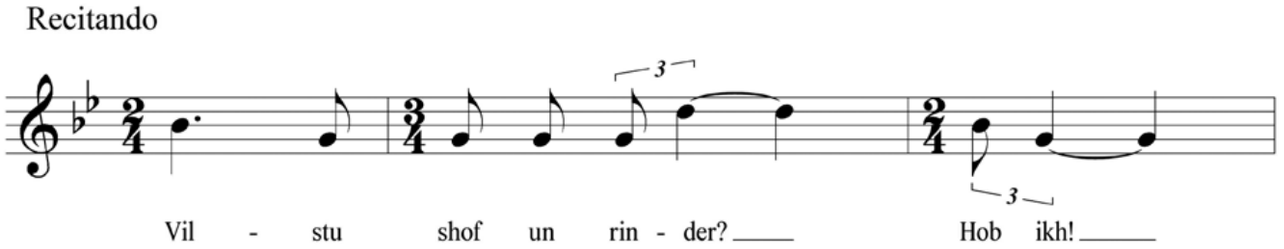
[28] Ex. 3 shows the beginning of the melody from a source shared by Fridrich Bruk: *Anthology: Jewish Folk Songs*, compiled by M. D. Goldin, edited by I. I. Zemtsovsky, Kompozitor, St Petersburg, 1994. Bruk's inclusion of the expressive indication *Recitando* further connects the entry of the baritone saxophone to the beginning of the folk-melody, labelled *Recitando* in this source as well.

[29] *My Hometown Soroke*, p. 12 (it is unclear which writer contributed this segment in the booklet).

'tune from the ghetto' takes on a jaunty, defiantly optimistic spirit and the text prompts assenting bubbles of laughter from the audience.[30] The text of the first verse reads:

Vilstu shof un rinder? –Hob ikh!	*You want flocks and herds? –I've got ' em!*
Fygl g-ts a vinder? –Hob ikh!	*G-d's wondrous birds? –I've got 'em!*
Shof un rinder – s'vayb un kinder	*For flocks and herds – wife and children,*
Un zeyer zingen g-ts a vinder, ele-bele!	*And their singing is G-d's wonder, so there!*[31]

Ex. 3



Bruk audibly links this folksong to his melodic variations by incorporating two specific intervals from 'Ele-bele'. The first prominent interval is often referred to as the 'sol-mi interval' – a descending minor third which is commonly associated with a 'nyah, nyah' childhood taunt (often corresponding with the pedagogical solfege syllables sol-mi-la-sol-mi).[32] The minor third, B flat–G, opens the folksong on 'Vilstu' and, notably, this interval recurs on the exclamatory 'Hob ikh!' ('I've got 'em!) at the end of the first phrase.[33] The saxophone solo also opens (Ex. 4) with a descending third (concert B flat–G), set with a dotted crotchet (dotted quarter note) followed by a quaver. Thus, when the solo saxophone witness 'speaks' for the first time in this second movement at the *Recitando*, an immediate kinship with the folksong is established.

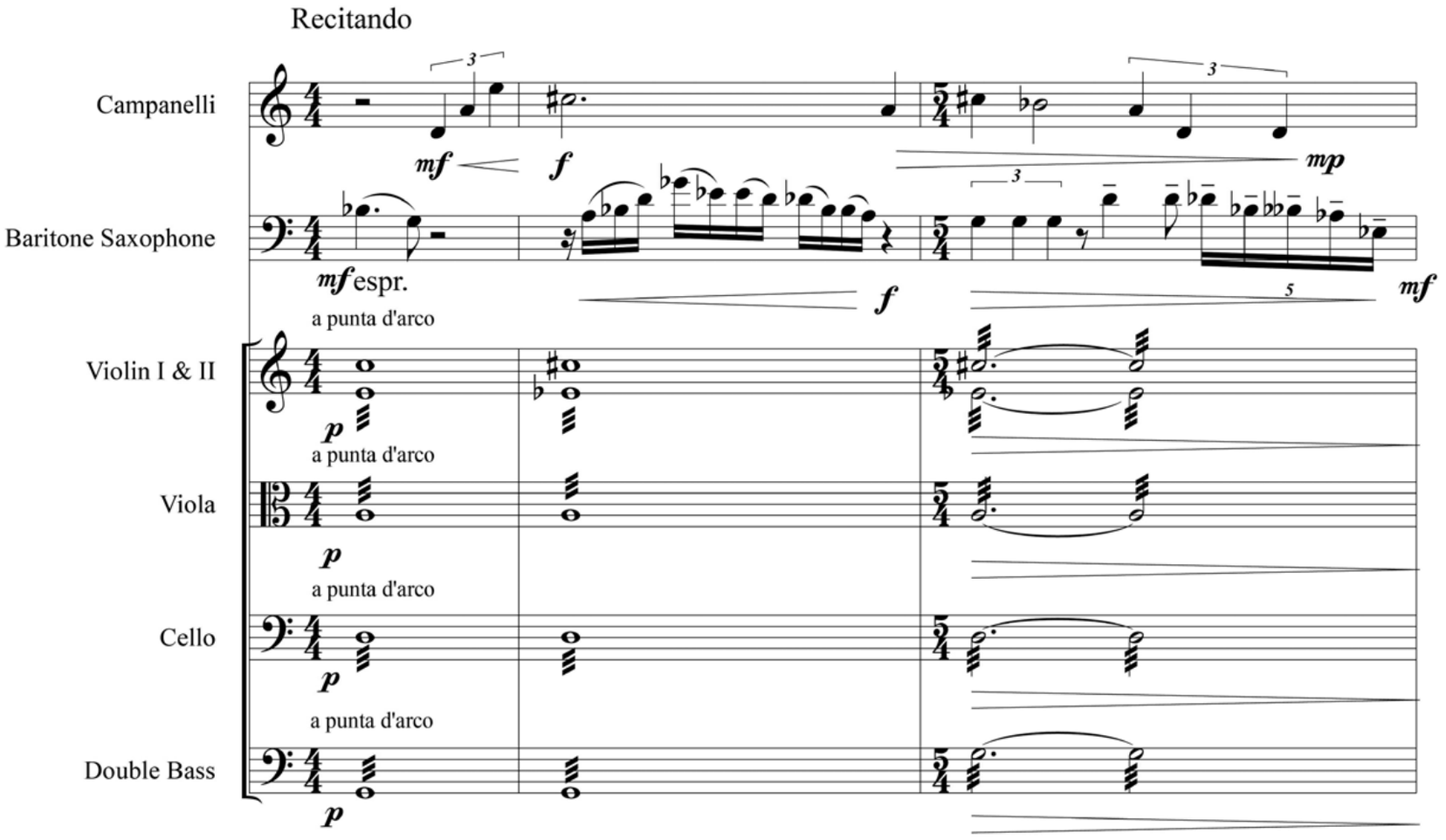
[30] Arkady Gendler sings 'Ele-bele': https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1TKjKg4RPfQ.

[31] As translated by Jeanette Lewicki in the booklet for *My Hometown Soroke*, p. 12.

[32] The traditional 'nyah, nyah' taunt is sung in a major key with the minor third falling between the fifth and third scale degrees (represented by the solfege syllables 'sol-mi'). Since this melody is in G minor (and not G major), the minor third in this folksong falls between the third and first scale degrees (B flat–G). However, even though this minor third does not literally represent 'sol-mi' in 'Ele-bele', the text nevertheless supports hearing this familiar interval as a taunt.

[33] Although only the first three bars are shown in Ex. 3, the descending third remains prevalent throughout the entire folksong.

