

# ‘From the Monkey Mountains’: The Body, the Grotesque and Carnival in the Music of Pavel Haas

MARTIN ČURDA

‘FROM the Monkey Mountains’ is the title of a string quartet written in 1925 by the Czech composer Pavel Haas (1899–1944), who lived and worked in Brno, Moravia, where in the early 1920s he studied with Leoš Janáček. This piece is commonly regarded as a turning point in the young composer’s career, one which singled him out within the group of Janáček’s students. Václav Kaprál, Vilém Petrželka and Osvald Chlubna (to name but the most important members of this group) built in their contemporary chamber works less upon Janáček’s latest works than upon the pre-war tradition of Czech high-art music, represented by Antonín Dvořák’s disciples Vítězslav Novák and Josef Suk.<sup>1</sup> Haas, by contrast, combined salient features of Janáček’s compositional idiom with avant-garde tendencies that emerged during and after the Great War.

Such an assessment of the significance of Haas’s quartet appears in Lubomír Peduzzi’s seminal monograph about Haas and in a number of derivative sources, but a more detailed contextualization or critical interpretation of the work is nowhere to be found.<sup>2</sup> Peduzzi’s work, despite its undeniable historiographical value, is marked by some serious

Email: [curdam@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:curdam@cardiff.ac.uk)

The research presented in this article is part of my Ph.D. project, funded by the School of Music, Cardiff University.

Examples 1 and 19 are reprinted with permission from Bärenreiter Praha (TP 520). Examples 2–15, 18, 20–2 and 24–7 are © 1994 by Tempo Praha, Prague / Bote & Bock, Berlin. Acquired 2003 by Boosey & Hawkes – Bote & Bock GmbH, Berlin. All rights reserved. ISMN 979-0-2025-1761-1. Example 16 is © 2006 Boosey & Hawkes s.r.o., Brno. World-wide publisher: Boosey & Hawkes – Bote & Bock GmbH & Co. KG, Berlin. All rights reserved. ISMN M-2025-1766-6. Example 17 is © Revised Edition 1991 Tempo Praha, Prague / Bote & Bock Berlin. 2nd Edition 1998 Tempo Praha, Prague / Boosey & Hawkes – Bote & Bock GmbH & Co. KG, Berlin. All rights reserved. ISMN: 979-0-2025-1671-3. Example 23 is reprinted with permission from Bärenreiter Praha.

<sup>1</sup> See Martin Čurda, ‘Smyčcové kvartety Janáčkových žáků z 20. let’ (‘String Quartets of Janáček’s Students from the 1920s’) (MA dissertation, Masaryk University, Brno, 2011). English summary on pp. 165–6.

<sup>2</sup> Lubomír Peduzzi, *Pavel Haas: Život a dílo skladatele* (Brno, 1993); trans Thomas Mandl, *Pavel Haas: Leben und Werk des Komponisten* (Hamburg, 1996). The work in question is discussed on pp. 42–9 of the Czech edition. All references to Peduzzi’s text are to the Czech edition, and translations of all quotations from this and other sources are my own, unless otherwise stated.

methodological limitations. Relying on the old-fashioned notion of linear influence between individual artists, Peduzzi sought to locate Haas in the history of twentieth-century music as a representative of Janáček's compositional 'school' whose stylistic development was informed by an illuminating encounter with the music of Stravinsky.<sup>3</sup> Not only did Peduzzi leave the nature of both composers' influence largely unexplained, but by attempting to bridge the apparent gap between local tradition (Janáček) and international development (Stravinsky) he also obscured the question of Haas's relationship with the 'middle-ground' context of Czechoslovak arts and culture of the time.

In this article, I will relate Haas's quartet to the notion of 'Poetism', which dominated Czechoslovak avant-garde discourse in the 1920s. Although I will not undertake a detailed comparative analysis with contemporary French avant-garde discourse, substantial parallels will become apparent to readers who are familiar with the latter. I suggest that the discourse of Poetism played an essential mediating role, enabling Haas to draw on ideas and tendencies similar to those that underpinned the music of Les Six and Stravinsky.

The interpretative framework I use in my reading of the work includes as its cornerstones, besides Poetism, the related notions of the body (or, more broadly, physicality), the grotesque and carnival. Carnival is a particularly characteristic topos of Poetism, the significance of which I will discuss through cultural-critical perspectives of Mikhail Bakhtin (1895–1975). To illustrate the roles played by each of the above in Haas's music, I will use three movements of the quartet as case studies: the first ('Landscape'), the second ('Carriage, Horseman and Horse') and the fourth ('The Wild Night'). The 'slow' third movement, 'The Moon and I', which is marked by a contemplative and intimate character, will not be discussed at length, because it is least relevant to the issues scrutinized here. However, I will argue that this movement is complementary to the carnivalesque features of the quartet and that, in this respect, its role in the piece is analogous with that played by contrasting sections within the other movements.

## Poetism

The notion of Poetism was introduced in the early 1920s by the avant-garde theorist Karel Teige (1900–51) and the poet Vítězslav Nezval (1900–58), the leading figures of the Prague-based left-wing avant-garde group of artists known as Devětsil.<sup>4</sup> There were strong links between Brno (where Haas lived) and Prague, the home of Devětsil. As a result, the group expanded from Prague to Brno in 1923, where its members edited

<sup>3</sup> Peduzzi, *Pavel Haas*, 48–9. Peduzzi described Haas's search for artistic individuality in terms of a 'journey from Janáček to Stravinsky'. Peduzzi did not elaborate on this argument much further; he suggested, though, that Haas was attracted to Stravinsky by his 'sense of the grotesque, to which [Haas] was himself inclined' (*ibid.*, 49).

<sup>4</sup> See *Devětsil: Czech Avant-Garde Art, Architecture and Design of the 1920s and 30s*, ed. František Šmejkal and Rostislav Švácha (Oxford, 1990).

the journal *Pásmo* (1924–6), in which many of their key texts were published.<sup>5</sup> Other activities of Devětsil in Brno included the organization of art exhibitions, lectures and social events.<sup>6</sup> Further evidence of Haas's contextual and conceptual affinity with Poetism will be provided over the course of this study.

In the opening of his 1924 manifesto of Poetism, Teige announced (as avant-garde movements typically did) a breakup with preceding artistic tradition and an assertion of 'new' art. He argued that art must no longer be the dominion of professionals, tradesmen, intellectuals and academics. The new art, he believed, would be cultivated by 'minds that are less well-read but all the more lively and cheerful'; it was supposed to be 'as natural, charming and accessible as sports, love, wine and all delicacies', so that everyone could take part in it.<sup>7</sup> Teige's critique of artistic 'professionalism' was essentially that of the gap between (old) 'art' and 'life', which Poetism sought to bridge in order to achieve an interpenetration of the two. Art was supposed to be abolished through its dissolution in life. Teige was eager to make clear that Poetism was not intended to be just another artistic '-ism', but a life perspective, a 'modus vivendi', 'the art of living, modern Epicureanism'.<sup>8</sup> Its artistic manifestations were supposed to offer noble amusement and sensual stimulation, 'invigoration of life' and 'spiritual and moral hygiene'.<sup>9</sup> Teige implied that art could help transform human life into the state of 'poiesis' ('supreme creation').<sup>10</sup> Thus, all people would eventually become artists in the way they lived their 'human poems':

Happiness resides in creation. The philosophy of Poetism does not regard life and a work [of art] as two distinct things. The meaning of life is a happy creation: let us make our lives

<sup>5</sup> *Pásmo* was Devětsil's first regularly published literary platform. It presented articles by the group's members in both Brno and Prague, as well as by European artists including (among others) László Moholy-Nagy, Theo van Doesburg, Walter Gropius, Kurt Schwitters and Le Corbusier. See Marcela Macharáčková, 'Z dějin Brněnského Devětsilu' ('From the History of Brno's Devětsil'), *Forum Brunense 2009: Sborník prací Muzea Města Brna*, ed. Pavel Ciprian (Brno, 2009), 79–99 (pp. 82–4).

<sup>6</sup> Particularly noteworthy was the 1924 'Exhibition of Modern Art' ('Výstava Moderního Umění'). The group organized about 30 lectures between 1924 and 1926, including the following: 'The Influence of Russian Theatre on the Art Scene' (Jindřich Honzl, 1924), 'Russian Constructivism' (Karel Teige, 1924), 'Modern Architecture' (Theo van Doesburg, 1924) and 'Painting, Photography, Film' (László Moholy-Nagy, 1925). See Macharáčková, 'Z dějin Brněnského Devětsilu', 96–9.

<sup>7</sup> 'Tímto uměním budou se pravděpodobně nadále zabývat duchové méně literátští a profesionální, ale zato mnohem živější a veselejší. [...] Je-li nové umění a to, co nazveme poetismem, uměním života, uměním žít a užívat, musí být posléze tak samozřejmé, rozkošné a dostupné jako sport, láska, víno a všechny lahůdky.' Karel Teige, 'Poetismus', *Host*, 3 (July 1924), 197–204, repr. in *Avantgarda známá a neznámá (The Known and Unknown Avant-Garde)*, ed. Štěpán Vlašín, 3 vols. (Prague, 1970–2), i: *Od proletářského umění k poetismu: 1919–24 (From Proletarian Art to Poetism: 1919–24)* (1971), 554–61 (pp. 554–5; page references here and below are to the 1971 reprint).

<sup>8</sup> 'Poetismus je [...] uměním žít, zmodernizovaným epikureismem.' *Ibid.*, 558.

<sup>9</sup> 'Poetismus [...] je dráždidlem života [...] duchovní a morální hygienou.' *Ibid.*, 560.

<sup>10</sup> 'Svrchovaná tvorba'. Karel Teige, 'Manifest poetismu', *ReD*, 1/9 (June 1928), repr. in *Avantgarda známá a neznámá*, ed. Vlašín, ii: *Vrchol a krize Poetismu (The Peak and the Crisis of Poetism)* (1972), 557–93 (p. 591; page references here and below are to the 1972 reprint).

a work [of art, a creation], a poem well organized and lived through, which satisfies amply our need for happiness and poetry.<sup>11</sup>

The art that strived for fusion with everyday reality, that abandoned galleries and museums, heading for the streets and peripheries of modern cities and aiming to appeal to the crowds necessarily made no distinction between ‘high’ and ‘low’ artistic regions. It comprised, as Esther Levinger noted, ‘all human activities, whether writing love letters, doing acrobatics, gardening, or cooking’, and even work, which would ‘resemble artistic activity by being free and gamelike’.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, Poetism, in terms of both form and content, drew on popular urban culture. It sought its sources in circuses, variety shows and cabarets with clowns, acrobats and dancers; in the cinema, offering a hitherto unseen magnificent spectacle; in cafés, bars and music halls, where one could hear jazz and dance to modern popular music; and in the streets and public spaces, regarded as the parade of modern society.

Teige’s views on art were underpinned by Marxist materialism. The ‘new’ art was not to be metaphysical, transcendent, ‘high’, elitist, complicated, speculative and intellectual. On the contrary, it should be earth-bound, empirical, sensual, popular, accessible and entertaining. Hence the preference for ‘low’ art forms, which, unlike the dead fossils of ‘old’ art, were (or so Teige believed) throbbing with life. Poetism’s shift of emphasis towards everyday experience was paralleled by the abolition of boundaries between body and spirit, by recourse to corporeality and sensuality: ‘Poetism liquidates the discord between body and spirit, it knows no difference between bodily and spiritual art, between higher and lower senses. Here the Christian and ascetic dictatorship of spirit comes to an end.’<sup>13</sup>

Teige thus reclaimed for art the right to appeal to the body. Therefore, strong emphasis was laid on human sensual experience. Quoting Teige’s article ‘Pozor na malbu’ (‘Beware of Painting’), Levinger argues:

The Devětsil artists endeavored to arouse an awareness of everyday experience that represented the merger of art and life. They imagined that they could reawaken and reeducate the senses so that people could fully enjoy all sensory data – all sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches – but especially sight, for art was all around them, in ‘colorful flowerbeds, posters, flags, road signs, sports clothes, the colored animation of dancing

<sup>11</sup> ‘Lidskou báseň’; ‘Štěstí je v tvorbě. Filosofie poetismu nebere život a dílo za dvě rozlišných věcí. Smysl života je šťastné dílo: učíme svůj život dílem, básní dobře organizovanou a prožívanou, která je bohatou satisfakcí naší potřebě štěstí a poezie.’ Teige, ‘Manifest poetismu’, 592.

<sup>12</sup> Esther Levinger, ‘Czech Avant-Garde Art: Poetry for the Five Senses’, *Art Bulletin*, 81 (1999), 513–32 (p. 513).

