

An Evening in Bohemia: Insight into Czech Culture

Linda Rabadi

Senior Honors Project

February 23rd, 2003

Pruis Hall

3:00

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Robert Palmer

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert Palmer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'R' and 'P'.

LINDA RABADI
piano
in a
SENIOR HONORS RECITAL
with
Yen-hsi Chen, violin – Arthur Hill, cello
Amanda York, piano

Sonata in G Minor, Op. 10, No. 2	Jan Ladislav Dussek
Grave. Adagio non troppo	(1760-1812)
Vivace con spirito	
Cibulicka (The Little Onion) <i>Czech Dance</i> No. 5	Bedřich Smetana
Polka in F-sharp Minor, Op. 7, No. 1	(1824-1884)
Slepička (The Little Hen) <i>Czech Dance</i> No. 2	
. . . Intermission . . .	
Piano Trio in F Minor, Op. 65	Antonín Dvořák
III. Poco Adagio	(1841-1904)
La Fantasia	Bohuslav Martinů
	(1890-1959)

Linda Rabadi is a student of Robert Palmer.

This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Honors Program at Ball State University.

PRUIS HALL
Sunday, February 23, 2003
3:00 p.m.

Series LVII
Number 117

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Introduction

I am a piano major, and all through college I planned on combining my senior recital with my senior honors project. Therefore, I wanted my final product to be more than just a musical performance. I wanted to incorporate ideas and aesthetics I had gained through my experiences in the Honors College.

During the Spring semester of my junior year, I began researching Czech piano music. My mother was born and raised in Prague, and learning more about my heritage has always been a priority in my life. I knew that learning the music of the Czech Republic would give me a strong sense of Czech culture, for it has always been the responsibility of the artists to express the thoughts, emotions, and experiences of the entire civilization.

Czech culture was never thoroughly discussed during my coursework at Ball State, so I knew many other students lacked information on this topic. My project would not only allow me to investigate my roots further and to express the results of my research creatively, but it would also provide the opportunity for me to expand the knowledge of my peers. I have always been interested in education and have found that when connections are made between different concepts, a deeper understanding occurs. Keeping this in mind, I strove for an interdisciplinary event that would not only include the music of the Czech Republic, but also the visual art, the creative writings, and the cuisine of the land. By including these elements, I was also able to expand the traditional form of a musical recital into something more distinct.

The result was a true cultural experience. Before the start of the recital, I displayed a slide show of Czech art, architecture, land, and people. The sounds of Dvorak's *Slavonic Dances* filled the hall as people mingled during intermission. At the start of the second half, Ball State theater major Teresa Reynolds read an excerpt from Bozena Nemcova's work, *The Grandmother*. A reception followed the recital, where traditional Czech cuisine was served.

Here I have displayed the recital announcements, created by Honors senior Leia Yabut and inspired by the works of the Czech artist Mucha, and the recital aids, consisting of my program notes, bibliography, the excerpt from Nemcova's *The Grandmother*, and acknowledgements. Following are a few samples from the slide show, a small collection of photographs taken by photojournalism major Amanda Hill, and a sound recording of the performance.

Music is our most abstract art form. It is difficult to truly capture a musical performance, even with the current technology. There is no comparison to sitting in the hall with the performer, for it is there that the connection between artist and audience is made. It is that connection that makes the performing arts one of humanity's greatest achievements. This binder is an attempt to recreate the afternoon of February 23rd, 2003. Although there is no way to document all of the emotions from that afternoon, this is closest I came.

IMPORTANT EVENT



Linda S.
Rabadi
Senior Recital
FEB
23 • 2003
go to
PRUIS HALL
@ 3:00 p.m.

Featuring Greek composers!
• DASSIS
• Smetana
• Dvorak
• Martinu.

also...
Arthur Hill, Yen-Hsi Chen, Amanda York...



PROGRAM NOTES

Linda Rabadi, piano

SENIOR HONORS RECITAL

with Yen-hsi Chen, violin, Arthur Hill, cello, Amanda York, piano
Pruis Hall - Sunday, February 23, 2003 – 3:00 p.m.