Ex. 4



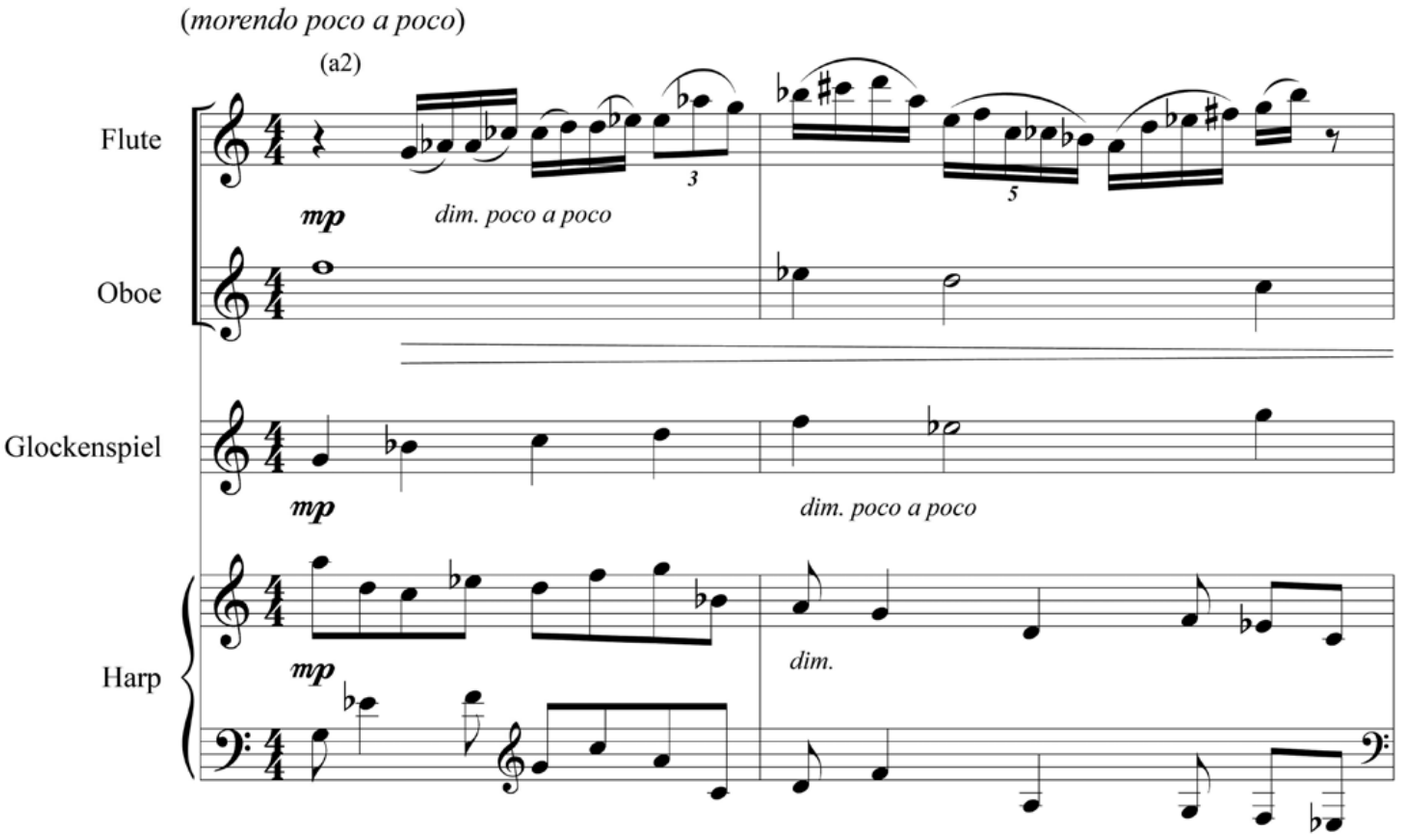
Another prominent interval which binds the folksong to the second movement is an ascending perfect fifth. In the folksong – as at bar 2 on 'rinder' in Ex. 3 – G–D mirrors the natural rise in pitch that generally occurs when someone asks a question ('You want flocks and herds?'); the saxophone solo expressively draws attention to this interval in the third bar of Ex. 4.

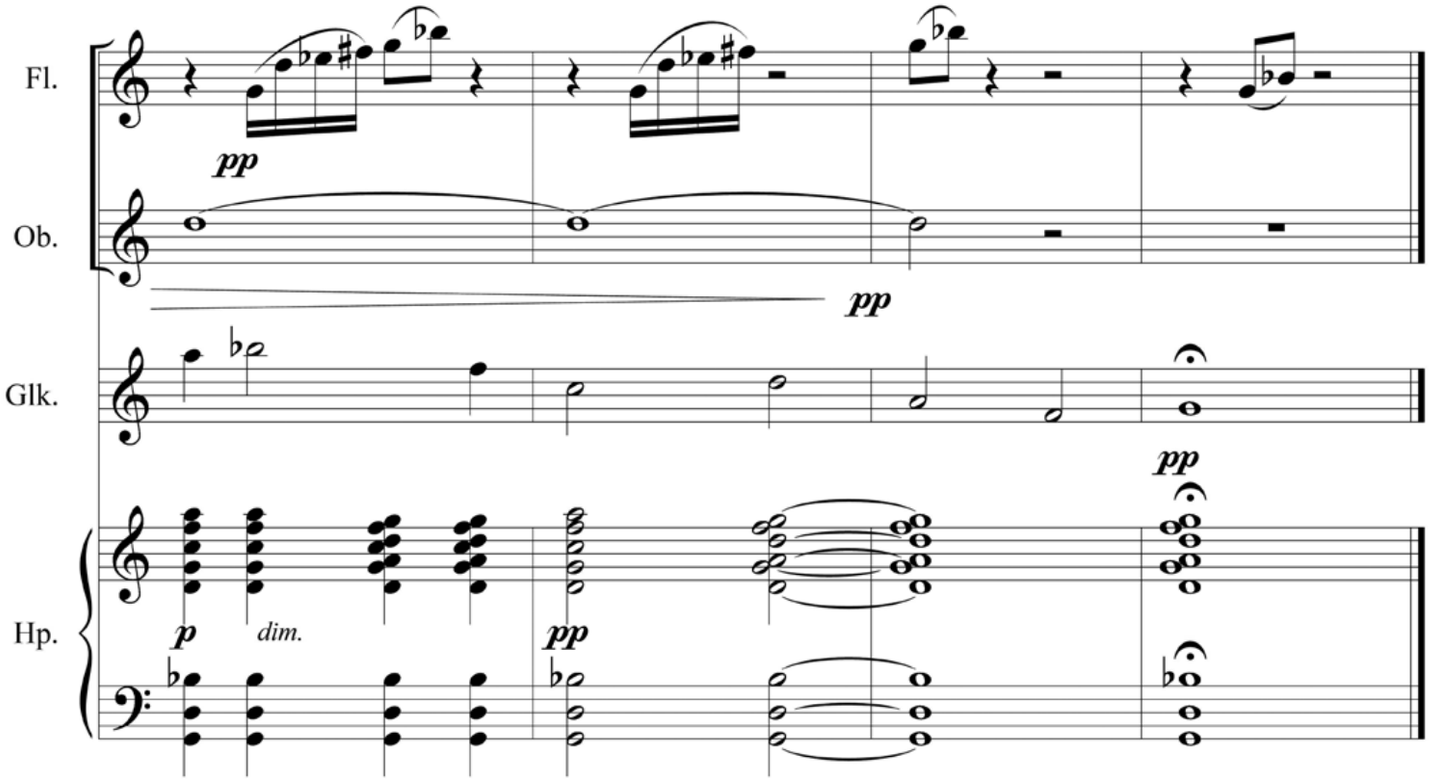
It is worth noting that at 0:49, immediately before the *Recitando*, the campanelli play a four-bar ostinato (similar to the one heard in the first movement). Here, however, the altered ostinato is a three-note pattern of ascending perfect fifths (D–A–E). The emphasis on ascending fifths distinctively prefaces the initial entry of the baritone saxophone (1:13) and foreshadows that intervallic connection to 'Ele-bele'. Furthermore, at the beginning of the *Recitando* (Ex. 4), the ascending crotchet triplet in the campanelli

(bells) is a rhythmically varied repetition of the ascending fifths at 0:49 and this D–A–E sounds after the descending minor third, B flat–G, in the saxophone (shown at concert pitch in Ex. 4). As the movement progresses, Bruk's inclusion of the minor third and the perfect fifth continue to forge a solid aural connection between the folksong and his ever-evolving variations.

Unlike the first movement, with its more literal depiction of 'Es Brent' and flaming tongues of fire, Bruk has instead chosen to weave motivic elements of 'Ele-bele' into a poignantly expressive movement, elegiac in nature. The introductory section (*Luttuoso* – 'Mournful'; up to 1:12) begins with a sorrowful melody featuring numerous lament-filled semitones. This improvisatory idea is presented first by the cor anglais, continued by the oboe and then taken up by the clarinet. The essence of this movement is encapsulated in an extended contrapuntal section for strings (9:25–12:00). With the evocative power of an elegy, the dark timbres of the string bass and cello at 9:25 are joined by the upper strings as the texture thickens and emotional dissonance builds.