<sup>13</sup> ‘Poetismus likviduje disharmonie těla a ducha, nezná rozdíl mezi tělesným a duchovním uměním, mezi vyššími a nižšími smysly. Zde končí křesťanská a asketická diktatura duše.’ Teige, ‘Manifest poetismu’, 592.

halls, popular festivities, and fairgrounds [...] ballet, film, games of reflections, fire-works, parades, and carnivals'.<sup>14</sup>

Teige's understanding of human sensuality was broad enough to include the category of 'corporeal and spatial senses (a sense of orientation, speed, spatial-temporal movement)', which comprised 'sport and its various kinds: automobility, aviation, tourism, gymnastics, acrobatics'.<sup>15</sup> Teige continues:

The hunger for records, inherent in our mentality, is satisfied by athletics, the passion of victory bursts out in football matches together with the joy of teamwork, with the feeling of tensive harmony, precision and coordination. The poetry of sport, shining above the instructional and orthopedic tendencies of physical education, develops all senses, it yields a pure sensation of muscular activity, the pleasure of bare skin in the wind, the beauty of physical exaltation and intoxication of the body.<sup>16</sup>

This quotation illustrates eloquently the emphasis Poetism laid on corporeality, physical culture and sports. Such celebration of the body, youth and physicality stems from the negation of what was seen as the anaemic spirit-dominated art and culture of the past, aiming to restore the harmony of body and spirit.<sup>17</sup> When extolling the virtues of the body, Teige invokes the characteristic features of the modern industrial age, such as speed, dynamism, functionality, precision and so on. Bodily health is thus correlated not only with mental hygiene, but also with industrial expansion and technological progress.

Because of its association with dance, music is very well suited for appealing to the body. Of all musical parameters, rhythm is most directly correlated with bodily motion. It follows that music informed by Poetism would be emphatically rhythmic. It was largely owing to its rhythmic vivacity that 'jazz' was so popular among the artists of Devětsil. The composer and theatre director Emil František Burian (1904–59) described jazz as an art born of 'the joy drawn from movement and lively rhythm'.<sup>18</sup> This common view of jazz was underpinned by equally widespread

<sup>14</sup> Levinger, 'Czech Avant-Garde Art', 528. Levinger quotes Teige's article 'Pozor na malbu' ('Beware of Painting'), published in Karel Teige, *Stavba a báseň: Umění dnes a zítra 1919–1927 (Construction and Poem: Art Today and Tomorrow 1919–1927)* (Prague, 1927), 107 (trans. Levinger).

<sup>15</sup> 'Poezie tělesných a prostorových smyslů (smyslu orientace, smyslu rychlosti, časoprostorového smyslu pohybu): sport a jeho rozmanité druhy: automobilismus, aviatika, turismus, gymnastika, akrobacie.' Teige, 'Manifest poetismu', 589.

<sup>16</sup> 'Žízeň po rekordech, vrozenou naší mentalitě, sytí atletika, vášně vítězství propuká ve fotbalových zápasech zároveň s radostmi kolektivní souhry, s pocity napjaté harmonie, preciznosti a koordinace. Báseň sportu, zářící nad výchovnými a ortopedickými tendencemi tělocviku, rozvíjí všechny smysly, dává čisté senzace svalové aktivity, rozkoše obnažené pokožky ve větru, krásnou fyzickou exaltaci a opojení těla.' *Ibid.*, 589–90.

<sup>17</sup> See *ibid.*, 592.

<sup>18</sup> 'Z radosti z pohybu a živého rytmu'. Emil František Burian, *Jazz* (Prague, 1928), 18.

stereotypical assumptions about its ‘Negro’ progenitors: ‘Dance and dance again is the basis of the spiritual life of these primitives. One could say they live through movement.’<sup>19</sup>

Teige himself seldom referred specifically to music. However, as early as 1922 he co-authored, along with the less well-known Devětsil-affiliated composer Jiří Svoboda (1900–70), an article entitled ‘Musica and Muzika’, which effectively brought into Czech discourse the essential ideas articulated in Jean Cocteau’s 1918 manifesto *Le coq et l’arlequin*.<sup>20</sup> Like Cocteau, Teige and Svoboda employed iconoclastic, anti-academic rhetoric. The Latin term ‘musica’ in the title refers to the music supposedly marked by the academicism, snobbism and elitism of pre-war arts and culture, while its vernacular counterpart ‘muzika’ denotes the music of ‘the people’.<sup>21</sup> ‘Muzika’ can be heard ‘in the café, in the restaurant, in the cinema, on the street, in the park, in the Sunday dance hall, at the Salvation Army parade’ or at sports events;<sup>22</sup> it is ‘passionate, [...] richly colourful, strongly moving, [...] emotional, and immediately appealing’;<sup>23</sup> its genres include ‘ragtime, jazz band, [...] foxtrot, shimmy, exotic music, couplet [popular song], cake-walk, music in cinema [and] operetta’.<sup>24</sup> Music of the future, the authors believe, should draw on these rejuvenating resources. Drawing on his own area of expertise, Teige asks: ‘Why should music resist new, academically unsanctioned instruments – jazz band, accordion, the barbarian barrel organ, etc. – when architecture happily makes use of the advantages of modern materials?’<sup>25</sup>

Teige and Svoboda invoke French avant-garde composers as the pioneers of this new direction. Erik Satie is introduced as an influential ‘comedian, humourist, and primitivist’.<sup>26</sup> Stravinsky is celebrated for his ‘love of the vulgar and the profane’ which made him ‘lead modern music [...] towards exoticism in its modern, cosmopolitan

<sup>19</sup> ‘Tanec a opět tanec je ovšem předpoklad duchovního života těchto primitivů. Mohli bychom říci, že žijí pohybem.’ Burian, *Jazz*, 32.

<sup>20</sup> See Jiří Svoboda and Karel Teige, ‘Musica a muzika’, originally published in *Život*, 2 (1922), 86–9, repr. in *Avantgarda známá a neznámá*, ed. Vlašín, i, 405–12. Page references here and below are to the 1971 reprint.

<sup>21</sup> Given his Marxist conviction, Teige used ‘the people’ (‘lid’) interchangeably with ‘proletariat’. This ideological agenda differentiates him from Cocteau, who – despite his opposition to cultural conservatism – employed nationalist (and thus more right-wing) rhetoric.

<sup>22</sup> ‘V kavárně, v restauraci, v kinu, na ulici, v parku, v nedělní tančírně, při kapele Armády spásy, pouliční kutálce atd’. Svoboda and Teige, ‘Musica a muzika’, 407; the reference to sports is made on p. 409.

<sup>23</sup> ‘Muzika je živelná, [...] bohatě barevná, mocně dojemná, [...] je citová a bezprostřední.’ *Ibid.*, 406.

<sup>24</sup> ‘Rag-time, džezbend, [...] foxtrot, shimmy, exotická hudba, kuplet, cake-walk, hudba kina, opereta.’ *Ibid.*, 408.

<sup>25</sup> ‘A proč by se měla hudba bránit novým, akademií nesankcionovaným nástrojům – džezbend, harmonika, barbarský kolovrátek etc. – když architektura se nebrání moderním vymoženostem materiálu?’ *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> ‘Je to komik, humorista a primitivista.’ *Ibid.*, 410.

sense'.<sup>27</sup> Georges Auric is described as a lover of 'musical caricature' who seeks all that is 'grotesque and merry', and as the author of the 'modernist foxtrot *Adieu, New York!* as well as other pieces that could be played on a barrel organ'.<sup>28</sup> Arthur Honegger and Darius Milhaud are also briefly mentioned. In the article's conclusion, the authors lament the 'conservatism, foolishness and narrow-mindedness' of Czech critics, who 'a priori reject such music [...] fearing its bold innovations'.<sup>29</sup>

### 'From the Monkey Mountains': reception and Haas's commentary

The critical reception of Haas's quartet at its première is a fine example of the conservative critics' hostility towards the anti-academic features of 'Western' avant-garde style.<sup>30</sup> The elements of 'low', popular music ('muzika' rather than 'musica') in Haas's work were all the more striking since they clashed with the expectations set by the genre of the string quartet, traditionally associated with 'high' art, seriousness and refinement. This clash was further exacerbated in the last movement, when the string ensemble was joined (as if in response to Teige's call for the use of modern instruments) by a percussion set – the hallmark of contemporary 'jazz bands'.<sup>31</sup> Many were also dismayed by Haas's use of tone-painting, which was described in terms of 'caricature', the 'burlesque' and the 'grotesque', and perceived by some as the mark of the influence of contemporary 'international' or 'Western' music (note that the same characteristics were used by Teige and Svoboda with reference to Auric).<sup>32</sup>

<sup>27</sup> 'Láska k vulgárnosti a světskosti'; 'vedl přímo moderní hudbu [...] k exotismu v moderním, kosmopolitickém smyslu'. *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> 'Vyhledává groteskní a veselé, chce hudební karikaturu'; 'složil modernistický foxtrot *Adieu, New York!* a jiné kousky, které by mohly být hrány na kolovrátek'. *Ibid.*, 411.

<sup>29</sup> 'Odmítat a priori a tvrdošijně tuto hudbu, jako činí např. česká kritika [...], svědčí o konzervatismu, pošetilosti a malodušnosti, která se bojí těchto smělych novot.' *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> The première took place in Brno on 16 March 1926 under the auspices of the Club of Moravian Composers (Klub Moravských Skladatelů). Throughout his life, Haas compiled newspaper clippings with reviews of his works in a notebook entitled 'Moje úspěchy a ne-úspěchy' ('My Successes and Non-Successes'). This album survives as the property of Olga Haasová, the composer's daughter, to whom I am grateful for allowing me access to this source. Unless stated otherwise, reviews are cited from the original newspaper articles. Since these are mostly signed by initials or cyphers such as '–l–' or 'St–', the names of the authors cannot always be established. Where originals could not be accessed, reviews are cited according to Haas's album, which provides only incomplete bibliographical information.

<sup>31</sup> The review in *Moravské noviny* blames the composer for seeking to be 'fashionable at all costs' ('chce být i za každou cenu apartní'). See lk., 'Nová kvarteta', *Moravské noviny*, 19 March 1926.

<sup>32</sup> See –l–, 'Kulturní obzor: V koncertu Klubu Moravských Skladatelů', *Stráž socialismu*, 18 March 1926; –k–, 'Z brněnských koncertů: Večer kvartetních novinek', *Lidové noviny*, 18 March 1926; [unknown], 'Koncerty v Brně', *Tribuna*, 19 March 1926 (cited from Haas's album); L. K. [Ludvík Kundera], 'Koncert Klubu Moravských Skladatelů', *Národní osvobození*, 19 March 1926.

It is noteworthy that, despite the chauvinistic undertone of some reviews, no hostility was directed towards Haas himself and there was no mention of his Jewish origin, a factor that was used by French conservative critics against musicians like Milhaud and Jean Wiéner, and that later proved fatal to Haas during the time of Nazi occupation.<sup>33</sup> National identity was not an issue, since Haas – unlike many Jewish artists and intellectuals in Czechoslovakia at that time – was unambiguously Czech in terms of language, as well as cultural and professional affiliations.<sup>34</sup> As a recent graduate of Janáček's compositional masterclass, Haas was seen as a young talent, promising to advance the Moravian compositional tradition. Thus, most critics recognized his musical gifts, but his work was nonetheless dismissed as 'modish', 'tasteless' and 'unscrupulous'.<sup>35</sup>

In anticipation of the concert, which featured Haas's quartet alongside works by Kaprál and Chlubna, the journal *Hudební rozhledy* (*Musical Outlooks*) published short commentaries on each of the pieces. Haas began his own commentary as follows:

The title of the quartet comes from the colloquial name of the Moravian locality in which this composition arose. Although the movements are given programmatic titles ['Landscape'; 'Carriage, Horseman and Horse'; 'The Moon and I'; 'The Wild Night'], this is not for the sake of some kind of painting, as the listener might easily think. I simply intended to capture several strong impressions evoked by a light-hearted summer vacation in the country. [...] I could have entitled the movements plainly with Roman numerals and supplemented those with Italian tempo markings. I did not do that, however, because I wanted to confess openly the actual source of my inspiration and thoughts to the listener.<sup>36</sup>

These claims make clear that – contrary to the expectations of the chamber-music genre – Haas was not writing a serious piece of high art intended exclusively for expert audiences. This work was to be 'light-hearted' in character, and its inspiration was very much earth-bound. It should be pointed out that leisure-time activities were a typical

<sup>33</sup> See Barbara L. Kelly, *Music and Ultra-Modernism in France: A Fragile Consensus, 1913–1939* (Woodbridge, 2013), 5.

<sup>34</sup> As far as I know, the concert passed unnoticed by German periodicals.

<sup>35</sup> See St–, 'Klub Moravských Skladatelů', *Rovnost*, 18 March 1926; lk., 'Nová kvarteta'; L. K., 'Koncert Klubu Moravských Skladatelů'; V. H. [Vladimír Helfert], 'Koncerty v Brně: Klub Mor. Skladatelů', *Ruch*, 20 March 1926.