Jan Ladislav Dussek (1760-1812) *Sonata in G minor, Op 10 No. 2*

Dussek's music was received with enthusiasm in his day. He was praised for his originality and expressiveness, and most of his music was reprinted, some as many as ten times. Today he is not often programmed, but without good reason. Although some of his work, such as his variations on popular tunes of the day, is trivial, his compositions still hold a large amount of musical worth and deserve to be performed and enjoyed today.

Dussek was one of the earliest touring pianists, and as a result, most of his works are piano compositions. His early compositions are normally in the Classical style, but during the last twenty years of his life, Romantic traits run through his works, such as expressive markings, the choice of key and modulation to remote keys, and the use of altered chords and non-harmonic notes. His harmony involves a larger range of chords and is more chromatic than Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven. His piano music has a fuller texture than C.P.E Bach, Mozart, or Haydn. His piano style is often virtuosic in character, understandable because of his active career as a performer. Trills, octaves, rapid scale passages, all appear frequently in his piano works. Much of his music resembles that of other composers, but generally, these composers are later than Dussek, proving him to be much ahead of his time.

The Sonata in G Minor was written around 1790. It is a two-movement sonata that combines gentleness and aggression. Throughout the work, this dichotomy is enhanced with the use of contrasting dynamics. The first movement opens with a simple G-minor chord written out in a dotted rhythm. This melody is slightly intensified through the first section, but remains almost stagnant until a strong C-minor chord sounds and moves the music through an aria-like movement. The second movement is an energetic sonata-allegro form. This movement also opens with a broken G-minor chord, but this time it is with force. The movement is charged the entire way through, with numerous sixteenth-note scale, arpeggio, and double-third passages. A peaceful second theme provides some rest, but it never lasts long.

Bedrich Smetana (1824-1884), *Cibulicka, Polka in F-sharp Major, Slepicka*

Smetana was a composer, conductor, and critic, and is known as the first Czech nationalistic composer. His musical personality had such an impact that his style became tightly linked to the Czech nationalistic style.

Dances make up the majority of Smetana's piano music. The polka was of particular interest to Smetana, especially during the 1850s. He often returned to his polkas later in life and revised them. He was known to say that his work with the polka

was aimed at being similar to Chopin's work with the mazurka. His treatment of dances was normally not meant for dancing.

The three pieces being performed today are from two different collections. Slepicka and Cibulicka are from Smetana's 1879 *Ten Czech Dances*, and the Polka in F-sharp Major comes from *Salon Polkas* of 1854. The Polka is a popular piece. His use of color is prominent here, most easily noticed in the opening passage. *Ten Czech Dances* required much research for Smetana. His original intent was to create a collection of Czech dances broken into six categories, with two dances per category. The categories were: dances for an individual man or woman, dances for pairs of men denouncing love, dances for pairs of men praising love, dances for pairs of women denouncing love, dances for pairs of women renouncing love, and collective dances for men and women. He had trouble finding enough material for the fourth and fifth categories, which required him to rearrange the work and reduce the number of dances to ten. He wrote to his publisher, Velebin Urbanek, before the printing process in 1879. "I suggest publishing folkdances under the title Czech Dances. Every dance under its own name, e.g. 'Furiant', 'Skocnaj', 'Rejodovak and Rejodovacka', 'Sousedska', 'Hulan', etc. Whereas Dvorak gives his pieces just a general name 'Slawishe Tanze' with people not knowing which they are, and whether they exist at all, we would show which dances with real names we Czechs have." The *Dances* turned out to be large-scale concert works with the spirit of each dance conveyed in an imaginative and free manner. Cibulicka is the most widely known folk song of the collection and ensured Smetana a good amount of popular appeal. He treats the melody fairly simply, so the embellishment never conceals the original. Slepicka is based on a girl's dance in the style of a polka. It does not draw from a specific folk melody.