Ex. 5





In the final six bars of this movement (Ex. 5) the running semiquavers (sixteenth notes) in the flute part and its nearly transparent accompaniment gradually fade away – *morendo poco a poco*.

In the third bar of Ex. 5, the semiquaver run from bars 1–2 (flutes) begins to break apart bit by bit, leaving behind motivic fragments from the original folksong: the motivic ascending fifth G–D (bars 3 and 4) and the augmented second E flat–F sharp (bars 2–4). With a poignant twist, however, the once-taunting minor third now ascends (G–B flat). In direct contrast to the jaunty and confident 'sol-mi' taunt from the folksong ('I've got 'em!'), the transformed minor third is barely whispered in these final bars with a rising inflection, as if it were a question which will forever remain unanswered.

The third movement 3 is dedicated, in general, to all Jewish workers and, specifically, to a Latvian 'Schindler', Žanis Lipke (1900–87), and his wife Johanna (1903–90). In 2009, Bruk had a conversation with a Jewish violinist in the Liepāja Symphony Orchestra, who told him that her mother and father were saved by the Lipke family during the Second World War. This dedication to Lipke is a direct result of that conversation.

Žanis Lipke with his family before the Second World War

The Lipkes arranged for, or provided shelter to, other Jewish refugees as well, saving as many as possible from the Riga ghetto during the War. Two of Lipke's early hiding-places included the workshop of a friend, Barnets Rozenbergs, and a small workshop where the refugees were tended to by janitor Andrejs Graubiņš.[34] Until it became too dangerous, Lipke also provided refuge in his own home. One night in January 1942, Lipke dug his first bunker for refugees underneath the woodshed in his yard.[35] From 1942 to the summer of 1944, this bunker provided safe shelter for eight to twelve Jews. Remarkably, this refuge was never discovered and its inhabitants – and the Lipke family – remained safe. Today, a commemorative museum stands next to the Lipke house. Opened in 2012, the Žanis Lipke Memorial is a compelling structure, which not only pays tribute to the bravery of Lipke and his family and friends, but also invites deep contemplation: 'the Memorial is conceived as a symbolic voyage of man through dim passages to light, freedom and faith in human values at a time of grave peril and helplessness'.[36]

This movement is based on a folksong entitled 'O, Hemerl, Hemerl, Klap!' ('O, Hammer, Hammer, Knock!'), written by Avrom Reisin (1876–1953).[37] A prolific writer and poet, Reisin is considered to be '"the most popular sung poet of the Jewish workingclass movement" in Eastern Europe'.[38] Born in Koidanov, eastern Belorussia, Reisin moved to New York in early 1911.[39] At least fifty of his texts were set to music by professional or anonymous composers; several of these songs, such as 'O, Hammer, Hammer, Knock!', became popular in both eastern Europe and America.[40]

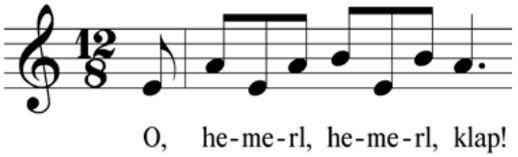
In this folksong, 'Reisin draws a sympathetic picture of the poverty-stricken little cobbler'.[41] A prose translation of the first verse reads: 'Strike, little hammer, strike! Drive

[34] http://www.lipke.lv/en/hiding-places, accessed 1 February 2020.
[35] *Ibid*. This first bunker eventually collapsed and Lipke immediately rebuilt a fortified version.
[36] http://www.lipke.lv/en/museum/architecture-zaiga-gaile, accessed 1 February 2020.
[37] Rubin (*Voices of a People*, p. 359) translates this title as 'O Little Hammer, Rap'.
[38] *Ibid*., p. 366, note 30.
[39] https://yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Reyzen_Avrom, accessed 26 October 2019.
[40] Rubin, p. 359.
[41] *Ibid*., pp. 359–60.

in nail after nail. There is no bread in the house, but the sufferings and troubles are far too many'.[42] In the second verse, the exhausted cobbler raps his hammer until midnight and, in the third verse, struggles to finish a pair of shoes for a rich man's daughter by the morning.[43] Bruk found the lyrics particularly meaningful, noting that 'this text describes the situation of Jewish handworkers who permanently suffered from hunger and fear for their own life and their families'.[44] The percussion section is featured prominently in this movement, conjuring images of hammers and other striking tools one might hear in the midst of a busy workshop (i.e., blacksmith or cobbler).

The first phrase of the folksong is shown in Ex. 6. Bruk adopts the $\frac{12}{8}$ metre as the basis for this third movement, thus creating a tangible rhythmic link with the folksong. The first prominent melodic connection to the folksong occurs at 1:13 when the cor anglais presents the opening five notes of the folksong before spinning into an original melody of Bruk's making.

Ex. 6



In this final movement, the solo baritone saxophone continues to function as a guide through the programmatic landscape (entering initially at 1:28). Possibly a Mahlerian influence, familiar references from the journey through Symphony No. 19 appear throughout this movement.[45] Amidst pervasive emulations of Jewish handworkers hard

[42] *Anthology: Jewish Folk Songs*, No. 79.
[43] *Ibid*.
[44] In July 2018, to aid in writing these booklet notes, the composer sent the scores for Symphonies Nos. 19–21 along with copies of each of the folksongs and some handwritten thoughts. This particular quotation is drawn from a handwritten note included on a copy of the folksong 'O, Hemerl, Hemerl, Klap!'
[45] References from earlier movements also appear in the finale of Mahler's Symphony No. 5. Other, more concrete, connections to Mahler's Fifth Symphony will be discussed shortly in the context of Symphony No. 20.

at work, a flashing reminder of 'Es Brent' and the 'scorching fire of anti-Semitism'[46] appears at 2:00, with trills in the woodwinds. At 4:20 the fragile orchestral colour (harps, flutes and bells) recalls the bittersweet ending of the second movement and, at 8:52, the baritone-saxophone melody from the first movement (Ex. 1(b)) returns (in a slightly varied presentation) and is expanded. This expansion also matches a section found toward the end of the second movement, 'Ele-bele', beginning at 12:22 (with minor changes).

At 8:30 (*Allegro*), the stark contrast in dynamics (from *fff* to *pppp*) and shift in instrumentation (from the brass to solo timpani) immediately attract attention. The rhythmic texture steadily intensifies with the addition of one percussion instrument at a time, evolving into an entrancing cacophony of percussive sounds – an effect similar to a camera lens drawing further back to show all the different Jewish handworkers at once, hard at work rapping their individual hammers. A resounding gong strike at 10:25 appears to mark the end for these Jewish workers, as the flurry of activity suddenly stops. Rather than an insinuation of hope, peace, or light in the darkness (which Bruk often provides at the end of his symphonies), at the conclusion of this symphony only darkness is evident in the weighty B minor chords which seem to toll for the dead.

Symphony No. 20 for Clarinet, Two Trumpets, Marimba, Drums and String Orchestra

Bruk's Symphony No. 20 (2018) is non-programmatic; dedicated to his wife, Nadezhda, it commemorates their 60th wedding anniversary on 10 September 2019. With its chamber orchestration, this work has an intimate feel and features many duet and small ensemble passages with colourful timbres. Within the context of the meta-symphony, Symphony No. 20 is wedged between two Holocaust themes, thus providing a brief respite to the darkness of the opening and closing symphonies. In discussing the genesis of this symphony, Bruk writes:

> In general, my aim was to give many possibilities for soloists and the ensemble to show their abilities and the level of performers. The music is optimistic, shining, sparkly, and in

[46] Kohn, *loc. cit.*

the end quite peaceful; the main idea of this composition is found in the last, final phrases: the light resulting from the combination of my life with Nadia's is a blessing from God.

The first movement, *Allegro energico* [4], includes the string section, marimba soloist, percussion and two trumpets in a theme and variations (although not specified as such). The form is indicated in the Table, along with the corresponding times in the recording.