<sup>36</sup> 'Název kvarteta odvozen jest od lidového pojmenování moravského kraje, kde tato skladba povstala. Ačkoliv jsou jednotlivé věty kvarteta opatřeny charakteristickými názvy ['Krajina'; 'Kočár, kočí a kůň'; 'Měsíc a já'; 'Divá noc'], přece tu neběží o nějaké malování, jak by se posluchač mohl snadno domnívat. Šlo mi tu pouze o zachycení několika silných dojmů, vzbuzených bezstarostným letním pobytem na venkově. [...] Mohl jsem věty nadepsati pouhými římskými číslicemi a tyto doplniti italskými označeními tempa. Neučinil jsem to však proto, poněvadž jsem chtěl posluchači otevřeně přiznati skutečný zdroj inspirace a myšlenek.' Pavel Haas, 'Haasův kvartet "Z opičích hor": Poprvé proveden v Brně 16. března 1926' ('Haas's Quartet "From the Monkey Mountains": Premiered in Brno on 16 March 1926'), *Hudební rozhledy*, 7 (1925–6), 106.



source of inspiration for Poetism, and that travel, trips and postcards were among its most characteristic topics, repeatedly exploited in poems and photo collages.<sup>37</sup>

Yet at times the proclaimed rural inspiration is brought into question by elements suggestive of an urban context. This is particularly the case with the last movement ('The Wild Night'), which, as one reviewer described it, is marked with 'the atmosphere of a bar'.<sup>38</sup> These issues will be explored later; suffice it here to say that Haas avoided mentioning other, more urban sources of inspiration. Whether or not the composer had spent his summer holiday in the 'Monkey Mountains', it is arguable that he chose this term – once familiar in the patois of Brno – for the title of his quartet to give it a humorous, slightly subversive ring, conjuring up as it does the common association of monkeys with mockery, cheekiness and pulling faces.<sup>39</sup> In this sense, the title encapsulates the vernacular, grotesque features of the work, which will be discussed below.

The decision to avoid 'Roman numerals and [...] Italian tempo markings' and use 'programmatic titles' instead advertises the piece's anti-academic character and accessibility to the audience. However, Haas seems rather apologetic about the programmatic element. It is not easy to see what he means by claiming that he did not aim at 'some kind of painting'. Considering the slightly derogatory undertone of this formulation, it is possible that Haas wanted to distance himself from the aesthetic context of Romanticism or Impressionism, with which tone-painting could be associated. Haas later made his position somewhat clearer by claiming that 'the programme helps greatly to create contrasts and escalations, thus determining the piece's formal structure [and] facilitating the creation of purely musical features'.<sup>40</sup> This implies that the programmatic or pictorial element is treated with a high degree of abstraction and that it is ultimately subordinate to the considerations of 'pure music'. This explanation sounds plausible as far as the first movement ('Landscape') is concerned. However, some of the other movements (especially 'Carriage, Horseman and Horse') are much more overtly pictorial. Again, I suggest, the composer is trying to divert attention away from the more controversial features of his work – in this case the use of 'caricature-like' and 'grotesque' elements within the rarefied genre of the string quartet.

Haas's commentary also betrays a considerable emphasis on physical movement and sensuality – both of which are musically conveyed by (and correlated with) rhythmic devices. Having stated that '*movement* governs throughout this light-hearted

<sup>37</sup> See Levinger, 'Czech Avant-Garde Art', 523.

<sup>38</sup> 'Barové ovzduší'. *Stráž socialismu*, 18 March 1926.

<sup>39</sup> The reviewer in *Stráž socialismu* (*ibid.*) who questioned the 'rural' inspiration of the work also pointed out that the term 'Monkey Mountains' (as a name for the particular locality) was 'derisory rather than [just] vernacular' ('[není názvem] ani tak lidovým jako posměšným') and thus 'rather dangerous for Haas's work' ('[toto označení] je tedy dosti nebezpečno pro Haasovo dílo').

<sup>40</sup> 'Program tu silně napomáhá ku tvoření kontrastů a gradací, čímž je dána formální struktura díla; usnadňuje tedy vznik prvků čistě hudebních.' Haas, 'Haasův kvartet "Z opičích hor"'.

composition', the composer went on to suggest that the sensual impressions which had inspired the piece had some kind of rhythmic identity:

Whether it is the rhythm of a broad landscape and birdsong, or the irregular movement of a rural vehicle; be it the warm song of a human heart and the cold silent stream of moonlight, or the exuberance of a sleepless night of revelry, the innocent smile of the morning sun . . . , after all, it is movement that governs everything. (Even the deepest silence has its own motion and rhythm.)<sup>41</sup>

Finally, Haas explained that the use of the percussion set ('jazz') in the last movement was 'neither self-serving nor unnatural' since it was 'firmly bound up with the original conception of the piece, which culminates rhythmically and dynamically in its last movement'.<sup>42</sup> This justification plays down the association of 'jazz' with contemporary dance music and modern urban popular entertainment as a whole. In subsequent performances (Prague, 1927; Brno, 1931), the composer had the work played without the percussion part. To my knowledge, there is no archival evidence as to the reasons behind this decision. Nonetheless, Peduzzi argued that 'the composer [ . . . ] refrained from the use of the percussion set not so much in response to the critics as in the interests of practicality of performance'.<sup>43</sup>

### Rhythms of 'Landscape': a Janáčekian perspective

Perhaps the most interesting point made by Haas in his commentary is that concerning the significance of rhythm. He argued that the sensual, pictorial and emotional impressions that had inspired the piece were somehow articulated by means of rhythm, giving rise to a specific dynamic trajectory that is an essential element of the piece's formal design. The apparent emphasis on rhythmic and dynamic categories (those elements which play the most important role in the bodily perception of music, ensuring its direct sensual appeal) is consistent with the Poetist concept of 'poetry for the senses'. At the same time, however, Haas arguably echoed the ideas on rhythm held by his mentor Janáček.

<sup>41</sup> '*Pohyb* vládne celou touto bezstarostnou skladbou'; 'Ať je tu již rytmus širé krajiny a ptačího zpěvu, nebo nepravidelný pohyb venkovského vozidla, ať je to teplý zpěv lidského srdce a tichý chladný tok měsíčních paprsků, neb rozpustilost probdělé a prohýřené noci anebo čistý, nevinný úsměv ranního slunce . . . , vždyť je to pohyb, který vším vládne. (I největší ticho má svůj vlastní ruch a rytmus.)' Haas, 'Haasův kvartet "Z opičích hor"'.  
<sup>42</sup> 'A proto musím zvláště zdůrazniti, že právě v této skladbě není žádnou schválností a zvláštností, používám-li v poslední větě bicích nástrojů, jazzu, neboť tato myšlenka jest pevně spjata s původním plánem díla, které rytmicky a dynamicky vrcholí v poslední větě.' *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> 'Skladatel [ . . . ] od bicích nástrojů upustil ani ne tak pod dojmem kritiky jako z praktických provozovacích důvodů.' Peduzzi, *Pavel Haas*, 42.

In his theoretical writings, Janáček suggested a theory of metro-rhythmical relations, which he referred to as *sčasování* (literally ‘in-time-putting’).<sup>44</sup> One of the most characteristic features of Janáček’s theory is the concept of hierarchically organized ‘rhythmic layers’ (*sčasovací vrstvy*; see Figure 1).<sup>45</sup> Importantly, Janáček’s concept of *sčasování* had psychological connotations. In his view, each layer was endowed with a specific ‘mood’. There is a striking similarity between the statements Haas made in

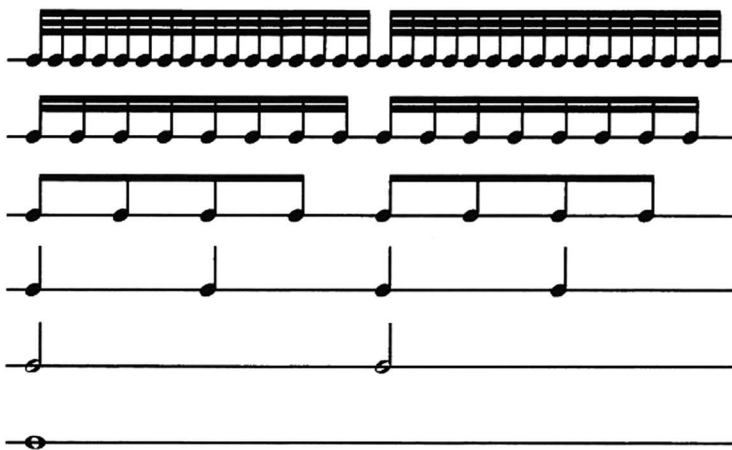


Figure 1. Janáček’s model ‘*sčasovací layers*’ stemming from a semibreve ‘*sčasovací base*’. Leoš Janáček, ‘Můj názor o sčasování (rytmu)’ (‘My Opinion of Sčasování (Rhythm)’), *Teoretické dílo: Články, studie, přednášky, koncepty, zlomky, skici, svědectví, 1877–1927* (*Theoretical Works: Articles, Studies, Lectures, Concepts, Fragments, Outlines, Testimonies, 1877–1927*), ed. Leoš Faltus *et al.*, 2 vols. (Brno, 2007–8), ii/1 (2007), 361–421 (p. 393).

<sup>44</sup> This literal translation of Janáček’s neologism *sčasování* (noun; adjective: *sčasovací*) was suggested in Jiří Fukač, ‘Janáček and the Dance of “Categories”’, *Janáček and Czech Music: Proceedings of the International Conference (Saint Louis, 1988)*, ed. Michael Beckerman and Glen Bauer, *Studies in Czech Music*, 1 (Stuyvesant, NY, 1995), 371–88 (p. 387). In pursuit of the term’s definition, Michael Beckerman drew on Jarmil Burghauer’s explication of *sčasování* as (a) ‘metrorhythmics’ (a general designation for the realm of rhythmic and metrical phenomena) and (b) ‘rhythmicising’ (i.e. the ‘compositional activity’ of ‘forming and organising in this area’). See Jarmil Burghauer, ‘Hudební metrika v Janáčkově teoretickém díle’ (‘Musical Metrics in Janáček’s Theoretical Works’), *Sborník prací Filosofické fakulty Brněnské University*, series H (Řada hudebně vědná / Musicological Studies), 33–4 (1984–5), 137–53 (p. 138), cited in Michael Beckerman, *Janáček as Theorist* (New York, 1994), 82 (trans. Beckerman).

<sup>45</sup> See Leoš Janáček, ‘Úplná nauka o harmonii’ (‘Complete Theory of Harmony’), *Teoretické dílo: Články, studie, přednášky, koncepty, zlomky, skici, svědectví, 1877–1927* (*Theoretical Works: Articles, Studies, Lectures, Concepts, Fragments, Outlines, Testimonies, 1877–1927*), ed. Leoš Faltus *et al.*, 2 vols. (Brno, 2007–8), ii/1 (2007), 459–661 (particularly pp. 462, 605). See also Beckerman, *Janáček as Theorist*, 83.

his commentary and the italicized passage in the following quotation from Janáček's 'Úplná nauka o harmonii' ('Complete Theory of Harmony'):

I have arrived at the significance of *sčasování* through the study of speech melodies. [...] The ultimate *sčasovací* truth resides in words, the syllables of which are stretched into equal beats, a pulse which springs from a certain mood. Nothing compares to the *sčasovací* truth of the rhythms of words in [the flow of] speech. *This rhythm enables us to comprehend and feel every quiver of the soul, which, by means of this rhythm, is transmitted onto us, evoking an authentic echo in us.* This rhythm is not only the expression of my inner spirit, it also betrays the impact of the environment, the situation and all the mesological influences to which I am exposed – it testifies to the consciousness of a certain age. We can feel a fixed mood clinging to the equal beats [i.e. the pulse] of *sčasovka* [a noun referring either generally to a 'sčasovací layer' or, more specifically, to a recurring rhythmic pattern].<sup>46</sup>

Janáček's notion of rhythmic layers also manifests itself in his compositional practice. [Example 1](#) illustrates Janáček's typical use of stratified textures, consisting of superimposed melodic and rhythmic layers, as well as the strategy of 'transposing' fragmentary and repetitive motivic material 'higher' or 'lower' across the rhythmic strata. Some theorists have used the term 'montage' to describe Janáček's technique of manipulation with fragmentary musical material.<sup>47</sup> 'Vertical' montage, based on superimposition and resulting in textural stratification, has already been described. 'Horizontal' montage refers to the juxtaposition of discontinuous stretches of musical material, following one another without transition.

Horizontal montage has far-reaching consequences for the formal structure of Janáček's music. The Czech composer and musicologist Josef Berg compared the formal designs of Janáček's late works to a mosaic; he suggested that they are based not on the linear and continuous development of motifs and themes, but rather on a succession of distinct variants of one or several recurring motivic fragments cast in

<sup>46</sup> 'K poznání sčasovacímu dospěl jsem studiem nápěvků mluvy. [...] Není nad sčasovací pravdu, která leží ve slově, jehož slabiky jistou fází vyvěrající nálady životní do rovných dob jsou napjaty. Není nad sčasovací pravdu rytmu ze slov v hudbě. *Porozumíme a vycítíme z toho rytmu každý záchvěv duše; jím přenáší se na nás a věrnou ozvěnou budí se v nás.* Takový rytmus není jen výrazem mého nitra, ale svědčí i o prostředí, okolí, všech mesologických vlivech, v kterých se nalézám – je dokladem vědomí určité doby. Na sčasovce rovných dob vycítíme ustálenou na ní náladovost.' Janáček, 'Úplná nauka o harmonii', 462 (italics added). For a slightly different translation, see Beckerman, *Janáček as Theorist*, 82–3.

<sup>47</sup> The term 'montage' ('montáž'), originating in the discourse surrounding avant-garde art and film, was adopted by Czech composers and theorists (Miloš Štědroň, Miloslav Ištvan, Ctirad Kohoutek, Alois Piňos) in the 1960s. Besides its application to electroacoustic music, the term was used to describe specific features of texture and form in Janáček's music. See Miloš Štědroň, *Leoš Janáček a hudba 20. století: Paralely, sondy, dokumenty* (*Leoš Janáček and Twentieth-Century Music: Parallels, Probes, Documents*) (Brno, 1998), 147–56.