Antonin Dvorak (1841-1904) *Piano Trio in F-minor, Op. 65, Third Movement*

Dvorak is regarded as one of the great nationalistic composers of the nineteenth century. He was long ignored by the German-dominated music world, but now holds a strong place in music literature. He wrote in many genres, including symphonies, chamber music, oratorios, songs, and operas.

Dvorak seemed to have a natural ability for chamber composition. His first official opus was a string quintet for two violas, and from then on, chamber music remained central to his work. Dvorak's chamber music tends to be less nationalistic than his stage works or his orchestral programmatic pieces. His middle period, from 1875 to 1892, is considered to be his most nationalistic. It is at this time that his chamber music incorporates folk songs and dances. There is also a return to Classical forms and proportions. Dvorak did follow Smetana along the lines of Czech nationalism, but because of the genres in which he chose to most often work, symphonies and chamber music, he looked to Vienna to learn from the works of Brahms, Beethoven, and Schubert.

Op. 65 is considered a peak in Dvorak's chamber compositions. It is here that he reaches a refinement of compositional techniques. It is a blend of folk elements and nineteenth-century aesthetics. His approach to motivic handling and variation techniques is reminiscent of Brahms. This piece is said to be his response to his mother's death a year earlier. This statement is verified by the Third movement, which opens with a

longing melody in the cello above somber chords in the piano. This melancholy emotion dominated the piece. Even during the imitative, passionate, middle section, a touch of pain resounds.

Bohuslav Martinu (1890-1959) *La Fantasia*

Martinu was born in the small town of Policka, near the Czech-Moravian border. Until 1902 his family lived at the top of a church tower. His father combined his work as a cobbler with fire-watching and ringing bells for services. Martinu was later known to say that this environment of isolation in a vast space of land affected him greatly. At seven, Martinu started violin lessons, and quickly developed into a solid player. With hopes of his becoming a virtuoso, the local community raised funds to send him to the Prague Conservatory. He did not do well in academic life, but gained much from living in Prague. He eventually earned a position with the Czech Philharmonic and toured Europe with them. On tour, he discovered Paris, and moved there in 1923. He visited Prague often, but never lived in Czechoslovakia again. In Paris, he was exposed to many styles of music, including Stravinsky, Les Six, and jazz. By the late 1920s he became increasingly prolific, and by the 1930s, many elements of his style were established and his reputation was growing. He was blacklisted by the Nazis during World War II and fled to America. He moved back to Europe in the 1950s and died in Switzerland.

Martinu wrote in virtually every instrumental and vocal genre. Debussy and Stravinsky were very influential, as well as jazz. He was also receptive to earlier music as an inspiration. Although his influences are eclectic, Martinu has a distinct sound. His music is permeated with syncopated rhythms and closely spaced harmonies. Although his work is very dissonant, they are oftentimes based around a tonal framework. *La Fantasia* of 1929 shows Martinu's ability to write bi-tonal and polytonal works. This piece is an energetic, fast-paced display for two pianos. Dissonance dominated the piece, but strategically placed tonal chords create an appreciation for both dissonance and consonance. Although in appearance somewhat chaotic, the piece is tightly woven with rhythmic and motivic ties. The piece is also rounded, with a beginning exposition, a middle developmental section, and an abbreviated recapitulation. The aggressive alternating sixteenth-note passage that closes the first section appears again by the end of the piece. It is slightly lengthened and closes the piece with a powerful punch.

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Excerpt from *The Grandmother* by Bozena Nemcova. Translated from the Bohemian by Frances Gregor, B.L. Chicago: A.C. McClurg Co., 1892.

Read by Teresa Reynolds, senior Theater major and Women's Studies minor at Ball State University.

The wagon stopped at the gate, and Wenzel helped a little old woman to alight. She was dressed in the garb of a peasant, having her head wrapped up in a large white kerchief. This was something the children had never seen before, and they stood still, their eyes fixed upon their grandmother...

They wondered at her curious little coat, with its full pleating, like organ pipes, behind; the green linsey-wolsey petticoat, bordered with a white ribbon was an object of great admiration; they were pleased with the flowered kerchief that was tied beneath the large, white head shawl. They sat down upon the ground that they might examine better the red wedge-shaped insertion in her white stockings, and also her black slippers...