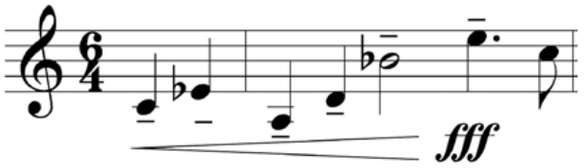
Table

Symphony No. 20: Form of *Allegro energico*

A (Theme)	0:01
B	0:46
A' (Var. 1)	1:08
B'	1:36
A'' (Var. 2)	3:29
B''	4:08
A''' (Var. 3)	4:59
B'''	7:21
A'''' (Var. 4)	9:00
B''''	9:54

The theme and all subsequent variations include two contrasting sections: A sections featuring a dramatic or expressive melody line and B sections characterised by a bouncy, detached style – often beginning with *pizzicato* strings followed by the entry of two trumpets, as if playfully mimicking the strings with their alternating *staccato* quavers. One particular motivic idea drawn from the initial A section (Ex. 7) seems to provide the most inspiration for subsequent variations. Played by the first violin, these seven notes from the A theme can be heard from 0:26 to 0:32.

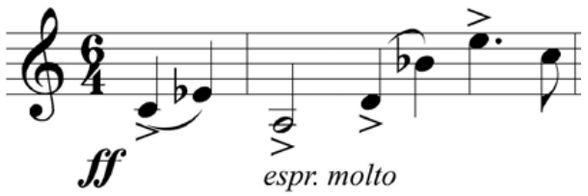
Ex. 7



This melodic excerpt clearly informs future variations of theme A in this movement, and includes motivic elements which will be heard in subsequent movements. In particular, the ascending perfect fourth – a motivic connection shown here as A–D – permeates this entire work, and is arguably an important motivic link to Symphony No. 19. In this symphony, melodic gestures which feature the first three intervals shown in Ex. 7 appear prominently throughout as well: minor third–tritone–perfect fourth. In the following B section (0:46), the light-hearted character returns as the maracas add a sparkle of colour to the *pizzicato* strings.

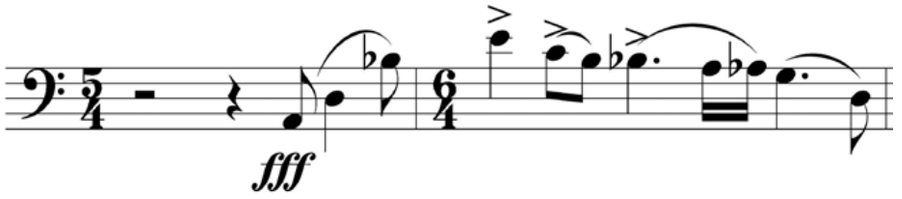
In the first variation of theme A (A′), the first violins play the melody of Ex. 7 with slight rhythmic variation at 1:14–1:20 (Ex. 8). With the changes of articulation and added agogic stress on A as a minim (half note), the A–D fourth at the *espr. molto* indication receives special attention.

Ex. 8



In the cello solo which follows (Ex. 9), the melodic idea is further varied, as the two preceding crotchets from Exx. 7 and 8 (C–E flat) are omitted; the five notes from the *espr. molto* in Ex. 8 (A–D–B flat–E–C) are rhythmically reimagined and the melodic thought is extended through a stirring descent.

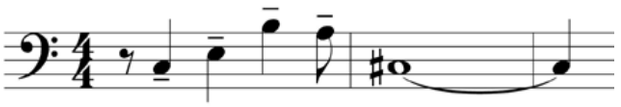
Ex. 9



The beginning of the B′ section (at 1:36) is aurally marked by the shift to lighter string articulations; cello and bass play *pizzicato* while the upper strings use the tip of the bow (*a punta d'arco*) to navigate their conjunct, chromatic lines. Additionally, the marimba soloist is featured along with the string section.

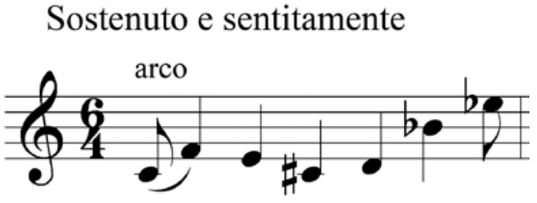
The second variation of the A theme (beginning at 3:29) is more subtly connected to its earlier iterations. The pitches and intervallic relationships in Ex. 10 (A″) are different from those in Exx. 8 and 9, although the ascending contour with three successive disjunct intervals, played with long strokes of the bow (similar to the style of the opening A section), aurally connects this section back to theme A. The B″ section is initially an exact repetition of the first B section, although it concludes abruptly, shortly after the trumpet duo enters at 4:45.

Ex. 10



As the third variation of the A theme begins (*Sostenuto e sentitamente* – 4:59), motivic material from the A and B themes is combined, and there is a notable increase in contrapuntal and rhythmic complexity. Although the accompanying chromatic scale patterns in the viola, cello and bass are drawn from the B′ section (1:36), a sustained style (*arco*) with a lyrical melody in the first violins (Ex. 11) recalls the opening A section.

Ex. 11

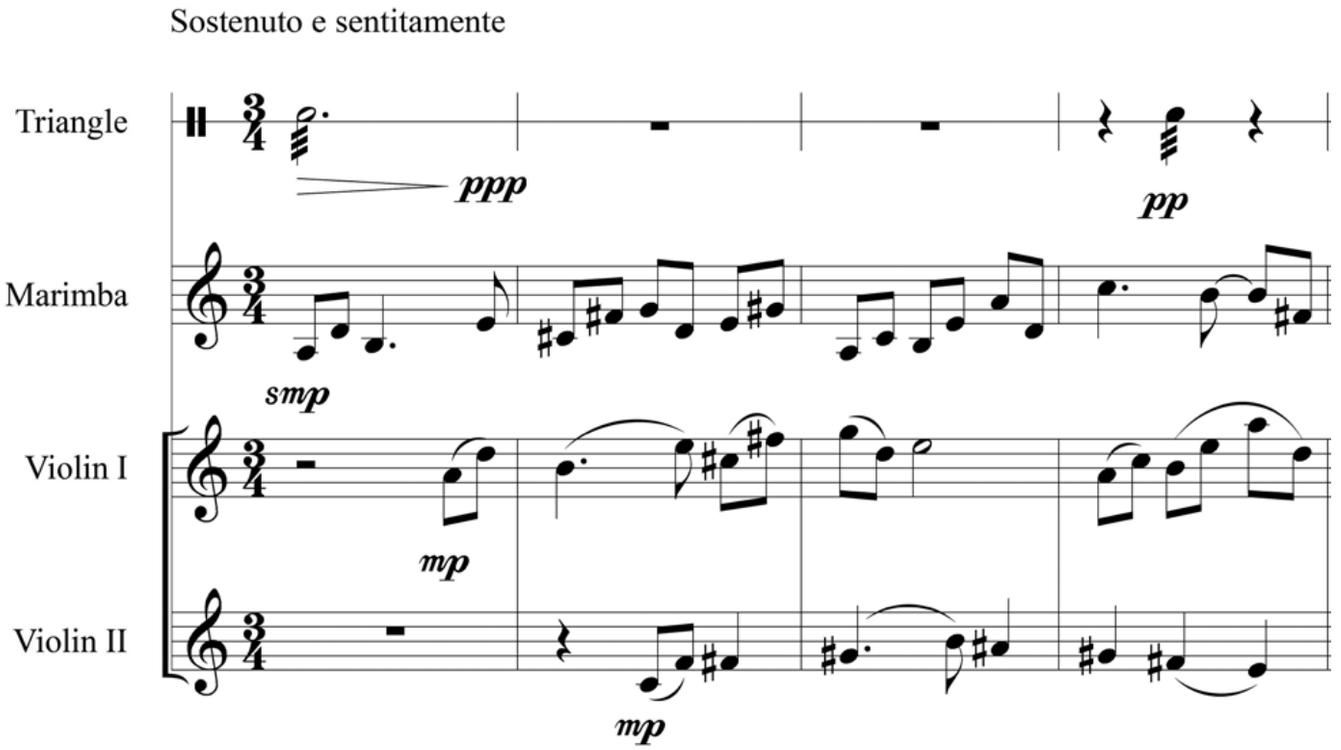


The opening ascending perfect fourth in Ex. 11, C–F, is also reminiscent of the A–D fourth from the A theme and the first set of variations. Additionally, the ascending minor sixth reappears from Exx. 7, 8 and 9 (D–B flat), although it is followed by an E flat (instead of the E natural from earlier examples), thus creating a perfect fourth from B flat to E flat rather than the earlier tritone. In a stark contrast to the smooth, lyric contrapuntal strings, the B′′′ section begins suddenly at the *Inquieto* (7:21) and timpani and trumpets infuse the texture with triplets, heightening the intensity.