Example 1. Rhythmic strata in Janáček's music. Leoš Janáček, String Quartet no. 1 ('Inspired by Tolstoy's Kreutzer Sonata'), 1923 (Prague: Supraphon; 2nd edn, rev. Milan Škampa, 1982), second movement, bars 179–87. All subsequent extracts from this work refer to this edition.

various rhythmic, metric, modal and textural contexts.<sup>48</sup> Such context is provided primarily by the underlying ostinatos (*sčasovky*), which often persist throughout whole formal sections. In other words, a particular ostinato pattern invests each section with

<sup>48</sup> 'Simple reiteration, the juxtaposition of successive statements of a theme (as well as juxtaposition of different themes without a transition) is more common than development. [...] The comparison with a mosaic in visual arts springs to mind' ('Prosté opakování, kdy je téma několikrát postaveno vedle sebe (podobně jako se staví vedle sebe bez přechodu i různá témata), je častější než vývoj [...] Maně napadá srovnání s mozaikou ve výtvarném umění'). Josef Berg, *K Janáčkovu skladebnému projevu (On Janáček's Compositional Idiom)* (Brno, 1991), 10.

Example 2. Opening ostinato, Pavel Haas, String Quartet no. 2 ('From the Monkey Mountains'), op. 7, 1925 (Prague: Tempo; Berlin: Bote & Bock, 1994), first movement, bars 1–2, violin 2 and viola. All subsequent extracts from this work refer to this edition.

Andante (♩ = 58)  
con sordino

ppp

con sordino

ppp

a distinctive identity and its change often amounts to a significant form-constitutive event.

A number of parallels with the Janáčekian compositional-technical features described above will be observed in the following analysis of the first movement of Haas's quartet, in which I explain how an abstract dynamic trajectory is 'distilled' from pictorial rhythmic elements. One of the contemporary critics observed that the first movement 'depicts the composer's rambling through a hilly landscape', portraying with 'apt humour' the 'pleasure drawn from movement and events along the journey'.<sup>49</sup> Haas's mention of the 'rhythm of a broad landscape' in his commentary on the quartet arguably refers to the ostinato rhythm at the beginning of the first movement. The opening section bears resemblance to the melodic and rhythmic patterns of the blues: notice the 'off-beat' rhythmic pattern in what would be the piano left-hand part (see Example 2) and the chromatic inflections of the solo violin melody hovering above this accompaniment (see Example 3). Once F is established as the 'tonic', the chromatic variability of the third and seventh degrees (the 'blue notes', in this case A/A♭ and E/E♭ respectively) becomes apparent.

Quite remarkable is the way in which the initial 'blues' ostinato comes to a stop by means of the gradual augmentation of rhythmic values, only to be replaced by another, more agitated one (see Example 4). In fact, this is a distinctly Janáčekian technique, based on movement across rhythmic layers. As is often the case in Janáček's formal designs, the onset of a new ostinato pattern marks the beginning of a new formal section (marked 'b' in the schema shown in Figure 2). The characteristically Janáčekian texture consisting of ostinatos, trills and melodic/rhythmic fragments scattered across the score is even more apparent in Example 5. Moreover, the march-like 'oom-pah' accompaniment figure reinforces the music's association with bodily movement.

<sup>49</sup> 'V kvartetě Haasově [...] jsou líčeny toulky skladatelovy v hornatém moravském kraji zvaném Opičí hory. Radost z pohybu a cestovní příhody jsou vyjádřeny s bystrým humorem.' *Tribuna*, 19 March 1926.

Example 3. Blues-scale inflections in the opening theme, Haas, String Quartet no. 2, first movement, bars 3–10, violin 1.

Musical notation for Example 3, showing blues-scale inflections in the opening theme, Haas, String Quartet no. 2, first movement, bars 3–10, violin 1. The notation is in treble clef, 2/4 time, and consists of two staves. The first staff shows a melodic line with notes G4, A4, Bb4, and C5, with slurs and fingerings 7<sub>h</sub> and 7<sub>b</sub> above. The second staff shows a similar melodic line with notes G4, A4, Bb4, and C5, with slurs and fingerings 3<sub>h</sub> 3<sub>b</sub> above. The notes are marked with flats (Bb) and have a bluesy, inflected quality.

Example 4. Change of the underlying ostinato, Haas, String Quartet no. 2, first movement, bars 38–40.

Musical notation for Example 4, showing a change of the underlying ostinato, Haas, String Quartet no. 2, first movement, bars 38–40. The notation is in 3/4 time and consists of two systems. The first system shows four staves (violin 1, violin 2, viola, and cello/bass) with a common key signature of one sharp (F#). The second system shows the same four staves with a common key signature of one flat (Bb). The first system is marked *pp* and the second system is marked *mf*. The tempo marking *un poco animando* is present above the second system. The notation includes slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

		(movements 1 and 2)				(movement 3)		(movement 4)	
		ESCALATION				REPOSE		FINALE	
A	a	b	a'		B		A'		
1		40	62 66	80	83		137 140 144		171

Figure 2. Rhythm and form in ‘Landscape’.

Throughout the whole movement, this passage is most likely to evoke the image of a tourist marching through a hilly landscape. One could even see in the extremely high register of the violin part and in the trill, typically associated with excitement in Janáček’s music, signs of the ‘pleasure drawn from movement’ mentioned in the review quoted above.<sup>50</sup>

Example 5. Janáčekian texture, Haas, String Quartet no. 2, first movement, bar 44.

<sup>50</sup> Berg regards the trill as a special case of *sčasovka* (ostinato rhythmic pattern) because it functions as a ‘vehicle of mood’: ‘From Janáček’s perspective it always signifies tensions. This effect stems from its association with whirling, unrest. [...] The same holds true of tremolo’ (‘Janáčkův trylek [...] je prvkem výrazu – nositelem nálady. Znamená v pojetí Janáčkově vždy napětí a tento účín je dán jeho analogií s vířením, neklidem. [...] Totéž platí i o tremolu’). Berg, *K Janáčkovu skladebnému projevu*, 17.



Example 6. 'Birdsong' motif, Haas, String Quartet no. 2, first movement, bars 48–52.

*più animato*  
(♩ = 96)

The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system (bars 48-50) is in 3/4 time. The first violin part has a melody with a slur and accents, marked *mf leggiero*. The second violin part has a tremolo marked *p* and *pizz.* The third and fourth strings have a tremolo marked *p*. The second system (bars 51-52) is in 2/4 time. The first violin part has a melody marked *arco*. The second violin part has a tremolo. The third and fourth strings have a tremolo. The time signature changes to 2/4 in the second system.

With a rapid change of texture, the motif that was previously presented in crotchets reappears in semiquavers, transformed into a characteristically short and sharply articulated Janáčekian melodic fragment. Haas's mention of the 'rhythm of birdsong' in his commentary undoubtedly refers to the section illustrated in Example 6. The return of the opening ostinato in rhythmic diminution marks the beginning of what might appear to be a recapitulation (see Example 7). In fact, this is another step up the ladder of rhythmic layers, a part of the continuous escalation of momentum which spans the entire first section of the movement. The increasing rhythmic activity is accompanied by textural complication, the employment of extremely high registers and the accumulation of motivic material (the 'birdsong motif' gradually becomes submerged in the ostinato).

When the intensification reaches its climax, another rapid cut in tempo, rhythm and texture announces the beginning of a contrasting middle section. This is characterized

Example 7. Opening ostinato in diminution and 'birdsong' motif, Haas, String Quartet no. 2, first movement, bars 66–8.

The musical score is presented in three systems, each containing four staves (Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello/Double Bass). The music is in 3/4 time and marked *f* (forte).  
- **System 1 (bars 66-67):** The Violin I part begins with a melodic motif (the 'birdsong' motif) consisting of a half note followed by a quarter note. The other parts play a rhythmic ostinato of eighth notes. A fermata is placed over the first measure of the Violin I part.  
- **System 2 (bar 67):** The Violin I part continues with the melodic motif. The other parts continue the rhythmic ostinato.  
- **System 3 (bar 68):** The Violin I part continues with the melodic motif, which now includes triplet markings. The other parts continue the rhythmic ostinato.

Example 8. Contrasting middle section, Haas, String Quartet no. 2, first movement, bars 90–7.

The musical score for Example 8 is presented in two systems. The first system (bars 90-93) is in 3/4 time and features a melody in the first violin part, marked *amoroso e con dolore* and *p con espress.*. The accompaniment in the other parts is marked *ppp*. The second system (bars 94-97) is marked *poco rit.* and features a melody in the first violin part, marked *p*. The accompaniment in the other parts is marked *ppp*. The score is in 3/4 time and features a melody in the first violin part and a chordal accompaniment in the other parts.

by homophonic texture, slow tempo (*Lento ma non troppo*) and a regular, albeit ambivalent metrical pattern: whereas the melody is cast in 3/4 metre, the chordal accompaniment is notated in 6/8 (see Example 8). The regular slow pulse of this section invites another bodily metaphor, as it corresponds with the rate of the human heart during rest (note the composer's mention of 'the warm song of a human heart' in the commentary quoted above). The middle section, which is permeated by this regular beat, thus physiologically associates the moment of repose following the escalation of activity in the first part of the movement. At its end, however, the slow pulse is progressively disturbed by outbursts of the first section's ostinato, the assertion of which marks the beginning of the 'recapitulation' (see Example 9). This agitated rhythmic pulse persists until the end of the movement, providing a unifying 'background' for the recapitulation of the movement's motivic material, including the theme of the slow section. Figure 2 (see p. 76) represents the occurrence of the most extensively used of the ostinato patterns observed above. There are four main rhythmic patterns,

Example 9. Intrusion of the ostinato, Haas, String Quartet no. 2, first movement, bars 136–8.

**poco più mosso**

(♩ = ♩) **con brio**

138

which have been arranged in descending order of rhythmic values. The scheme indicates that the changes of the underlying rhythmic pattern delineate the movement's formal sections. Throughout the first section (A), rhythmic values are gradually diminished. Simultaneously, layers of ostinatos are gradually superimposed to increase rhythmic activity and textural density. The momentum suddenly drops in the middle section (B) and is resumed in the final section (A'). Significantly, the resulting dynamic trajectory, which follows the pattern 'escalation–repose–finale', is also replicated on a large scale in the succession of the four movements of the piece, which thus, as the composer himself suggested, 'culminates rhythmically and dynamically in its last movement'.

A parallel emerges with the endeavours of Honegger in his symphonic movements *Pacific 231* and *Rugby*, in which formal design is underpinned by metro-rhythmic

procedures.<sup>51</sup> From the perspective of Teige's writings, these works would have been very attractive owing to their connotations of rational 'construction', sports, bodily movement and so on. Honegger's *Pacific 231* has more immediate relevance to Haas's 'Landscape', not least in that it was performed in Brno in 1924.<sup>52</sup> Arguably, there is a conceptual parallel in the preoccupation with rhythm and momentum. In both cases a particular dynamic trajectory is created by gradual diminution of rhythmic values and increasing density of contrapuntal texture.

A more detailed discussion of the form-constitutive functions of rhythm in this movement cannot be undertaken here, as it is not the primary concern of this study.<sup>53</sup> However, I wish to conclude the discussion of 'Landscape' by arguing as follows: first, Haas, influenced by particular aspects of the aesthetic of Poetism (as epitomized in Teige's notion of 'poetry for corporeal and spatial senses'), used Janáčekian compositional-technical devices in order to create a formal design determined primarily by rhythm – the musical parameter that is most intimately correlated with physical movement, speed, dynamism and so on. Secondly, Janáček was a crucial source for Haas's use of rhythm as a medium of communicating various emotional and sensual impressions by means of physiological empathy. It is remarkable that Janáček's thoughts on the expressive potential of rhythm, although they were informed by nineteenth-century sensitivity, could still be appropriated by Haas within a strikingly different aesthetic framework informed by Poetism.

### 'Carriage, Horseman and Horse': a grotesque ride

The second movement of the quartet relies on tone-painting much more than the first. As far as its 'programme' is concerned, the title 'Carriage, Horseman and Horse' and Haas's reference to the 'irregular movement of a rural vehicle' in his commentary are the only clues given to the listener. Nonetheless, when guided by the music, one needs no further description to imagine the creaking cart uneasily moving off, gradually picking up momentum, bouncing along an uneven track, getting out of control and finally breaking down. Contemporary critics were put off by the frivolous humour of this movement, which many of them described as 'grotesque'.

Since the notion of the grotesque is central to the following line of argument, I will proceed by summarizing briefly the main features of the grotesque and its manifestation

<sup>51</sup> For a detailed discussion of the role of rhythm in these works, see Keith Waters, *Rhythmic and Contrapuntal Structures in the Music of Arthur Honegger* (Burlington, VT, 2002).

<sup>52</sup> The date of the performance of *Pacific 231* in Brno (5 October 1924) is mentioned in Peduzzi, *Pavel Haas*, 49.