On summer evenings, when the sky was clear, Grandmother used to sit with the children upon the bench under the old linden. While Adelka was small, she sat in Grandma's lap, and the rest of the children stood at her knees... She told them about shining angels that dwell above and light the stars for the people, and about guardian angels, who protect children, rejoicing when they are good and weeping when they are bad. They entered the house, and Grandmother blessed them with holy water and tucked them in their little nests.

I would like to take this chance to thank all my loved ones for being so supportive to me during this entire process. This concert is not only the result of work I have put forth these past few months, but throughout my musical career. Because of this, there have been many people who have guided me and encouraged me along the way:

To my dear family, who provide me with so many kinds of support. You have stood by me not only with this performance, but countless others through my 16 years as a musician. You encouraged my endeavors without falter. Each of you have given me something special: Mom, your care, love, transportation to numerous lessons and performances, and of course, for baking this afternoon. Abdo, for being truly interested in my progress and always providing me with a new score for further study. Dina, for lots of giggles and long talks. Andrea, for shopping trips, dinners, and security. Alan, for putting up with my early attempts at music making. Jana, for having a friend in the family who really knows what this all was like. For this lasting support, I thank you.

To Dr. Palmer, whose knowledge, concern, and advice extends beyond our lessons. You have not just been a teacher, but a true mentor, and my experience at Ball State would have never been as positive had it not been for your guidance.

To Liz, for helping me through my early years. Your expert musicianship and care gave me a solid base as a musician, and your friendship gives me so much, including a more experienced perspective on my life.

To Vani and Sam, who can't be here due to their academic success at their respective schools. Years of friendship through some rough times has brought us so close. I know you are both here in spirit.

To Amy J., for being such a solid friend through my years at Ball State. I'm not quite sure how I would have made it this far without you. Thanks for doing my dishes these past few weeks!

To Jared and Leia, my little urban family. I love our combination of fun and seriousness. Jared, thank you for all the late-night therapy at the Heorot. Leia, thank you for the beautiful posters, a prized-possession on this campus, and our psychic, Aquarian-Libra bond.

To Carrie and Margot, for our long talks at Coffee Night. You both are so wonderful at providing peace during the storm.

To Melissa, who always is ready to listen and provide wonderful fashion advice.

To all my music friends, most of whom are trapped in a lengthy orchestra rehearsal. I know you would all much rather be here.

To Artie, Yen-hsi, and Mandy for their time, energy, and lots of extra rehearsals.