The fourth and final variation of the A theme begins with imitation between the marimba and the first violin, marked *Sostenuto e sentitamente* (as also seen in Ex. 11). The sudden shift from *staccati* and accents to lyrical lines, the *mp* dynamic contrast (previously *fff*), and the much reduced texture mark the beginning of this section aurally. The first four bars are shown in Ex. 12. Here the first five pitches of the marimba part

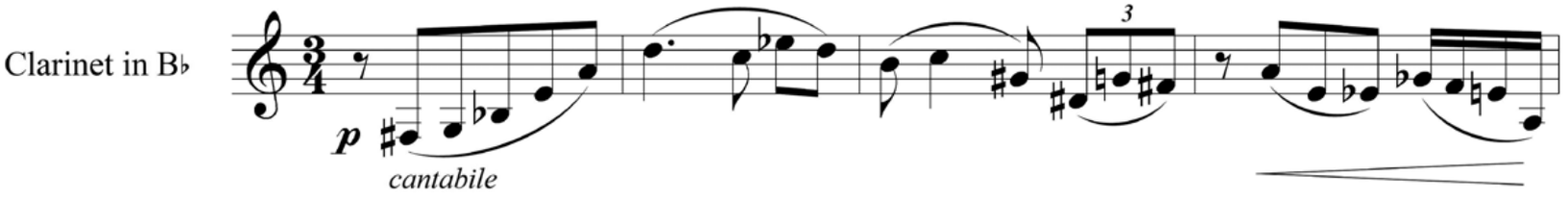
are closely related to the *espr. molto* passage in Ex. 8 (A–D–B flat–E–C natural). With further comparison, the contour of the marimba part in this variation (and of both the violin parts) is revealed to be much more compact; the line begins with a sequence of ascending perfect fourths rising by whole steps (A–D, B–E, C sharp–F sharp), a change from the previously soaring contour (spanning an octave plus a fifth before shifting direction), and with a slightly varied intervallic content to emphasise this important motif. This movement concludes after the return of the final B section (B‴) at 9:54, marked by an *Allegro* section with alternating *pizzicato* quavers in the string section and a sparkly tambourine rhythm. The energy of this final section builds as the orchestral texture thickens, driving this movement to an exciting ending resembling a syntactical exclamation point.

Ex. 12



In the second movement, *Adagietto* 5, a solo clarinet joins the orchestral palette, having been excluded from the first movement. This movement continues to draw upon and develop thematic material from the first movement. The solo clarinet opens the movement (bar 2), accompanied by marimba and low *pizzicato* strings (Ex. 13). The first bar in Ex. 13, with a series of ascending quavers, is an anacrusis to the melody, as becomes evident with subsequent melodic entries; following the first semitone, the intervallic pattern – a minor third, augmented fourth and then a perfect fourth – relates back to the A theme of the first movement with its pattern of minor third, diminished fifth and perfect fourth, as in Ex. 7. But in comparison with Ex. 7, this contour differs with the altered direction of the tritone, although the shared intervallic relationship immediately creates both an aural connection and a sense of continuity from the first movement to the second. In particular, the motivic fourth from the first movement (and from Symphony No. 19) remains prominent, often featured at the beginning of a new phrase or section as an immediate aural connection between variations (that is, trumpets at 0:48 and 0:57, clarinet at 1:45, and at 2:31 in a duet between the marimba and clarinet in which the marimba begins by descending a perfect fourth (F–C), while the clarinet simultaneously bounces a fourth upwards in its light and graceful countermelody).

Ex. 13



With the arrival of the contrasting *Inquieto* section (3:14–5:25), imitative lines between the clarinet and first trumpet initiate a slow increase in drama and intensity (gradually building in dynamic as well, from *mp* to *ffff*); this turbulent section is also similar in tone and function to the *Inquieto* from the first movement (B′′′). Following the *Inquieto*, the metre shifts from single to compound time (4:27). It is worth noting that all the previous variations of this movement were primarily in $\frac{3}{4}$ time. This change

to compound metre not only serves as a means of rhythmic variation but also facilitates a smooth entry into the third movement, as the *Lesto* ('Light' or 'Nimble') begins 6 with alternations between $\frac{5}{8}$, $\frac{6}{8}$ and $\frac{7}{8}$.

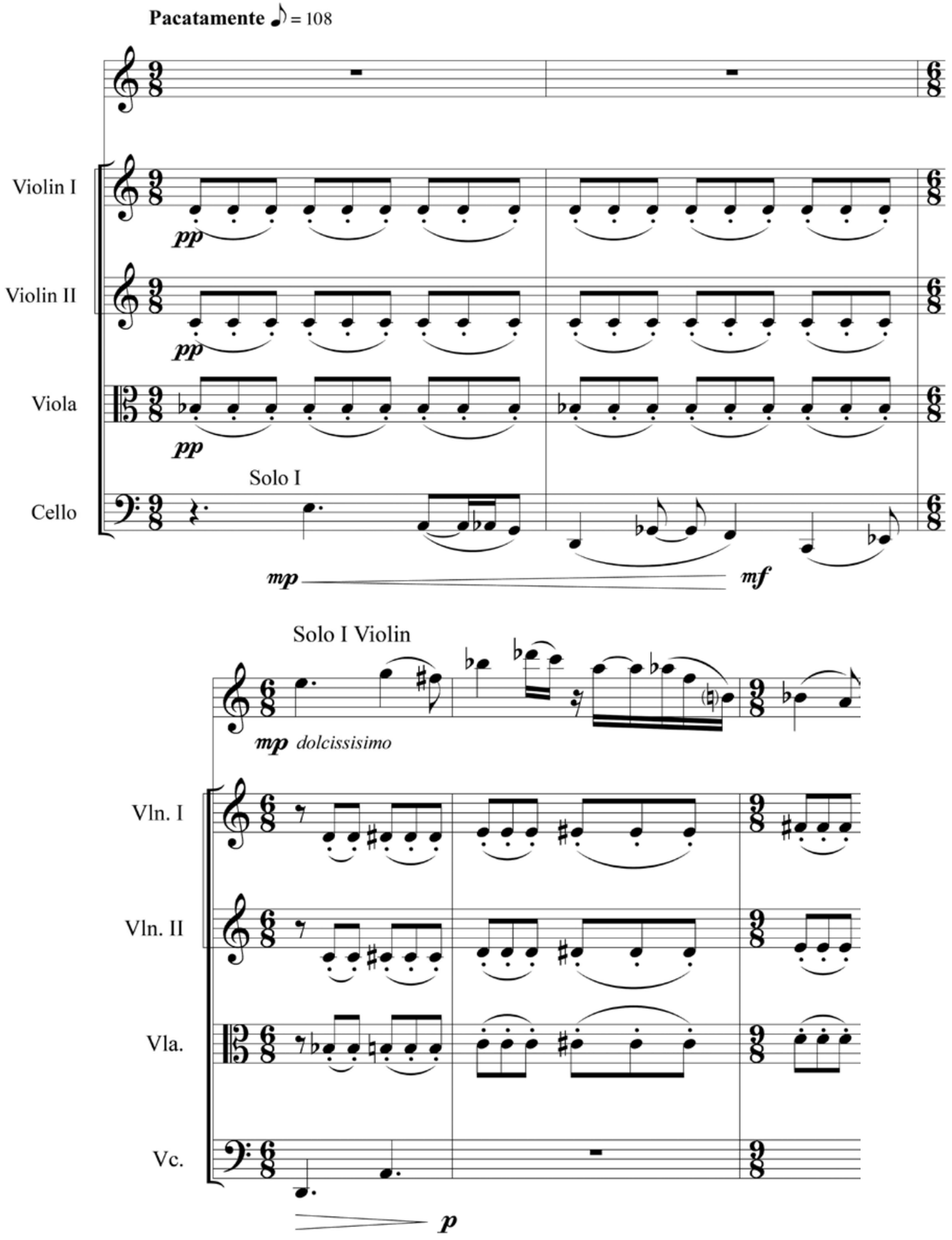
The title of the second movement, *Adagietto*, forges a distinct connection with another *Adagietto* movement in the symphonic repertoire: the fourth movement of Mahler's Symphony No. 5. As the conductor William Mengelberg (1871–1951) noted in his own copy of the score, 'This *Adagietto* was Gustav Mahler's declaration of love for Alma! Instead of a letter, he sent her this in manuscript form; no other words accompanied it. She understood and wrote to him: he should come!!! (Both of them told me this!)'.[47] As in Mahler's Symphony, Bruk's *Adagietto* also leads seamlessly into a joyful finale; thus the *Adagietto* (II) and *Lesto* (III – the final movement) are merged together (*attacca*) – two into one. However, rather than the *Adagietto* as a whole functioning as a declaration of love, Bruk's symbolic 'letter to Nadia' actually appears in the final section of the third movement (3:12), conceivably revealing itself to be the teleological goal of the entire symphony.

