

VÁCLAV TROJAN (born 1907) has aroused attention with a number of works of a neo-classical character in which poetic phantasy combines with sound musicality, such as his chamber compositions or his opera "The Roundabout" intended for interpretation by children. His greatest success hitherto, however, has been his film music. He has composed the music for a number of Jiří Trnka's puppet films such as "Špalíček", "The Emperor's Nightingale", "Prince Bajaja", "Old Bohemian Legends", and "A Midsummer Night's Dream", which received international recognition not only for their perfect and original artistic style, but also for their music which was in perfect harmony with the contents and style of the films. Václav Trojan has received several awards for his inventive and effective music, including the honorary premium of the Czechoslovak State Film in 1947, a Diploma of Honour for "A Midsummer Night's Dream" at the Film Festival in Karlovy Vary in 1959, the State Prize in 1960, a special prize for "Špalíček" at the Third International Competition of Film Music in Valencia in 1962, the Cidalc Medal, and the Mercurio do Oro Prize.

He composed his "Fairy-Tales" for Accordion and Orchestra in 1959 as a concert suite, using the accordion, on the one hand, for descriptive purposes, such as the roaring of the dragon in the third fairy-tale, and combining it, on the other hand, with other instruments, thus achieving a fresh colouring complying well with the slightly burlesque subject. Apart from the accordion, he used in the orchestra a piccolo, a flute, an oboe, percussion instruments, a celesta, a piano, and strings. The whole suite is characterized by the humorous talent of its composer: from beginning to end it tells its stories with humorous enthusiasm. The serious pieces which occur here and there bow to the law of contrast which applies in music, too. Similarly as in real life, neither in music can we laugh all the time.

The names of the individual fairy-tales and the character of Trojan's music are sufficient to make the listener understand what the composer had in mind. The composition begins with an overture written in the form of a sonata of a playful dancing character which leads us straight into the fairy-tales. To bring about a change of mood the composer introduces us to the Sleepy Princess who resists all attempts to wake her from her beautiful dream. Soon we leave her because we find in our hands a Magic Box which is quite amazing as it pours out magic and charms. To afford some action, the composer produces a fairy-tale with all the usual trimmings: we see an unhappy princess, a dragon roars in a fugue, and then his heads are cut off one after another by none other than the prince who comes to free the princess. Naturally we are not surprised when the young couple rejoices over the vanquished beast. After such an exhausting experience we must have some light entertainment. And is not a beautiful roundabout an enchanting fairy-tale, too, and not only for children? Its funfair gaiety bursts out in a lively waltz and we feel the atmosphere of a village fair. And then the accordion comes into its own again. A sailor appears and plays it good and proper. The dance changes from a merry tune into a seductive one. What has happened? The accordion was enchanted and seduced the sailor to follow it into the depth of the sea. Perhaps it was a Siren or merely a woman—but the story comes to a bad end. The composer cannot, however, tolerate a sad end to his work and therefore concludes his suite with the "Acrobatic Fairy-tale": similarly as the roundabout, the flying trapeze and tight-rope afford an enchanting spectacle, too, and can both be ranged among fairy-tales. And why could not the human feelings which we hear in the lyricism of Trojan's music find expression even here? After all, a circus is brought to life by people, too.

In Trojan's suite reality mingles with phantasy, gaiety with wistfulness, but everything is good-natured and, but for the unfortunate sailor, everything would end well. However, one story cannot spoil the whole work which affords a cheerful impression.

Trojan's "Fairy-tales" enrich world literature for the accordion in a new and important way, the performing solist having an opportunity to display not only his musicality, but also his virtuosity.