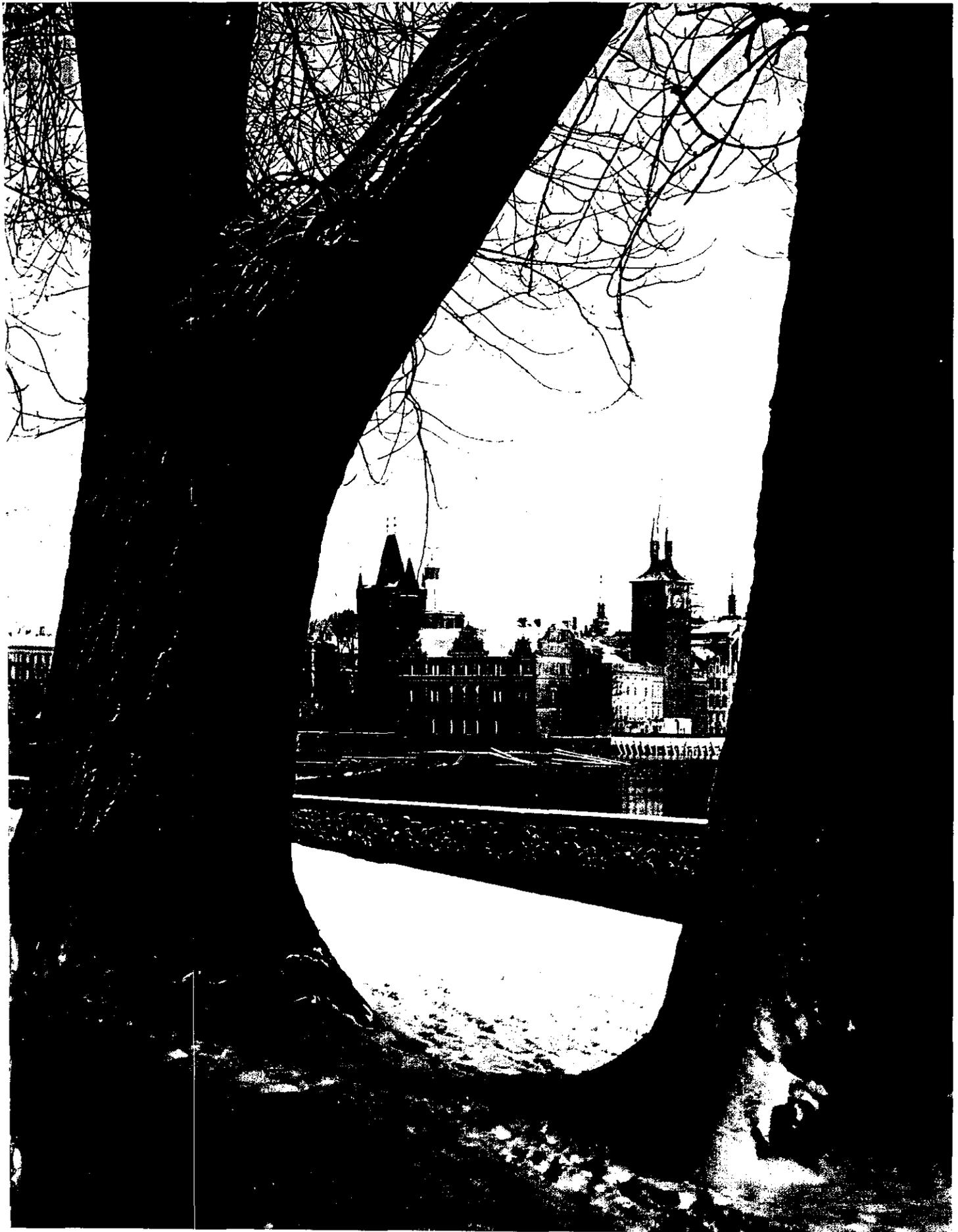
To all my friends at VIS, who create a fun, supportive work environment.