The third movement is a joyful celebration of life with its upbeat and light-hearted instrumental dialogue. A playful gavotte begins at 1:39 (in a section marked *à la Gavotte*) and is similar in style to dance-like sections from Bruk's *Five Duets for Clarinet (B) and Violoncello*.[48] At 2:30 the Gavotte gives way to a fun and jazzy swing section before yielding to the composer's love-letter to Nadia, beginning at 3:12. In this final section (*Pacatamente* – 'Placidly' or 'Calmly'), soaring melodic phrases played by a solo cello and solo violin come to life. The first four bars of this section are shown in Ex. 14. Here the accompanying quavers in the violins and viola are a tone apart (viola – B flat, violins – C and D), evoking peacefulness and 'wholeness', as on the second beat the solo cello enters on an E – briefly creating a four-note whole-tone cluster. Expressive appoggiatura gestures in the cello and violin solos create a sweetly singing melody for the composer's love, reminiscent of Mahler's beautiful *Adagietto* with its string-dominant texture.

[47] Gilbert E. Kaplan, 'Mahler and Tradition. Is There or Isn't There? Gilbert E. Kaplan and Peter Franklin in Search of One', *The Musical Times*, Vol. 133, No. 1797 (1992), p. 2.

[48] *Five Duets for Clarinet (B) and Violoncello*, available on YouTube, in particular at 10:20: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cFPxQipe8K4.

Ex. 14


Pacatamente ♪ = 108
Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Cello
pp
pp
pp
Solo I
mp
mf
Solo I Violin
mp dolcissisimo
Vln. I
Vln. II
Vla.
Vc.
p

Symphony No. 21, *Presentiment: In memory of Anne Frank*

Symphony No. 21, *Presentiment: In memory of Anne Frank (1929–1945)* returns to the topic of the Holocaust to close this symphonic triptych. Bruk writes: 'I have composed *Presentiment* because I am confident that the diary-book of Anne Frank is the highest expression and symbol of an ethical point of Jewish European culture in the days of the Holocaust'.[49] *The Diary of Anne Frank* has become a world classic, diary entries begun by a thirteen-year-old girl which document her life in hiding with a small group of family and friends; after two years in hiding (1942–44), Anne and her family were captured. Anne, along with her sister Margot, perished in February or March of 1945 in the concentration camp at Bergen-Belsen – just a few short months before the liberation of the Netherlands.

Whereas Symphony No. 19 focused on the earlier years of the Holocaust, with the voice of an anonymous surviving witness depicted by the solo baritone saxophone, the final years of the Holocaust are represented in Symphony No. 21 with the image of Anne Frank symbolised by the alto flute. This symphony is noticeably shorter than the previous two in this triptych, at a little over fifteen minutes long – one minute for every year of Anne's short life. This work is divided into two parts, 'Presentiment – 1' 8 and 'Presentiment – 2' 9, and, as the title suggests, the music is filled with a sense of foreboding like the shroud of fear which, in all likelihood, continually hung over Anne. On Monday evening, 8 November 1943, Anne wrote in her diary:

> This evening while Bep was still here, there was a long, loud penetrating ring at the door, I turned white at once, got a tummy-ache and heart palpitations, all from being scared! At night, when I'm in bed, I see myself alone in a dungeon, without Mummy and Daddy. Sometimes I wander by the roadside, or our 'Secret Annexe' is on fire, or they come and take us away at night. I see everything as if it is actually taking place, and this gives me the feeling that it may all happen to me very soon![50]

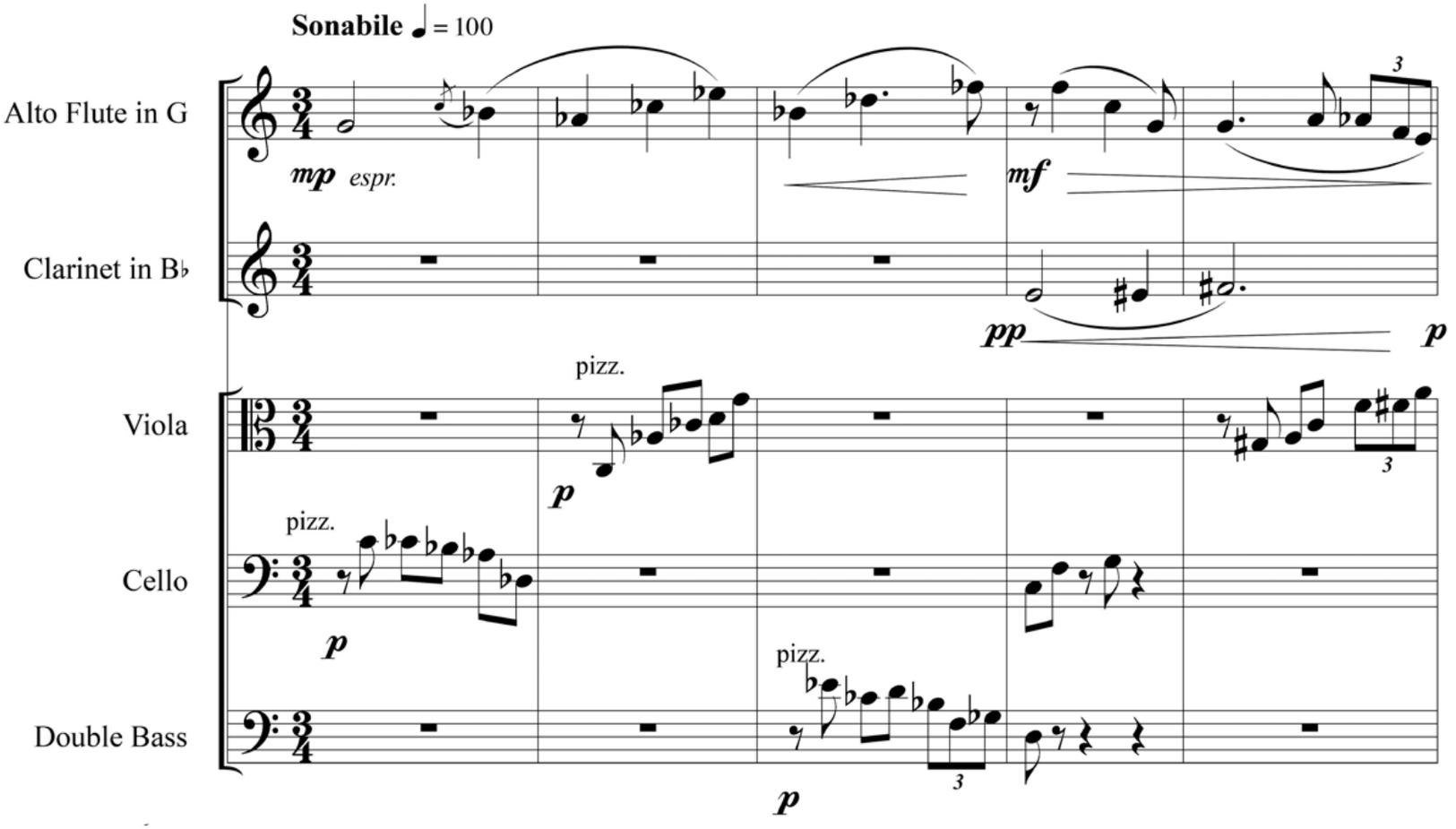
[49] Text received in an e-mail from the composer on 22 May 2019.

[50] David Barnouw and Gerrold Van Der Stroom (eds.), *The Diary of Anne Frank: The Critical Edition*, Doubleday, New York, 1989, p. 415.