<sup>53</sup> The relationship between rhythm and form in Haas's music constitutes an independent strand of my forthcoming Ph.D. dissertation.

in music, drawing on studies by Esti Sheinberg and Julie Brown.<sup>54</sup> The grotesque has been described as a hybrid form, a bizarre and irrational cluster of incongruities in which all kinds of boundaries are blurred – typically those between laughter and horror; merriment and frenzy; sanity and insanity; life and death; animate and inanimate; man, machine, animal and vegetable.<sup>55</sup> The sense of hybridism, ambivalence and confusion can be conveyed through the juxtaposition of musical elements that are incongruous in terms of style, character or musical syntax.

It has also been argued that grotesque art communicates through the medium of the human body and that sensual perception and physical empathy take precedence over rational, conceptual thought.<sup>56</sup> The effect of the grotesque is created primarily by violations of an implicit bodily norm, namely through exaggeration and distortion. Sheinberg suggested that hyperbolic distortion of the bodily norm can be musically articulated by using a tempo which is too fast for human motion, a register too high for the human voice, or ‘unnatural’ rhythmic patterns, contrasting with the natural rhythms of the human body (walk, heartbeat and so on).<sup>57</sup> Musical instances of the grotesque often make use of dance gestures because of their association with bodily movement. Sheinberg suggested the following list of musical features which ‘enhance a feeling of compulsive obsession that relates to the insane, bizarre side of the grotesque and to its unreal, unnatural aspects’: a ‘tendency to triple metre, which enhances the feeling of whirling, uncontrollable motion, sudden unexpected outbursts, loud dynamics, extreme pitches, marked rhythmical stresses, dissonances or distortions of expected harmonic progressions, and many repetitions of simple and short patterns’.<sup>58</sup>

The first example of grotesque exaggeration and distortion in Haas’s quartet appears at the very beginning of the second movement (see [Example 10](#)). The coarse opening glissandos paraphrase the opening motif of the first movement. The initial notes (E, D, Eb, Db, C) of what was originally a fluid melody played in the upper register of the violin are now mechanically repeated, encumbered with heavy accents, played in parallel seconds in the lower register of viola and cello, and, most provocatively, disfigured by ‘creaking’ glissandos. As the title suggests, this musical effect may illustrate the squeaking wheels and the horse’s neighing. In any case, the movement opens with a grotesque musical image of a body (possibly a hybrid body conflating the animal with the vehicle) distorted and pushed to the extreme. Another level of distortion is added when an incongruent metrical pattern ( $3/8 + 3/8 + 2/8$ ) is introduced in the

<sup>54</sup> Esti Sheinberg, *Irony, Satire, Parody and the Grotesque in the Music of Shostakovich: A Theory of Musical Incongruities* (Aldershot, 2000); Julie Brown, *Bartók and the Grotesque: Studies in Modernity, the Body and Contradiction in Music* (Aldershot, 2007).

<sup>55</sup> See Brown, *Bartók and the Grotesque*, 54. See also Sheinberg, *Irony, Satire, Parody and the Grotesque*, 221–5.

<sup>56</sup> See Brown, *Bartók and the Grotesque*, 54. See also Sheinberg, *Irony, Satire, Parody and the Grotesque*, 215.

<sup>57</sup> See Sheinberg, *Irony, Satire, Parody and the Grotesque*, 211.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

Example 10. The opening glissandos, Haas, String Quartet no. 2, second movement, bars 1–4.

Andante (♩ = 58)

accompaniment, creating the sense of irregular or awkward motion. At the same time, the pitches of the initial motif are adapted to yield a pentatonic collection, which, through its traditional association with exoticism, makes the section sound ‘strange’ (see [Example 11](#)).

In contrast with the rather static character of the opening, the second section (*più mosso*) is emphatically motoric. A new, highly repetitive theme suggestive of a horse’s trot is introduced in the second violin (quavers), accompanied by semiquavers phrased in groups of three. The resulting cross-rhythms convey the impression of ‘irregular’ and ‘bouncy’ movement. The realm of pitch betrays another incongruity: like the opening theme of the first movement, the ‘horse-trot’ theme consists essentially of a descending blues scale, which is characterized by an inherent ambivalence between major and minor mode. As a result, the musical depiction of the ride oscillates, in Sheinberg’s terms, between ‘euphoric’ and ‘dysphoric’

Example 11. Metric conflict and pentatonicism, Haas, String Quartet no. 2, second movement, bars 17–18.

values, traditionally associated with ‘major’ and ‘minor’ modality respectively (see Example 12).<sup>59</sup> The theme, originally presented in ‘comfortable’ tempo (quavers) and register, is subsequently repeated in double speed (semiquavers) and transposed to an extremely high register, with the ‘bouncing’ effect enhanced by dotted rhythm. Significantly, the composer annotated this section ‘tečkovaný cirkus’ (‘dotted circus’) on the margin of his autograph (see Example 13).<sup>60</sup> Indeed, this section is marked by a musical idiom which is strikingly similar to that of the music accompanying actual circus performances. Particularly characteristic is the use of stock accompaniment patterns associated with the march or a quick dance in duple metre such as the polka. In keeping with these contextual associations, the passage is marked by the typically clownish mixture of humorousness and silliness. First, the newly added components (dotted rhythm, dance/march topic) further exaggerate the already prominent emphasis on physical movement, which is thus made excessively explicit and satirized.<sup>61</sup> Secondly, highlighting the ‘inessential’ musical components introduces an element of the banal.<sup>62</sup> The bars that follow Example 13 are literally filled up by the repetitive accompaniment pattern in order to expand the four-bar ‘dotted circus’ theme into a neat (and in itself pronouncedly banal) eight-bar phrase.

The exaggeration of the obvious and inessential is a satirical device that invests the sense of merriment with a mocking undertone. However, the same strategy may also serve the purpose of the grotesque, which prevails once such hyperbolic distortion evokes a sense of obsession, insanity and frenzy that overrides the initial sense of humorousness, gaiety and merriment.<sup>63</sup>

This is surely the case in the violent motoric climax that immediately follows the ‘circus’ section, where the ‘horse-trot’ theme is stated in double diminution (demisemiquavers), played by all four instruments in unison. This ‘liquidation’ of the

<sup>59</sup> Sheinberg draws on the familiar fact that modal inflections of certain scalar degrees, such as minor third and raised fourth, are associated with ‘dysphoric’ values, while others, especially major third and sixth, are associated with ‘euphoric’ values. Of course, such interpretation of interval qualities is culturally determined, but it is highly relevant for the perception of music and therefore crucial for the construction of semantic ambiguities. For example, Sheinberg notes that the Russian composer Mikhail Gnesin metaphorically described his experience of Jewish music as ‘laughter through tears’ and therefore considered it the epitome of the grotesque in music. She explains that such perception is largely based on the intervallic properties of the so-called Jewish Dorian mode, which ‘is in itself ambiguous, with its dysphoric minor third and raised fourth and euphoric raised sixth degrees’. See Sheinberg, *Irony, Satire, Parody and the Grotesque*, 302, 305–6.

<sup>60</sup> Haas’s autograph is deposited in the Moravian Museum, Brno, Department of Music History, sign. A 29.801a, fol. 15.

<sup>61</sup> In Sheinberg’s theory, the principal strategies of satirical distortion of an object include such ‘insertion of a new component’ which serves to ‘satirize an implicit quality of the object by enhancing it, thus making it explicit’. See Sheinberg, *Irony, Satire, Parody and the Grotesque*, 98.

<sup>62</sup> Among other strategies of satirical distortion, Sheinberg mentions the ‘removal of the essential’ and the ‘manifest presence of the inessential’. The latter typically involves ‘the emphatic use of musical banalities, musical clichés and/or musical background material’. See *ibid.*, 88–9.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 221.



Example 12. 'Horse-trot' theme in quavers, Haas, String Quartet no. 2, second movement, bars 24–32.

The image displays a musical score for a string quartet, consisting of three systems of staves. Each system includes a violin part (top staff), a viola part (middle staff), and a cello/bass part (bottom staff). The music is in 2/4 time and features a 'Horse-trot' theme in quavers. The first system (bars 24-26) begins with a *p* dynamic in the violin and *mf* in the other parts. The second system (bars 27-29) starts at bar 27 with a *tr* (trill) in the violin and *mf* in the other parts, and includes the instruction *poco a poco accel.* The third system (bars 30-32) begins at bar 30 with a *tr* in the violin and *mf* in the other parts, and concludes at bar 32 with a *f* dynamic in all parts. The score includes various musical notations such as trills, accents, and dynamic markings.



theme leads to a collapse and all movement comes to a stop within a few bars of *Tempo I*, before the whole process of gradual accumulation of momentum starts again from the opening glissandos, with minor variations to texture and figuration (see [Example 14](#)). This is likely to be the very passage that reminded the critics of Honegger's *Pacific 231*. Indeed, it is arguable that Haas picked up and trivialized the idea of acceleration and deceleration of the supposed locomotive (reduced here to a 'rural vehicle') and thus added a parodic dimension to his piece.

What the two pieces also have in common is the technique of gradual diminution of rhythmic values, the application of which is also self-consciously trivial (certainly in comparison with *Pacific 231*). In this case, this becomes the principal means of

Example 14. 'Liquidation' of the theme and motoric collapse, Haas, String Quartet no. 2, second movement, bars 51–8.

ff

ff

ff

ff

Tempo I (♩ = 58)

53

ff

mf

mf

ff

mf

mf

ff

mf

mf

grotesque distortion: the musical material associated with bodily movement is rendered 'too fast' and often simultaneously transposed to registers that are 'too high'. This process also implicitly suggests the mechanization of the animate: what was initially a comfortable horse's trot has been accelerated into motor-like motion. The theme's gradual rhythmic diminution is reminiscent of the shifting gears of a motor vehicle. This yields a typically grotesque image of a hybrid body conflating an animal with a machine.

### Cinematic aspects of the second movement

There are several reasons to draw a parallel between the second movement of Haas's quartet and the medium of film. First, the illustrative character of the music invites visual representation. The movement's title – 'Carriage, Horseman and Horse' – immediately suggests a picture, which the music sets in motion or, one might say, 'animates'. One might even wonder whether Haas was aware of René Clair's 1924 film *Entr'acte* with music by Satie, in which the image of a funeral vehicle drawn by a camel gains much prominence. Starting in slow motion, the funeral procession gradually turns into a chase after the runaway hearse, racing wildly through the streets of Paris to the accompaniment of Satie's music. This film's absurd humour and satirical undertone is highly characteristic of the subversive spirit of Dada, which was closely related to the sentiments preached by Poetism.

Secondly, the term 'grotesque', which was repeatedly used in reviews of the piece, has also been used as a noun in Czech to refer to cartoons and short film comedies known as 'slapsticks' in English.<sup>64</sup> It is thus highly probable that when the Czech critics referred to Haas's music as 'grotesque', their understanding of the term was at least partly informed by its connotation with slapstick comedies of the day. Finally, American slapsticks (especially those made by Charlie Chaplin), which gained immense popularity throughout Europe in the 1920s, were celebrated by Poetism as the ultimate form of popular entertainment, outmatching circuses, cabarets and variety shows.<sup>65</sup>

There are several 'technological' parallels between the second movement of the quartet and early films and cartoons. Haas inherited from Janáček elements of his 'montage' technique, which is essentially cinematic in its juxtaposition of stretches of music divided by 'cuts' rather than transitions. The mechanistic metaphor of shifting gears, used above to describe Haas's technique of progressive rhythmic diminution,

<sup>64</sup> This use of the word 'grotesque' was probably inspired by the German terms 'Film-Grotesken' or 'Grotesk-Filme'. See Peter Jelavich, review of Thomas J. Saunders, *Hollywood in Berlin: American Cinema and Weimar Germany* (Berkeley, CA, 1994), in *Central European History*, 28 (1995), 105–7.

<sup>65</sup> See Karel Schulz, 'Groteska', *Český filmový svět*, 4/2 (March 1926), repr. in *Avantgarda známá a neznámá*, ed. Vlačín, ii, 278–80 (pp. 279–80).

is also applicable to the speed with which a reel of film unrolls. The technological limitations of early film projectors often rendered movement unnaturally fast and therefore jerky and mechanistic, which enhanced the comical effect of slapsticks. Besides, in the above-mentioned film by Clair, slow, fast-forward and reverse motion was purposefully used (besides other visual effects) to convey the sense of the ever faster and 'wilder' ride of the runaway hearse. The repetitive nature of much of Haas's music is suggestive of the 'loop' technique widely used in early 1920s cartoons. The movement's trivial narrative is repeated several times with minor variations before the cart joyfully drives off (a moment inviting the obligatory fadeout). The whole movement is roughly five minutes in duration, which just about matches the length of contemporaneous 'shorties'.