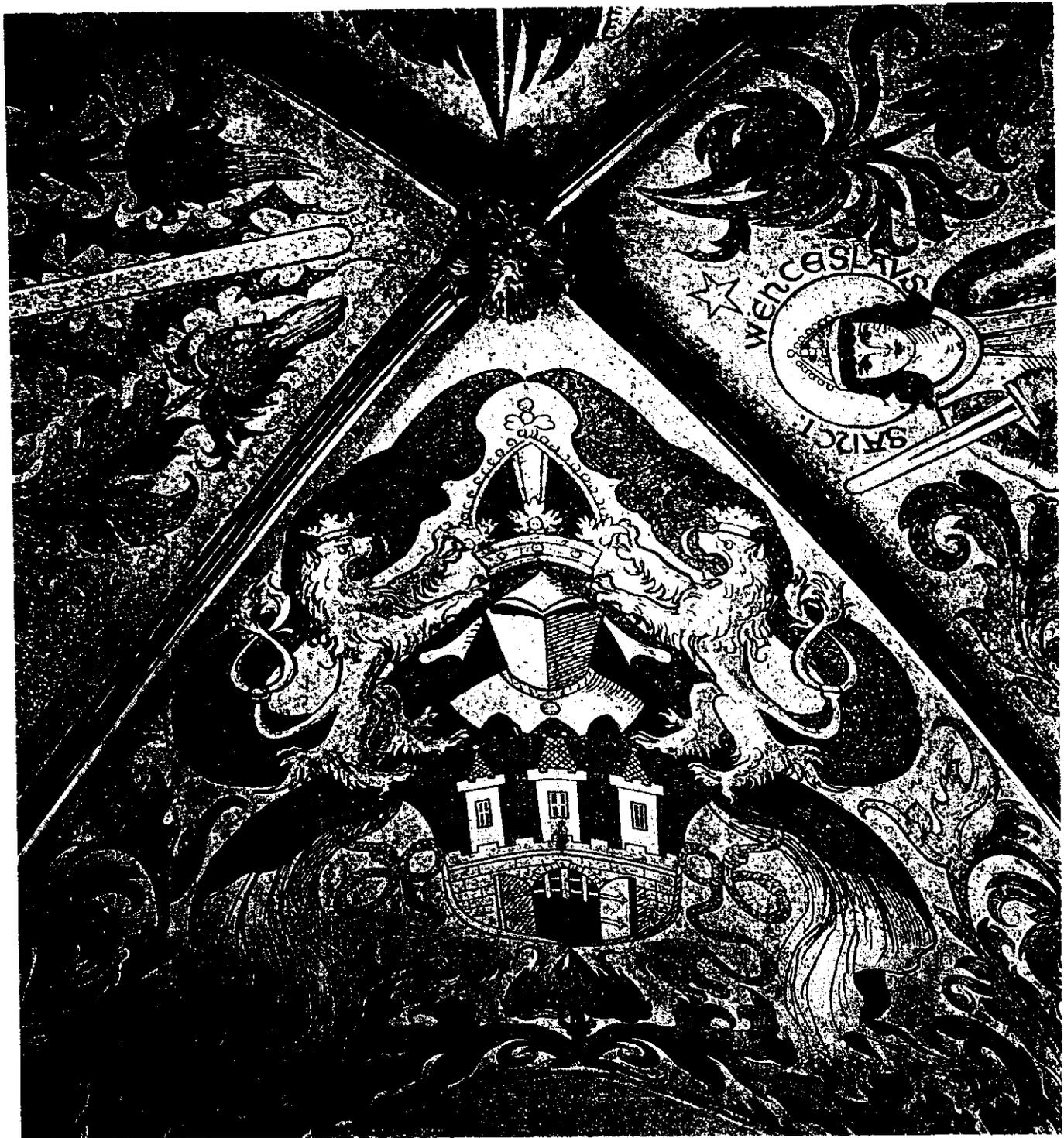
To all the staff and interns at the Women's Studies office. I rarely meet such a group of people who are as sincere and caring as all of you.

To the members of Main Street Church, who had faith in my abilities when I began working there years ago and always show concern for me.

Thank you again for all that you do. Each of you means so much to me.

This afternoon's performance is dedicated to my family, and especially my father, in fulfillment of a promise made years ago.