Her presentiment thus became a reality, as those hiding at 263, Prinsengracht were discovered on Friday, 4 August 1944 – although it happened on a warm summer's day rather than during the cool, dark night, as Anne had feared.

An expressive, sonorous melody played by the alto flute opens the work, with *pizzicato* strings in the background (Ex. 15).

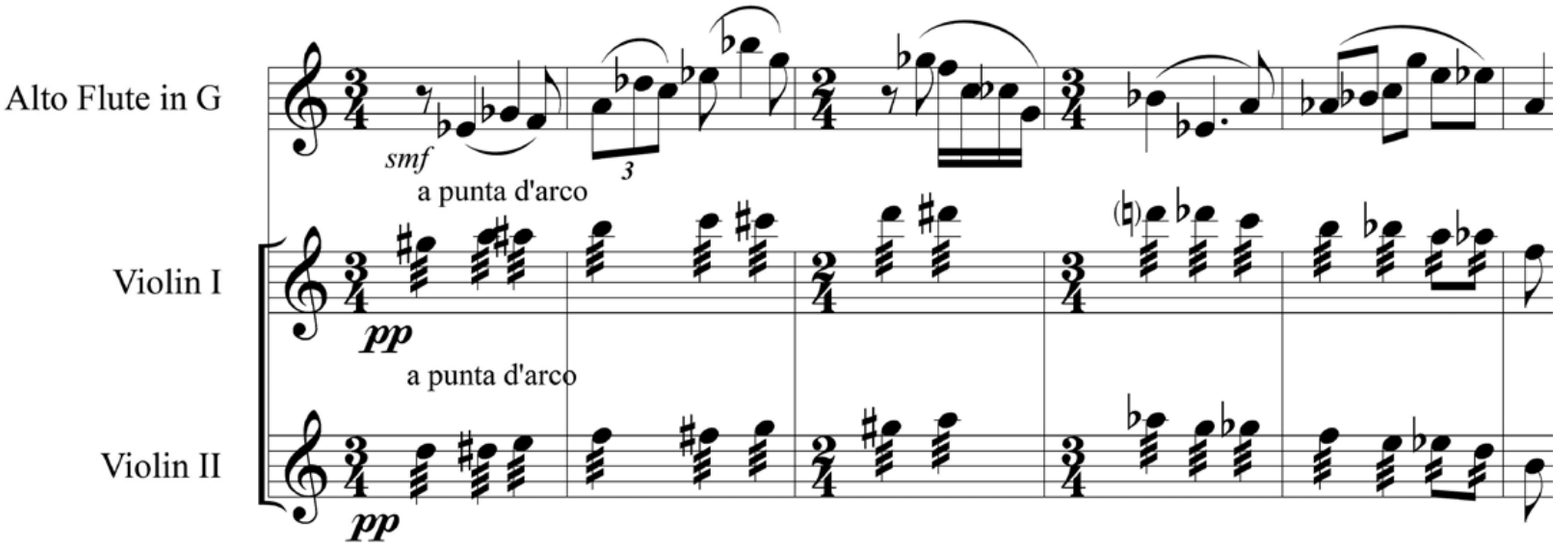
Ex. 15



As the alto flute melody continues (symbolising Anne), a feeling of uneasiness creeps in at 0:13 as the violins replace the previous *pizzicato* pattern with parallel ascending (and then descending) tritones, shown in Ex. 16. Periodically recurring eerie effects in the strings further contribute to a sense of foreboding, accompanied by bongos (a pair

of small drums with differing sizes to provide a contrast between a low and a high tone) at 1:22 and 3:53.

Ex. 16



In 'Presentiment – 2', as the orchestral texture thickens, the degree of uneasiness increases at 1:29 (*Impetuoso*). The addition of the bongos to the texture further ratchets up the intensity. As always, Bruk paints vivid pictures within his programmatic works and at 3:27 a dramatic shift in texture and dynamic, with *pianissimo* strings playing *flautando*, lends itself to imagining the Frank family in hiding – breathing shallowly and as quietly as possible – while soldiers search the building. Continuing with this interpretation, at 5:02 militaristic trumpets (a symbol of the Holocaust) seem to announce the discovery of the Frank family and friends, with full orchestral sonorities bearing down on their position.[51] The bongos featured in the final eight bars of the work are a brilliant and powerful touch, with the percussive footsteps played gradually *diminuendo*, as if the German soldiers are marching Anne, with her family and friends, away from their sanctuary and on their way to hell.

[51] Bruk also uses trumpets and percussion to depict hostile military forces in the second movement of Symphony No. 18, *Daugavpils*, as discussed in the booklet notes for *Fridrich Bruk: Orchestral Music, Volume One*, Toccata Classics TOCC 0455.

Tish Kennedy Davenport holds a Ph.D. in Music Theory with a specialisation in choral conducting from the University of North Texas. She is the Director of Music Ministries at the First United Methodist Church in Searcy, Arkansas, and also teaches privately. She is the author of an article on Bruk, 'Fridrich Bruk at 80: programmatic narratives and Jewish folk influences in Symphonies 3, 10 and 11', published in The Musical Times*, Autumn 2017, pp. 19–36.*

Māris Kupčs started his musical career as a choral conductor, later focusing on orchestra and opera repertoire. As a founder of the Baroque orchestra Collegium Musicum Riga and the Baroque choir Collegium Choro Musici Riga, as well as the Early Music Department of The Jāzeps Vītols Latvian Academy of Music, he is one of the few conductors who can direct Baroque operas and other early-music works from the harpsichord, conduct more contemporary large-scale symphonic or opera repertoire with a baton and play chamber-music programmes as a sought-after continuo player.

Māris Kupčs is the winner of many competitions as a conductor, often with Balsis, the choir he established: the BBC Grand Prix in 1991, and the Silver Rose Bowl and Grand Prix Neuchatel in the same year, and the first place in Cantonigros in 1995, as well as first places in the national conductors' competitions in Riga and international conductors' contest at Vilnius in 1990.

He has been a regular guest conductor of the Liepāja Symphony Orchestra since 1999, when they recorded the album *Pūt, vējiņi* ('Blow, Wind'), which received the Annual Latvian Music Recording Award in 2000 and for more than five years was one of the best-selling CDs in Latvian history. Māris Kupčs has been music director and conductor of many operas and musicals, among them Johann Strauss' *Die Fledermaus* at The Latvian National Opera and *Wiener Waltz* at The Liepāja Theatre, Zigmārs Liepiņš' opera *Parīzes Dievmātes katedrāle*

('Notre Dame') at The Latvian National Theatre, and more than 25 Baroque and Classical operas, including Caccini's *Euridice*, Gluck's *Orfeo*, Handel's *Acis and Galatea*, *Deidamia* and *Serse*, Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo*, Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and *Mitridate, re di Ponto*, Salieri's *Prima la Musica, poi le Parole* and Vivaldi's *Ottone in Villa*. He has conducted in Canada, Denmark, France, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Russia, Sweden and the USA.

Arvydas Kazlauskas (b. 1982) is one of the leading saxophone players in Latvia. Although trained as an academic musician, he doesn't limit himself to classical music, and is known for his creative curiosity, and his musical collaborations cover a wide span of musical styles. He was born in Vilnius, where he received his basic musical education. Then he graduated from the Jāzeps Vitols Latvian Academy of Music in Riga, with additional Erasmus studies at the Universität der Kunste in Berlin with Johannes Ernst. He has participated in a number of master-classes with such artists as Arno Bornkamp, Vincent David, Claude Delangle, Daniel Gauthier and Joel Versavaud. He has been a prize-winner in a number of international saxophone competitions.

Photo: Kestutis Pleita

He was a member of the Riga Saxophone Quartet from 2006 to 2013, and in 2016 founded the Atomos Saxophone Quartet. He is also a member of the electroacoustic free improv band Endless Roar, whose debut recording *Rush Hush* was nominated for the Zelta Mikrofons 2020 award in the category 'Best Jazz or Funk Album'.

As a soloist he has performed with the Latvian National Symphony Orchestra, Sinfonietta Riga, Lithuanian State Symphony Orchestra, Symphonic Band Riga, the Orchestra Sinfonia Concertante, the Municipal Symphonic Band of Seville and the St Christopher Chamber Orchestra. As a chamber musician and soloist he has performed across Europe. In 2017 he was nominated for the 'Latvian Great Music Award' as 'Musician of the Year'.