There are also similarities between the types of distortion described above and the repertoire of visual gags used in 1920s cartoons, such as those made by Walt Disney, in which grotesque imagery is virtually omnipresent. Much of the comical effect of Disney's cartoons was based on the images of distorted, dismembered and hybrid bodies mingling animate and inanimate elements. Unlike the bodies of live actors in film comedies, those of cartoon characters have no limits. They can take on hybrid forms, they can move in awkward ways that defy the laws of physics, they can be distorted or even dismembered and still, unlike static pictures to which earlier manifestations of the grotesque were confined, keep moving.<sup>66</sup> I am not suggesting that Haas was directly influenced by a particular Disney cartoon, but I do argue that his musical illustration relies for its effects, as Disney cartoons do, on the distorted image of the body in motion. It is also worth mentioning that forms of popular entertainment such as sports events, circuses and fairs are commonplace in Disney cartoons, and also influenced the choice of soundtracks. Thus, many of his cartoons were accompanied by circus-like music similar to that invoked by Haas in the 'dotted circus' section.<sup>67</sup>

The most profound affinity, however, resides in the emphasis on humour. Poetism celebrated slapstick as the art of laughter, which is universal, non-elitist and unhindered by conceptual intricacies and language barriers. I argue that 'Carriage, Horseman and Horse' was conceived as a musical analogue of slapsticks, a humorous mischief to be enjoyed and laughed at, one which is self-consciously simple in order to be as comprehensible as the visual gags of slapsticks. As such, it could even be regarded as a satirical commentary on the metaphysical baggage of Romantic 'programmatic' compositions, as an avant-garde statement of rejection of the preceding artistic tradition.

<sup>66</sup> Such images could have been appalling had the overall purport not been predominantly humorous. Nonetheless, in certain instances the comic element does not unequivocally dominate. For instance, Disney exploited the quintessentially grotesque topic of the Dance of Death in the 'Skeleton Dance' episode of his *Silly Symphonies* and in the *Haunted House* episode of the Mickey Mouse series (both 1929).

<sup>67</sup> For an example of a 'bouncy' horse ride and a grotesque dance (performed by a 'baddie' with a wooden leg) accompanied by a circus-like soundtrack, see the Disney cartoon *The Cactus Kid*, available on <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1UoD6bDoKY0>> (accessed 28 December 2014).

## The grotesque, carnival and Poetism: a Bakhtinian perspective

So far, the grotesque has been treated merely as an artistic device. However, the meaning conveyed by the device depends on its particular aesthetic and cultural context. For example, Brown's interpretation of the grotesque in Bartók's music is underpinned by the framework of Expressionism. I argue that Haas's use of the device, informed by the programme of Poetism, necessarily produces different meanings.

For the purpose of her study, Brown regards 'the grotesque body with its emphasis on distortion and abnormality, and conflation of the comic and the terrifying' as 'a perfect figurative manifestation' of 'early twentieth-century crises of subjectivity'.<sup>68</sup> Interestingly, the modern urban industrial world, which had been regarded as the source of alienation, fear and anxiety by the Expressionists, was considered enchanting rather than threatening from the perspective of Poetism. As a world-view, Teige argued, Poetism was 'nothing but [...] excitement before the spectacle of the modern world. Nothing but loving inclination to life and all its manifestations, the passion of modernity [...]. Nothing but joy, enchantment and an amplified optimistic trust in the beauty of life.'<sup>69</sup>

Bakhtin offered an alternative notion of the grotesque that is much more compatible with the agenda of Poetism. He shows that the 'dark' side of the grotesque, while always lurking in the background, need not always dominate, and that the irrationality and hybridism need not always be threatening. As David K. Danow has explained, Bakhtin differentiated between two concepts of the grotesque according to the presence or absence of the moment of renewal or rebirth: whereas the 'medieval and Renaissance' grotesque was endowed with regenerative power stemming from the principle of laughter, the 'Romantic' grotesque lost the power of regeneration and became the expression of insecurity and fear of the world.<sup>70</sup> The latter type of the grotesque is static (the state of aberration, defect and death is final and therefore threatening), whereas the former is essentially dynamic: 'The grotesque image reflects a phenomenon in transformation, an as yet unfinished metamorphosis, of death and birth, growing and becoming.'<sup>71</sup> Bakhtin's emphasis on rebirth rather than death is matched by a focus on (immortal) mankind rather than on (mortal) man; as Danow points out, the transcendent laughter belongs to collectives, not to individuals.<sup>72</sup> This observation also illuminates the difference involved in understanding the grotesque in the subjectivist 'Romantic' era (which gave rise to Expressionism).

<sup>68</sup> Brown, *Bartók and the Grotesque*, 46.

<sup>69</sup> 'Nic než [...] vzrušení před podívanou moderního světa. Nic než milostná náklonnost k životu a k jeho výjevům, vášně modernosti [...]. Nic než radost, kouzla a znásobená optimistická důvěra v krásu života.' Teige, 'Poetismus', 557.

<sup>70</sup> David K. Danow, *The Spirit of Carnival: Magical Realism and the Grotesque* (Lexington, KY, 2004), 36.

<sup>71</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World*, trans. Helene Iswolsky (Cambridge, MA, 1968), 24, quoted in Danow, *The Spirit of Carnival*, 35.

<sup>72</sup> Danow, *The Spirit of Carnival*, 37.

Influenced by Bakhtin's ideas, Sheinberg construes the grotesque as the 'positive' counterpart of what she calls the 'negative existential irony': 'Both have two layers of contradictory meaning, neither of which is to be preferred: both regard doubt and disorientation as the basic condition of human existence. Finally, the main purport of the grotesque, as well as that of existential irony, is its unresolvability.'<sup>73</sup> The difference, which resides in the mode of coexistence of the unresolvable ambiguities, is encapsulated in the terms 'infinite negation' and 'infinite affirmation':

The intrinsic irony of the human condition can take two opposing directions: on the one hand, it can continue with its contradictory meanings in a process of infinite negation, resulting in Kierkegaard's concept of irony, which eventually is a nihilistic despair. On the other hand, it can start a similarly infinite line of affirmations, that will eventually accumulate to form the Bakhtinian concept of the grotesque, in which all possible meanings of a phenomenon are clustered and accepted as an experienced reality.<sup>74</sup>

The grotesque, in a Bakhtinian sense, is based on the principle of acceptance of all ambiguities, the outcome of which is an accumulation and an 'excess of meanings'.<sup>75</sup> Thus, as Sheinberg explains, Bakhtin did not conceive the grotesque as destructive and nihilistic, but rather 'as a victorious assertion of all life's infinite "buds and sprouts"'.<sup>76</sup> It remains to point out that Bakhtin's views on the grotesque are intrinsically linked with his notion of carnival, as his use of the term 'carnavalesque-grotesque' clearly indicates.<sup>77</sup>

Renate Lachmann explains the social significance of carnival in terms of the juxtaposition of 'culture and counter-culture' – in the case of Bakhtin's study of Rabelais, the juxtaposition of the strictly hierarchical model of medieval society with the 'folk culture of laughter'.<sup>78</sup> Typically, carnival stages the world turned 'upside down', relativizing and ridiculing the norms and values of the dominant culture. Importantly, the effect of this travesty is not destructive, but regenerative:

The temporary immersion of official culture in folk culture leads to a process of regeneration that sets in motion and dynamically energizes the notions of value and hierarchy inverted by the parodistic counter-norms of the carnival. In this way the culture of laughter revives and regenerates the petrified remains of official institutions and, as it were, hands them back to official culture.<sup>79</sup>

<sup>73</sup> Sheinberg, *Irony, Satire, Parody and the Grotesque*, 208.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 209.

<sup>77</sup> See Danow, *The Spirit of Carnival*, 31: 'Bakhtin rightly combines (in recognition of their potential convergence) the two concepts in a single expression, the carnivalesque-grotesque.'

<sup>78</sup> Renate Lachmann, 'Bakhtin and Carnival: Culture and Counter-Culture', *Mikhail Bakhtin*, ed. Michael E. Gardiner, 4 vols. (London, 2002), ii, 60–90 (p. 75).

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.

Carnival thus facilitates a mythological death and rebirth through the principle of laughter, its recourse being to all that is material, corporeal, sensual or sexual and to the ‘unofficial, uncanonized relations among human beings’.<sup>80</sup> Bakhtin, in his study of folk culture in the work of Rabelais, construed carnival as a force which makes it possible ‘to consecrate inventive freedom, [...] to liberate from the prevailing point of view of the world’ and which ‘offers the chance to have a new outlook of the world, to realize the relative nature of all that exists, and to enter a completely new order of things’.<sup>81</sup>

The dialectical pair of culture and counter-culture matches Teige’s conceptual duality between ‘Poetism’, representing imagination, creativity and playfulness, and ‘Constructivism’, representing logic, rationality and discipline.<sup>82</sup> If Lachmann’s concept of culture and counter-culture is transposed to the sociocultural reality of the 1920s, the industrialized modern society based on inexorable logic, rationality and functionality represents the dominant culture which ‘has succumbed to cosmic terror’, since its structure and approach to work and production is goal-orientated, ‘finalistic’ and ‘directed toward the “end”’.<sup>83</sup> Poetism, on the other hand, can be construed as the counter-culture of laughter, capable of revitalizing the former.

Teige’s characterization of Poetism takes on a distinctly Bakhtinian tone as he describes it as ‘the culture of miraculous astonishment’: ‘Poetism wants to turn life into a spectacular entertaining affair, an eccentric carnival, a harlequinade of sensations and fantasies, a delirious film sequence, a miraculous kaleidoscope.’<sup>84</sup> Teige further claims that Poetism ‘was born in the climate of cheerful conviviality, in a world which laughs; what does it matter if there are tears in its eyes?’<sup>85</sup> This quotation implies that Poetism as a life perspective is not turning a blind eye to the difficulties of life. Nonetheless, to put it in a Bakhtinian manner, the irreconcilable contradictions of modern existence are to be accepted through the principle of laughter.

The art of Poetism invited its recipients to participate in a carnivalesque feast, to overcome the ‘cosmic terror’, the frustration and alienation elicited in human subjects by the ‘finalistic’ modern society, to embrace Poetism as a *modus vivendi* and to be reborn in the state of poiesis.<sup>86</sup>

<sup>80</sup> Danow, *The Spirit of Carnival*, 3.

<sup>81</sup> Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World*, 34, quoted in Danow, *The Spirit of Carnival*, 142.

<sup>82</sup> Teige, ‘Poetismus’, 560–1.

<sup>83</sup> Lachmann, ‘Bakhtin and Carnival’, 73.

<sup>84</sup> ‘Kultura záračného oslnění. Poetismus chce udělat ze života velikolepý zábavní podnik. Excentrický karneval, harlekyvádů citů a představ, opilé filmové pásmo, záračný kaleidoskop.’ Teige, ‘Poetismus’, 557.

<sup>85</sup> ‘Zrodilo se [umění poetismu] v atmosféře jaré družnosti, ve světě, který se směje; co na tom, slzí-li mu oči.’ *Ibid.*, 556–7 (trans. in Matthew S. Witkovsky, ‘Staging Language: Milča Mayerová and the Czech Book “Alphabet”’, *Art Bulletin*, 86 (2004), 114–35 (p. 114)). Witkovsky himself uses a modified translation from a reprint of Teige’s article in *Between Worlds: A Sourcebook of Central European Avant-Gardes, 1910–1930*, ed. Timothy O. Benson and Eva Forgacs (Los Angeles, CA, and Cambridge, MA, 2002), 580.

<sup>86</sup> Teige, ‘Poetismus’, 557.



## Haas and the ‘eccentric carnival of artists’ in Brno

As noted above, the activities of Devětsil in Brno included the organization of social events. Figure 3 shows the advertisement for one of the ‘Eccentric Eight o’Clocks of Artists’ organized as a run-up to the ‘Eccentric Carnival of Artists’. Both of these events took place in 1925, just months before Haas started the composition of his quartet.

It is noteworthy that the advertisement promises an ‘original American jazz band’. In fact, this is not the only time a jazz band is mentioned in connection with the ‘eccentric’ events of Devětsil. An article reflecting upon the Eccentric Carnival of Artists, published in the journal *Salon* (the article’s first page is shown in Figure 4), reports that invitations to the event included the following lines from Nezval’s poem *Podivuhodný kouzelník* (*Miraculous Magician*):

A básníci už neprosí  
za chudou prebendu,  
ti baví se jak černoši  
při řvoucím JAZZ-BANDU.<sup>87</sup>

(And poets no longer beg  
for a modest stipend,  
they have a good time like black men do  
with a roaring JAZZ BAND.)

**II. excentrický eight  
o'clock umělců**

Établ. St. Bogyi.  
I. étage.  
2. II. 1925.  
20. hodina.

Tango, Pas au double,  
Valse moderne, Fox  
blues, Sambo, One step.

III. eight o'clock  
14. II. 1925

I. excentrický  
Karneval umělců  
23. II. 1925.

Anecdotes,  
poèmes d'amour,  
de bons vins,  
Original  
american  
jazzband

Reklamace: Redakce „Pásmo“ Brno-Julíánov.  
Výbor I. excentrického Karnevalu umělců, Brno, kavárna „Slavie“

Figure 3. Advertisement for the ‘2nd Eccentric Eight o’Clock of Artists’. *Pásmo*, 1/7–8 (1924–5), 9.

<sup>87</sup> These lines from the poem are quoted in -ak-, ‘I. Excentrický Karneval Umělců v Brně’ (‘1st Eccentric Carnival of Artists in Brno’), *Salon*, 3/10 (1925), no page numbers. *Podivuhodný kouzelník* was first published in *Revoluční sborník Devětsil* (*Devětsil Revolutionary Almanac*), ed. Jaroslav Seifert and Karel Teige (Prague, 1922).