4

Znak Prahy
ve vestibulu
Staroměstské radnice

Герб Праги
в холле
Староместской ратуши

Wappen der Stadt Prag
im Vestibül
des Altstädter Rathauses

The emblem of Prague
in the vestibule of
the Old Town Town Hall

Armoiries de Prague
au vestibule de l'hôtel
de ville



Jaro vešlo
do pražských ulic

Весна вышла
на улицы Праги

In die Prager Gassen
zog der Frühling ein

The advent of spring
in the streets of Prague

Le printemps dans
les rues de Prague

3 / 4

Gottwaldovo nábřeží
u Slovanského ostrova

Набережная Готвальда
близ Славянского
острова

Gottwaldquai
bei der Slawischen Insel

The Gottwald
Embankment
near Slavonic Island

Quai Gottwald près
de l'île slave

Zábavy
pražských dětí

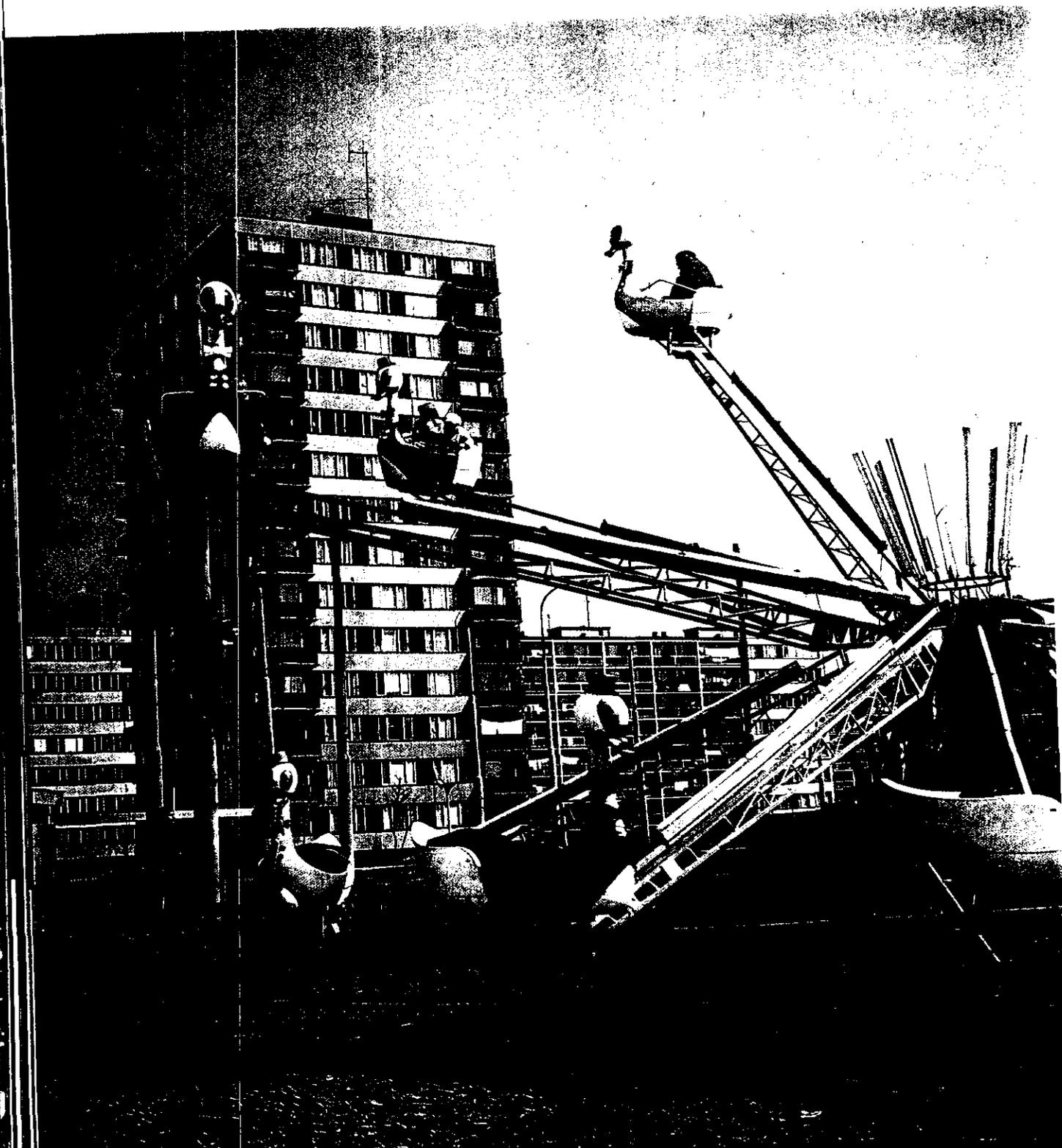
8

Развлечения
пражских детей

Freuden
der Prager Kinder

Entertainment and fun
for the children of Prague

Divertissements
des enfants de Prague





Taking my final bow



Smiling with my mother



Fellow Honors students enjoying the reception



A closer look at the reception table



Relaxing afterwards with my sisters



A look at the past and present: standing with Liz Seidel, my high school piano instructor, and Robert Palmer, my current piano professor and project mentor.