He has premiered saxophone concertos by Andris Dzenītis and Justė Janulytė, and chamber music by Līga Celma-Kursiete, Gabriel Jackson, Rolands Kronlaks, Linda Leimane, Jachin Pousson and Edgars Raginskis.

He teaches saxophone at the Jāzeps Vitols Latvian Academy of Music, and has given master-classes in Estonia, Finland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Lithuania and Spain.

The **Liepāja Symphony Orchestra** – formerly also known as The Amber Sound Orchestra – is the oldest symphonic ensemble in the Baltic States: it was founded in 1881 by Hanss Hohapfel, who also served as its conductor. The orchestral strength in those early days was 37 musicians, joined in the summers by guest players from Germany and Poland. With time both the structure and professionalism of the Orchestra grew, as did its standing in the eyes of the general public.

After World War II the LSO recommenced its activities in 1947, under the wings of the Liepāja Music School, and was conducted for the next forty years by the director of the School, Valdis Vikmanis. A new chapter in the life of the Orchestra began at the end of 1986, when it was granted the status of a professional symphony orchestra, becoming only the second in Latvia. That formal recognition was made possible by the efforts of two conductors, Laimonis Trubs (who worked with the LSO from 1986 to 1996) and Jēkabs Ozoliņš (active with the LSO from 1987 to 2008). The first artistic director of the LSO, as well as its first chief conductor, was the Leningrad-born Mikhail Orehov, who took the ensemble to a higher level of professionalism during his years there (1988–91). Another important period for the LSO was 1992 to 2009, when Imants Resnis was artistic director and chief conductor. He expanded the range of activities considerably: in addition to regular concerts in Riga, Liepāja and other Latvian cities, the Orchestra also went on frequent tours abroad, playing in Germany, Great Britain, Malaysia, Spain, Sweden and elsewhere. During this period a number of important recordings were made, some of them during live appearances on Latvian radio and television. In the early days of the LSO Valdis Vikmanis began a series of summer concerts, which always sold out, and so, in 2010, the festival 'Liepāja Summer' was launched, to renew that tradition of a century before. As well as orchestral performances (some of them in the open air), the festival includes sacred and chamber music.

The Liepāja Symphony Orchestra holds a special place in the national cultural life of Latvia. It received the highest national music award, the 'Great Music Award', in 2006, as well

as the Latvian Recordings Award in the years 1998, 2000, 2001, 2004, 2006 and 2008. In 2010 the Liepāja Symphony Amber Sound Orchestra was granted the status of national orchestra. Atvars Lakstīgala, chief conductor from 2010 to 2017, made his debut with the LSO in 2010 and received the 'Great Music Award' at the end of the same year.

This is the tenth of a series of recordings for Toccata Classics. The first featured Paul Mann conducting the orchestral music of the Norwegian composer Leif Solberg (TOCC 0260) and the next three brought Volumes One, Two and Three of the complete orchestral music of the Scottish Romantic Charles O'Brien (TOCC 0262, 0263 and 0299). The fifth release featured music by the German composer Josef Schelb (TOCC 0426), conducted again by Paul Mann, and the sixth presented Fridrich Bruk's Symphonies Nos. 17 and 18, conducted by Māris Kupčs (TOCC 0455). John Gibbons then conducted the LSO in the first of two recordings of the music of the English composer William Wordsworth (a descendant of Christopher Wordsworth, brother of the poet), the first programme including the Fourth and Eighth Symphonies (TOCC 0480) and the second his concertos for violin and piano (TOCC 0526). Between those two recordings Paul Mann returned to the orchestra to conduct an album of tone poems and the Symphony No. 15 – itself inspired by the Liepāja coast – by the English composer David Hackbridge Johnson (TOCC 0456).

Founded by Gintaras Rinkevičius (still its artistic director and chief conductor), the **Lithuanian State Symphony Orchestra** made its debut in 1989. The Orchestra's activities began during the years of the national revival of the late 1980s and have evolved in parallel with the history of the re-established independence of Lithuania. It is thus no coincidence that its first name was the Youth Symphony Orchestra: a young state, young musicians, a young conductor and major hopes for the future. Although three years later the prestigious title of the Lithuanian State Symphony Orchestra was conferred upon the group, the musicians and their artistic director have been faithful to their youthful traditions. Gintaras Rinkevičius and his orchestra became one of the symbols of the young state and of the renewal of its society, with programmes that introduced works unheard in Vilnius, among them Wagner's *Parsifal*, Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius*, Honegger's *Jeanne d'Arc au bûcher*, Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast* and Mahler's complete symphonies.

For its first ten years the Orchestra led a student-like life: with no roof over its head it would perform at different venues, and yet its loyal audience would follow it everywhere. At last, in

1999, Rinkevičius' determined efforts yielded results and the orchestra acquired its home, the Congress Hall in Vilnius.

An important field in the Orchestra's activities is in the operatic productions of operas by the theatre director Dalia Ibelhauptaitė (*Pagliaccio*, *La bohème*, *The Magic Flute*, *Werther*, *Eugene Onegin*, *Káťa Kabanová*, *Così fan tutte*, *Hansel and Gretel*, *Il trovatore*, *Pelléas et Mélisande* and *Tosca*). She rallied young singers into an informal movement which was eventually granted the formal status of Vilnius City Opera. Concert performances of operas – among them *Parsifal*, *Simon Boccanegra* and *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* – also feature in the Orchestra's activities. The repertoire also features the music of such rock bands as the Electric Light Orchestra, Pink Floyd and Queen.

Every year the Lithuanian State Symphony Orchestra has concert tours in European countries. It also pays considerable attention to its educational mission of acquainting the listener with professional musical art of the highest calibre, and of contributing to the spread of musical ideas. Every year it builds up a wide-ranging repertoire, introduces exceptional programmes and invites young talent to perform along with recognised soloists. The youngest concert-goers are thrilled by the Orchestra's special educational programmes for children with the participation of theatre actors and circus artistes.

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More Fridrich Bruk on Toccata Classics

TOCC 0455

'The orchestration shines and sparkles throughout the works, although the orchestra is occasionally used for strength as much as for tenderness.'

—Guy Rickards, *KlassiskMusikk*, Norway

'Bruk's style is not easy to define. Closer to Scriabin than Shostakovich, he builds a symphony out of fragmentary cultural references, assembling his shards into a structure that is at once disquieting and imposing. His use of Jewish melody bears no resemblance to socialist realism; rather, he performs a kind of psychoanalysis with elements of the unconscious that may, or may not, cohere into a healing whole. What is striking is his ability – possibly derived from film music – never to tax the listener's patience. This essential recording, performed with great proficiency by the Liepaja Symphony Orchestra with conductor Maris Kupcs, demands widespread attention.'

—Norman Lebrecht, myscena.org

Symphonies Nos. 19 and 21 recorded on 26–29 March 2019
in the Great Amber Concert Hall, Liepāja, Latvia
Producer-engineer: Normunds Slava
Assistant: Jānis Straum
Symphony No. 20 recorded on 20–22 May 2019 in the Congress Hall, Vilnius, Lithuania
Producer-engineer: Laura Jurgelionytė

Photograph of the Lipke family on p. 17 from Žanis Lipke Memorial collection;
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I am extremely grateful to the composer for his assistance in writing these notes.
Tish Kennedy Davenport

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FRIDRICH BRUK Orchestral Music, Volume Two

Symphony No. 19, *Tunes from Ghettoes* (2018)			**38:50**
1	I	Our Little Town is Burning	14:28
2	II	Ele-bele	13:15
3	III	O, Hammer, Hammer, Knock!	11:07
Symphony No. 20 (2018)			**23:21**
4	I	*Allegro energico*	11:52
5	II	*Adagietto –*	6:28
6	III	*Lesto*	5:01
Symphony No. 21, *Presentiment: In memory of Anne Frank (1929–1945)* (2018)			**15:42**
7	I	Presentiment – 1	9:47
8	II	Presentiment – 2	5:55

TT **77:55**

Liepāja Symphony Orchestra 1–3 7–8
Arvydas Kazlauskas, baritone saxophone 1–3
Lithuanian State Symphony Orchestra 4–6
Māris Kupčs, conductor

FIRST RECORDINGS