## I. excentrický karneval umělců v Brně.

Letošní zimní období v Brně se vyznačovalo neobyčejným ruchem uměleckého života, jehož jsme dříve nepozorovali. Byla nám vždy napadna disonance mezi uměleckým životem velikých měst Západu (Paříž, Nizza) Severu (Berlin, Stockholm) a uměleckým životem tohoto miniaturního velkoměsta — Brna. Veselí, humor, excentricita, projevy moderních tendencí uměleckých, jež v městech s tradicí častěji dosahují až varietní závažnosti a teatrální monumentalnosti, blikaly tu dosud nepatrnými světélky, o nichž se veřejnost nedověděla. Letos náhle uprostřed cyklu přednášek o moderní architektuře, jež s přednáškami Brněnského Devětsilu jsou osvěžujícím proudem ve vleklem a jaksi zdánlivě znaveném kulturním vlnobíhu moravské metropole, octly se v rukou zájemců prve pozvánky na 3 excentrické night o'clocky umělců a jejich I. excentrický karneval. Hýřily-li tyto pozvánky vtipem v úpravě, našli jsme též vtip v jejich textu, jenž oznamoval česko-francouzsko-německý program bud taktó; fox-blues, de bons vins, poèmes d'amour et d'esprit, humor, družnost — nebo touto devisou Nezvalovy Pantominy:



*V ateliéru akad. malíře Poděšty připravují se masky pro skupinu „Salon“.*  
Foto Lukáš Dřmouš

Figure 4. First page of '1st Eccentric Carnival of Artists in Brno'. *Salon*, 3/10 (1925), no page numbers. The upper photograph shows members of Devětsil, supposedly dressed up as robots; the lower photo shows the manufacturing of masks. According to the recollection of the Devětsil member Bedřich Václavek (quoted in Macharáčková, 'Z dějin Brněnského Devětsilu', 87), the event involved 'shooting in the manner of the people of the Wild West', 'dancing modern dances' and 'reciting of Dadaist poems' ('stříleli jsme jako lidé z divokého západu [...] recitovali dadaistické básně, tančili moderní tance').

It is doubtful that either of these events would host an ‘original American jazz band’. An intriguing terminological issue was revealed by the Czech popular-music scholar Josef Kotek, who observed that in the early 1920s ‘jazz’

was not used as a general term denoting the new dance music, but at first just as a name for the massive, hitherto unseen percussion set. [...] One can easily imagine the sensation which this rickety instrument [the percussion set] elicited in the limited sonic spectrum of the day. [...] In the first years [of the 1920s] the typological and stylistic characterization of new music seems to have been limited to the percussion set.<sup>88</sup>

Indeed, Haas himself referred to the percussion set as ‘jazz’ in his commentary. His decision to use ‘jazz’ in his string quartet gains special significance, considering the emphasis laid on this iconic feature of modern popular music in the advertisements for Devětsil’s ‘eccentric’ events.

The Eccentric Carnival of Artists was introduced by a speech, delivered by the Brno-based poet Dalibor Chalupa (1900–83),<sup>89</sup> who later published a poem entitled *Karneval*, undoubtedly inspired by the event.<sup>90</sup> Significantly, this poem was set to music by Haas as the male chorus *Karneval*, op. 9 (1928–9):<sup>91</sup>

**Karneval**

(Sbor huláká, jazzband lomozí.)

Masky

vypouklá zrcadla

světelné signály na moři

smutní umírají

lilie povadla

maskovaní lupiči v ulicích táboří

lampiony zrají.

(Sbor huláká, jazzband lomozí.)

Čtyři levé nohy

spirála červenozelená

a klauni ztratili klíče

v ulici beze jména

S bohem, Beatrice.

**Carnival**

(The choir bellows, the jazz band makes a racket.)

Masks

Bulging mirrors

Light signals on the sea

Sad people die

The lily has wilted

Masked bandits camp in the streets

Chinese lanterns ripen.

(The choir bellows, the jazz band makes a racket.)

Four left legs

A red-green spiral

And clowns lost their keys

In a nameless street

Goodbye, Beatrice.

<sup>88</sup> ‘Do širšího povědomí se nový pojem jazzu začal prosazovat teprve o rok později (1920). Nikoli ovšem jako širší zobecnění nové taneční hudby, ale zprvu jen jako název pro masivní, dosud nevídanou soupravu bicích nástrojů. [...] Snadno si lze představit senzací, jakou tento rámusivý instrumentář vyvolával v tehdejším zvukově omezeném spektru. [...] Typová a stylová charakteristika nové hudby jako by se proto v prvních letech zužovala právě jen na bicí soupravu.’ Josef Kotek, *Dějiny české populární hudby a zpěvu* (*History of Czech Popular Music and Song*), 2 vols. (Prague, 1994–8), ii: 1918–1968, 67–8.

<sup>89</sup> Macharáčková, ‘Z dějin Brněnského Devětsilu’, 85–6.

<sup>90</sup> Dalibor Chalupa, ‘Karneval’, *Host*, 4 (1924–5), 166–7.

<sup>91</sup> Two manuscript scores of this piece are deposited in the Moravian Museum, Brno, Department of Music History, sign. A 22.730b and A 54.252. A printed edition was published by Boosey & Hawkes – Bote & Bock in 2006.

(Bubny, činely, výstřel.)	(Drums, cymbals, gunshot.)
Harfou proskočil Indián	An Indian jumped through the harp
Zvony zvou vyzvánějí zvonivě	Bells bellow blasting blows
modrých zvuků lán	A field of bluebells
a vítr zvedl vlasy Godivě	And the wind blew up the hair of Godiva
činely letí k zenitu	Cymbals fly up to the zenith
ztratil se prsten	A ring got lost
není tu – není tu.	It's not here – it's not here.
(Housle.)	(Violin.)
Polibky s pomoranči	Kisses with oranges
dekolté	Décolleté
malé Javanky tančí	Little Javanese girls dance
v náruči Kristinu najdete	Kristina is to be found in [someone's] arms
Ó ohně ó planety	Oh fires oh planets
den začíná	The day begins
Růžová ňadra	Pink breasts
brokáty	Brocades
žije Mona Lisa	Mona Lisa lives
žije Kristina.	Kristina lives.
(Passo double.)	(Paso doble.)
Motýli	Butterflies
bělostné kotníky	White ankles
Opiovým snem pluje gondola	A gondola sails through an opium dream
Země odletěla	The Earth has flown away
a vesmírem tančí	And dances through space
dans excentric	Danse excentrique
na jazzband hraje kolibřík.	A hummingbird plays the jazz band.
[po prstech šlape kostlivý tanečník.]	[A skeletal dancer treads on tiptoes.]
[...]	[...]
(Sbor huláká, jazzband lomozí.)	(The choir bellows, the jazz band makes a racket.)
Duhové blesky tančí	Rainbow-coloured thunderbolts dance
kolotoč na parníku	A carousel on a steamboat
Hle, radostí pláčí	Look, crying with joy are
vrcholky obelisků	The tops of obelisks
Zeppelin letí k pestré obloze	Zeppelin flies to the multi-coloured sky
prérie v plamenech	A prairie on fire
Překrásná explose	A beautiful explosion
Jeden vzdech.	One sigh.
(Výstřel.)	(Gunshot.) <sup>92</sup>

<sup>92</sup> Chalupa, 'Karneval'. In the interest of accuracy, I did not attempt to replicate rhyming patterns in the translation. The only exemption is the line 'Zvony zvou vyzvánějí zvonivě' / 'Bells bellow blasting blows', where the onomatopoeic effect (the repetition of 'zv' / 'bl') is arguably more important than the literal meaning.

Chalupa's poem contains a number of the topoi of Poetism. First of all, there is carnival itself, complete with imagery of 'gondolas', 'Chinese lanterns', 'masks' and 'clowns'. Typical also is the mild eroticism that manifests itself in fleeting references to various female figures ('Beatrice', 'Godiva', 'Kristina', 'Mona Lisa'), all of which seem to coalesce into a single archetype of feminine beauty. Besides the obligatory element of exoticism ('an Indian', 'little Javanese girls'), there are also references to iconic features of modern civilization ('jazz band', 'steamboat', 'Zeppelin').

Perhaps more important than this catalogue of topoi is the dream-like juxtaposition of individual elements. The imaginative use of wordplay and the free association of images are reminiscent of Apollinaire's poetry, which was highly influential among the Poetists. Thus, the 'fires' of Chinese lanterns associate with 'planets' and the 'pink breasts' of Mona Lisa / Kristina; the 'multi-coloured sky', illuminated by the 'rainbow-coloured thunderbolts' (perhaps of fireworks), is likened to a 'prairie on fire' and a 'beautiful explosion' of the Zeppelin; the ringing of bells conjures up the sight of a field of bluebells; a harp becomes a circus hoop through which an 'Indian' jumps; cymbals are suddenly animated and 'fly up to the zenith'; the hummingbird becomes a jazz-band player, etc. This nonsensical, fantastic sequence of images, resembling a Dadaist or Surrealist film scenario, conveys the sense of bewilderment associated with carnival.

True to the dictum of 'poetry for the senses', Chalupa's poem attempts to convey not only visual but also aural sensations – particularly through bracketed illustrative remarks placed between the strophes, such as 'the choir bellows, the jazz band makes a racket' and 'drums, cymbals, gunshot'. In his musical setting, Haas drew on these indications. However, unlike in the string quartet, where he employed an actual 'jazz-band' percussion set, in *Karneval* the composer relied purely on the means offered by the chosen medium – the male-voice choir. Thus he used onomatopoeic words ('bum – džin'; 'boom – jin') in conjunction with repetitive march-like accompaniment patterns to imitate the sound of drums and cymbals; similarly, the lyrics 'ra-tada-da-ta' mimic a snare drum. Since the piece is mostly in 2/4, marked 'tempo di marcia', these effects are suggestive of a military band rather than a 'jazz band'. The concluding 'gunshot' effect is achieved by tutti declamation of the syllable 'pa'.

The poem places much emphasis on dance and erratic or spinning movement in general, thus conveying the sense of disorientation and vertigo (the physiological correlative of bewilderment). Of particular interest are the lines 'A gondola sails through an opium dream / The Earth has flown away / And dances through space / Danse excentrique'. Significantly, Haas replaced the following line ('A hummingbird plays the jazz band') with a new line of his own: 'A skeletal dancer treads on tiptoes.'<sup>93</sup> By associating 'danse excentrique' with 'danse macabre', Haas underscored the 'cosmic' significance of this carnivalesque whirl, emphasizing the confrontation and intermingling of life and death.

<sup>93</sup> 'Po prstech šlape kostlivý tanečník.' This line appears in the manuscript scores cited in note 91, at bars 109–10.

Example 15. 'Rumba' theme, Haas, String Quartet no. 2, fourth movement, bars 19–22.



'Danse excentrique' (with or without the element of 'danse macabre') is an important topic which appears throughout Haas's oeuvre from the mid-1920s to the early 1940s. The earliest example I have found is the 'rumba' theme from the last movement of the quartet 'From the Monkey Mountains', 'The Wild Night' (see Example 15). This theme betrays some significant similarities (namely the 'angular' melody with pentatonic basis, and the 'hopping' gesture of staccato quavers) to the central theme of the male chorus *Karneval* (see Example 16). Here, the lyrics 'four left legs, a red-green spiral' suggest a kind of 'eccentric dance' (the 'red-green spiral' may be associated with the colourful outfits of the clowns mentioned in the next line of the poem). This theme, in turn, later became the basis of the third movement of Haas's Wind Quintet, op. 10 (1929), significantly entitled 'Ballo excentrico' (see Example 17).

Manifestations of this topic can also be found in Haas's later works. However, a detailed discussion of these works would require adjustments to the interpretative framework used in this article, which is designed to fit specifically the context of the 1920s, underpinned by Poetism. Although the third movement – 'Danza' – of Haas's 1935 Piano Suite can still be understood more or less in terms of the life-affirming (Bakhtinian) carnivalesque imagery of Poetism, the second movement of his wartime Symphony (1940–1), which revisits the topic of the 'danse macabre', inescapably veers closer to the life-threatening pole of the grotesque.<sup>94</sup>

Example 16. Pavel Haas, male chorus *Karneval* (*Carnival*), op. 9, bars 19–21. Two manuscript scores deposited in the Moravian Museum, Brno, Department of Music History, sign. A 22.730b, A 54.252.

<sup>94</sup> The movement includes a quotation of the Nazi song 'Die Fahne hoch', which later appears in combination with the major-mode middle section of Chopin's 'Marche funèbre' (the third movement of his Piano Sonata no. 2 in B♭ minor, op. 35).

Example 17. Pavel Haas, Wind Quintet, op. 10, 1929 (Tempo Praha; Bote & Bock / Boosey & Hawkes, 2nd rev. edn, 1998), third movement, bars 7–10, flute, clarinet and bassoon.

The image displays a musical score for three instruments: flute, clarinet, and bassoon. The score is divided into two systems, each containing three staves. The first system covers bars 7-10, and the second system covers bars 9-10. The flute part begins with a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic and features a melodic line with accents and a fermata. The clarinet and bassoon parts provide harmonic support with rhythmic patterns and accents.

