

KAREL HUSA

Karel Husa, American citizen since 1959, was born in 1921 in Prague, Czechoslovakia. He studied at the Prague Conservatory, the Paris Conservatory and Ecole Normale. Among his teachers were Artur Honegger, Nadia Boulanger, the French conductors Andre Cluytens, Eugene Bigot, Jean Fournet, and Czech composer, J. Růžky. In 1954 Husa was appointed to the Music Faculty at Cornell University as Professor of Composition. His works have been performed at such important European Festivals as Edinburgh, Salzburg, Berlin, Prague, Paris, Donaueschingen, Frankfurt and Brussels, as well as in the United States, South Africa, Japan and Australia. He received the Czech Academy and Lili Boulanger Prizes, Koussevitsky, and UNESCO commissions, among many others. He was also a member of the juries of the Paris and Fountainebleau Conservatories, has been awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship and won the 1969 Pulitzer Prize in Composition for his *String Quartet No.3*. Recently he was elected to the Belgian Royal Academy of Arts and Sciences. During the past several seasons, Husa's music has been performed by the Boston, Cleveland, Chicago, Atlanta, and Baltimore Symphonies, the French National Orchestra, and the Orchestre Suisse Romande, among others. His best known work, *Music for Prague 1968*, has had a remarkable number of performances, over 6,000.

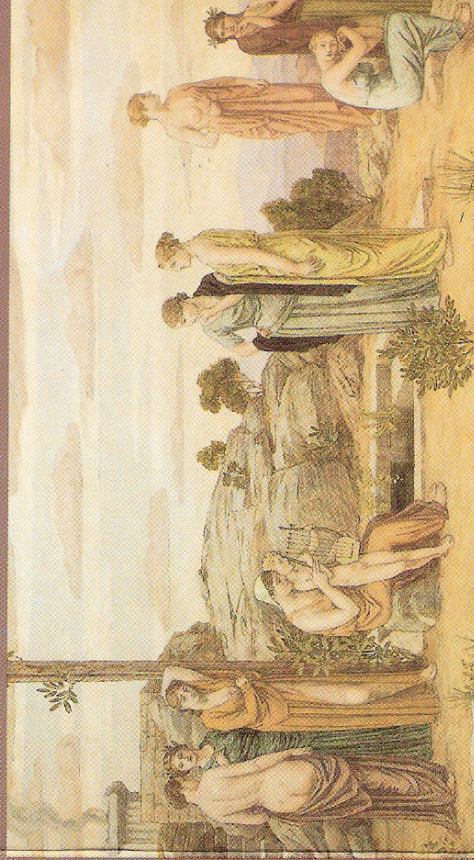
Other commissions include a *Concerto for Violoncello* for Lynn Harrell by the University of Southern California and premiered on March 2, 1989 in Los Angeles with Daniel Lewis conducting the USC Orchestra. The first European performance of this work took place on March 2, 1990 in Zurich with Lynn Harrell and the Tonhalle Orchestra conducted by Hiroshi Wakasugi. Husa's *Fourth String Quartet*, commissioned for the consortium of Colorado, Alard, and Blair Quartets by the National Endowment for the Arts was premiered by the Colorado Quartet on October 12, 1991 during the International Music Festival Brno in Czechoslovakia.

At present, he is working on a *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra*, commissioned by Zubin Mehta and the New York Philharmonic for Glen Dicterow, the orchestra's concertmaster.

Karel Husa has conducted many major orchestras including those in Paris, London, Hamburg, Brussels, Prague, Stockholm, Oslo, Zurich, Hong Kong, Singapore, New York, Boston, Washington, Cincinnati, Rochester, Buffalo, Syracuse, Aspen, and Louisville. Among numerous recordings - including his own works - he has made the first European disc of Bartok's *Miraculous Mandarin* with the Centi Soli Orchestra in Paris. Every year, Husa has visited the campuses of some 20 universities to guest conduct and lecture on his music.

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THE TROJAN WOMEN • FANTASIES FOR ORCHESTRA
DIVERTIMENTO FOR BRASS ENSEMBLE AND PERCUSSION



BRNO STATE ORCHESTRA AND ORCHESTRA DES SOLISTES DE PARIS
KAREL HUSA, CONDUCTOR

DIVERTIMENTO FOR BRASS ENSEMBLE AND PERCUSSION (1958)

The Scoring Is For
3 Trumpets, 2 or 4 Horns, 3 Trombones,
Tuba and Percussion (2 Players)

Overture - Little Scherzo - Song - Slovak Dance

DIVERTIMENTO FOR BRASS ENSEMBLE AND PERCUSSION (1958) is a transcription of four pieces from Husa's own *Eight Czech Duos for piano four hands* composed in 1955. These duos together with the *Divertimento*, *The Twelve Moravian Songs* and the *Four Little Pieces for Strings* were composed with the idea of extending the repertory of young musicians and possibly of amateur players, as well as for educational purposes.

The first performance of the *Divertimento for Brass Ensemble* was given February 17, 1960, Robert Prins conducting the Ithaca Brass Ensemble.

FANTASIES FOR ORCHESTRA (1956)

The Orchestration is: Piccolo, Flute, Oboe, Clarinet,
3 Trumpets, Percussion, Piano, Strings
and was Commissioned by the Friends of Music at Cornell

Aria - Capriccio - Nocturne

There are three Fantasies: the first is an *Aria*, written in contrapuntal style mostly for the string body of the orchestra, with piano, winds and percussion helping only in the climax of the piece. The immediately following *Capriccio* is a sort of "concertante" for three trumpets, piano, percussion, and the group of wood-wind instruments (piccolo, flute, oboe, clarinet), with strings often only in the background. The meter here is 5/8, divided into 2 - 3. The third *Fantasy*, a *Nocturne*, treats equally all the groups of the orchestra. In this movement new colors and other new possibilities in orchestration have been explored.

THE TROJAN WOMEN

Prologue: Smoldering Troy - Cassandra - Lullaby -
Death of Astyanax - Hecuba's Lament, Fanfare and Epilogue
Commissioned by the University of Louisville, Kentucky in 1980

Although *The Trojan Women* is one of the oldest extant literary works, Mr. Husa found its theme sadly appropriate for our own time. While composing the music, he remembered the Czech village of Lidice, whose fate at the hands of the Nazis paralleled that visited on Troy by the Greeks: its buildings razed, its men killed, its women and children deported. And, he notes, mankind still has not banished the scourge of war from the earth.

The Trojan Women was first performed in Louisville in 1981. Subsequently, Mr. Husa extracted from the full ballet score the concert scenes we hear in this recording. There are five movements. The first, *Prologue: Smoldering Troy*, uses percussive rumblings, dense microtonal harmonies and dark timbers to suggest the once proud city lying in ruin. In the second movement, *Cassandra*, the Trojan princess and prophet runs out of the temple carrying flaming torches and explodes into madness. She warns the Greeks of the folly of their aggression, then embraces Queen Hecuba, her mother, before being led away into captivity.

In the *Lullaby*, Queen Hecuba remembers happier times when she used to sing Astyanax, her grandson, to sleep. Here Mr. Husa calls for a bamboo flute to present a simple and affecting theme based on an ancient Greek melody. Astyanax, like all Trojan males, must die. Although his mother, Andromache, and the other women try to save him, he is taken away and slain in *The Death of Astyanax*. *Hecuba's Lament*, the Queen's elegy for the boy,