### 'The Wild Night'

Taking into account its historical and intertextual context, I argue that the last movement of Haas's string quartet 'From the Monkey Mountains' – 'The Wild Night' – is preoccupied with the topic of carnival. The movement's title and Haas's reference to 'the exuberance of a sleepless night of revelry' in his commentary are both consistent with this theme. However, one wonders whether the 'revelry' should be imagined as taking place in a village barn (as Haas's commentary implies) or in a city bar (as the contextual evidence suggests). The composer alludes to a variety of incongruent musical idioms linked solely by the topic of dance. There is no trace of 'jazz' in the movement's opening. Rather, 'The Wild Night' begins with a distinctly Janáčekian introduction (see [Example 18](#)).

Rapid trills, agitated *sul ponticello* bowing, surges of short motifs, all these are devices typically used by Janáček to evoke dramatic tension. Comparison with a passage from the second movement of Janáček's 1923 String Quartet no. 1 is illustrative (see [Example 19](#)). The introduction culminates in a Janáčekian folk dance of frantic, violent character, articulated by heavy accentuation, played *sul ponticello* and featuring double stops, restless trills and 'savage' augmented seconds (see [Example 20](#)). The

Example 18. Janáčekian introduction, Haas, String Quartet no. 2, fourth movement, bars 1–5.

Vivace e con fuoco (♩ = 104)

The musical score consists of two systems of four staves each. The first system covers bars 1-5. The tempo is 'Vivace e con fuoco' with a quarter note equal to 104 beats. The time signature starts in 6/4, changes to 1/4 for two bars, and returns to 6/4. The dynamics are marked *mf* and *f*. The Viola part is marked 'sul ponticello'. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Janáčekian introduction suddenly gives way to what might be called a ‘rumba’ theme, judging from the characteristic 3 + 3 + 2 rhythmic pattern (see [Example 21](#)).<sup>95</sup> This theme displays properties suggestive of the grotesque. It is marked by an ambiguity between major and minor mode resulting, as in the previous movements, from the ‘blues-scale’ inflection of particular scale degrees. Although the major third (G–B $\natural$ ) dominates at first, the theme concludes with three violent G minor blows. In its subsequent reiterations, the theme is frequently distorted by ending on a ‘wrong’ note, particularly one a semitone away from the expected ‘tonic’. The awkwardness of

<sup>95</sup> The similarity with rumba was pointed out in Peduzzi, *Pavel Haas*, 46.



Example 19. Comparison with Janáček. Janáček, String Quartet no. 1, second movement, bars 132–9.

The image displays two systems of musical notation for a string quartet. The first system, covering bars 132 to 135, consists of four staves. The top two staves are marked 'sul ponticello' and 'ff', showing rhythmic patterns with wide intervals. The bottom two staves are also marked 'ff', with the bass line featuring a prominent trill. The second system, covering bars 136 to 139, also consists of four staves. The top staff has rests, while the middle and bottom staves are marked 'ff'. The middle staff shows a rhythmic pattern, and the bottom staff features a trill marked 'tr'.

motion, characteristic of the grotesque, is conveyed by the 'angular' melodic design of the theme, which is marked by wide leaps, and by the irregular 3 + 3 + 2 rhythmic pattern encapsulating the incongruity between duple and triple metre.

The third distinct dance topic, polka, appears in what might be called the 'trio' section.<sup>96</sup> By Haas's time, the polka was a rather old-fashioned social dance, which

<sup>96</sup> Although the author himself did not use this title, the episode, by its character and position in the movement, matches the broad definition of 'trio' as 'a contrasting or lightly scored middle section to a scherzo-type movement'. See Erich Schwandt, 'Trio', *Grove Music Online*, Oxford Music Online, <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>> (accessed 2 December 2015): 'The concept of a contrasting or lightly scored middle section to a scherzo-type movement, even without the term, persisted well into the 20th century.'

Example 20. Folk dance allusion, Haas, String Quartet no. 2, fourth movement, bars 10–12.

The musical score for Example 20 consists of two systems. The first system covers bars 10 to 12. It is written for four staves: Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Cello. The time signature is 6/4. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The first system is marked with a forte (f) dynamic. The Cello part includes the instruction 'sul ponticello'. The second system covers bar 12, which is marked with a fortissimo (ff) dynamic. The Cello part in the second system includes the instruction 'pizz.'. The score includes various musical notations such as trills, slurs, and accents.

nonetheless was still very popular in the realm of semi-folk dance music associated with brass bands.<sup>97</sup> Haas's allusion to the dance is made to sound banal by the excess of 'redundant' musical material such as repetitions, fillings and stock accompaniment patterns (the alternation of arco and pizzicato in the cello is analogous to the onomatopoeic use of 'bum – džin' in *Karneval*). In this respect, it is similar to the 'circus' section of the second movement (see Example 22). Furthermore, Haas may be

<sup>97</sup> The polka originated in Bohemia in the first half of the nineteenth century and enjoyed widespread popularity in the patriotic circles of the higher society of the time. In the latter part of the century, it entered the standard repertoire of brass bands and assumed the status of folk music. See Gracian Čerušák, Andrew Lamb and John Tyrrell, 'Polka', *Grove Music Online*, Oxford Music Online, <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>> (accessed 2 December 2015).

Example 21. 'Rumba' theme, Haas, String Quartet no. 2, fourth movement, bars 19–22.

**risoluto (tempo stesso)**

The musical score is presented in four staves. The first three staves (Violin I, Violin II, and Viola) are marked 'pizz.' (pizzicato) and feature dynamic markings of *f sfz* and *sfz*. The fourth staff (Cello/Double Bass) is also marked 'pizz.' and features a dynamic marking of *f sfz*. The score is divided into two systems. The first system covers bars 19 and 20, and the second system covers bars 21 and 22. In the second system, the Violin I, Violin II, and Viola parts transition to 'arco' (arco) playing, while the Cello/Double Bass part remains 'pizz.'. The tempo is indicated as 'risoluto (tempo stesso)'. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

alluding to a particular scene from Bedřich Smetana's famous opera *The Bartered Bride* (which retained canonical status in Czech music throughout the interwar period). Following the so-called 'March of Comedians', which marks the arrival of a circus troupe in the village, a preview performance takes place, accompanied by 'Skočná'.<sup>98</sup>

<sup>98</sup> This piece was later used in several of Disney's Road Runner cartoons.

Example 22. The satirical polka, Haas, String Quartet no. 2, fourth movement, bars 152–9.

**poco a poco cresc. e accel.**

The musical score consists of two systems, each with four staves. The first system (bars 152-155) features a first violin part starting with a *mf* dynamic and an *arco* instruction. The second violin part begins with a *pizz.* instruction and a *p* dynamic. The viola part starts with a *p* dynamic. The cello and double bass part begins with a *f* dynamic and an *arco* instruction. The second system (bars 156-159) shows the first violin part starting with a *f* dynamic. The second violin part starts with a *mf* dynamic. The viola part starts with a *mf* dynamic. The cello and double bass part starts with a *mf* dynamic. The tempo/mood is indicated as *poco a poco cresc. e accel.*

The three-note accompaniment pattern in the viola part (Example 22), which Haas highlights by obstinate repetition, can be seen as a trivial paraphrase of the similarly repetitive motif in the middle section of Smetana's 'Skočná' (see [Example 23b](#)).

Haas's treatment of the 'rumba' theme is highly characteristic. As in the second movement, the theme keeps returning in ever shorter rhythmic values. Particularly interesting is the moment when the theme is projected simultaneously in three superimposed rhythmic strata: quavers in the second violin, semiquavers in the cello and demisemiquavers in the first violin (see [Example 24](#)). Through its repetitiveness, this section suggests mechanical revolving, which, in turn, evokes a spinning carousel or barrel organ, both of which are typical attributes of the fairground.

Example 23. Bedřich Smetana, *The Bartered Bride* (Prague: Editio Supraphon, 1982, piano reduction), 'Skočná': (a) bars 138–43 (opening) and (b) 223–30 (middle section).

(a)

Vivace (♩ = 144)

138

(b)

227

The multi-layered presentation of the theme resembles an image of wheels within wheels or a view through a kaleidoscope. The semblance of multiple vision suggests disorientation and vertigo, typically induced by excessive spinning motion (such as dancing or riding on a carousel).

The last stage of the 'development' of the 'rumba' theme is its liquidation. Example 22 shows the theme subjugated into the metrical context of a polka, devoid of its original 3 + 3 + 2 accentuation. Shortly afterwards, the theme reappears in demisemiquavers,

Example 24. 'Rumba' theme superimposed in different rhythmic layers, Haas, String Quartet no. 2, fourth movement, bars 71–4.

The musical score consists of four systems, each with four staves. The key signature is one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 2/4. The first system (bars 71-74) features:

- Staff 1 (Violin I): *p* (piano), eighth-note rhythmic pattern.
- Staff 2 (Violin II): *f [espressivo]* (forte), quarter-note rhythmic pattern.
- Staff 3 (Cello/Double Bass): *p* (piano), quarter-note rhythmic pattern.
- Staff 4 (Percussion): *mf* (mezzo-forte), quarter-note rhythmic pattern, labeled "Percussion (ad libitum) b.d., sn.d." with dynamic markings *p* and *f*.

The second system (bars 75-78) features:

- Staff 1: *p* (piano), eighth-note rhythmic pattern.
- Staff 2: *f* (forte), quarter-note rhythmic pattern.
- Staff 3: *p* (piano), quarter-note rhythmic pattern.
- Staff 4: *f marcato* (forte marcato), quarter-note rhythmic pattern.

Bar numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 are indicated below the percussion staff in the first and second systems respectively.

the rapid succession of which is reminiscent of the opening of Smetana's 'Skočná' (see Example 23a). The process of the theme's liquidation is finalized by its reduction to a mere rhythmic pulse (see Example 25). Thus, after the theme's rhythmic identity has been washed off, the melodic element is likewise eradicated, and all that remains is the germinal rhythmic motif, which is repeated obsessively. Even the element of pitch

is partly suppressed: the instruments are instructed to play *col legno*, alternating with the percussion. The following 'furioso' brings back the 'polka' recast into 3/8 metre, which underscores the effect of a dizzying whirl. The motif is progressively shortened until it is ultimately 'liquidated' like the rumba theme, whereupon all movement comes to a stop.

Having pushed the delirious frenzy to the point of collapse, Haas inserts a four-part arrangement of his own song dedicated to a beloved girl.<sup>99</sup> There could hardly

Example 25. 'Liquidation' of the 'rumba' theme, Haas, String Quartet no. 2, fourth movement, bars 164–7; 175–8.

<sup>99</sup> See Peduzzi, *Pavel Haas*, 48.

## Example 25 (continued)

The musical score for Example 25 (continued) consists of two systems of five staves each. The first system covers measures 171 to 174. Measure 171 is marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The second system covers measures 175 to 178. Measure 175 is marked with a forte (*f*) dynamic and includes the instruction 'arco col legno'. The score features various rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. The solo line in the first system is marked '(solo)' and features a demisemiquaver pulse.

be a greater contrast in terms of the 'Andante' tempo marking, the soft colour of the strings playing *con sordino*, the homophonic texture and the tonal clarity (see [Example 26](#)). However, at the end of the song's second iteration, the ethereal vision dissolves with the onset of the concluding 'furioso' section, which brings the previously interrupted dynamic escalation to a climax. Once again, all the motivic content is gradually eliminated until there is nothing left but the demisemiquaver rhythmic pulse (see [Example 27](#)).



Example 26. Quotation of Haas's early song, Haas, String Quartet no. 2, fourth movement, bars 205–12.

**Andante**

The musical score consists of two systems of four staves each. The first system (bars 205-208) is marked 'Andante' and 'con sord.'. The dynamics are *p* and *pp*. The second system (bars 209-212) is marked *mf*. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

The carnivalesque mood of 'The Wild Night' results largely from the use of highly fragmentary and repetitive material, often superimposed in stratified textures. Not only does the repetition and accumulation of material, which becomes redundant and banal, connote simple-mindedness,<sup>100</sup> it tends to become ever more obsessive and violent. The exaggeration of stereotypical dance-like accompaniment figures and repetitive rhythmic patterns functions as a means of hyperbolic distortion of the topic of dance and bodily movement in general, conveying the sense of a delirious rapture. This accumulation of

<sup>100</sup> See Sheinberg, *Irony, Satire, Parody and the Grotesque*, 88–9.



## Conclusion: the play of polarities and incongruities

The positioning of the contrasting section in the last movement refers to the 'escalation–repose–finale' pattern of the first movement, which, moreover, applies to the quartet as a whole. The third movement ('The Moon and I'), which includes a quotation of the 'slow' section of 'Landscape', thus appears as a larger-scale 'repose' section inserted between two emphatically dynamic movements. However, it is important to realize that the essence of the schema observed here is the juxtaposition of polar opposites. The 'fast–slow–fast' model is but one manifestation of this generic principle; other binaries include 'light/darkness', 'joy/sadness', 'sincerity/irony', 'seriousness/farce' and so on.

The work as a whole is deliberately heterogeneous in character. The first movement, despite its programmatic inspiration, is rather serious and abstract in its focus on the development of the form-constitutive dynamic trajectory. The second movement, on the other hand, uses similar techniques based on rhythmic diminution to create a farcical musical caricature. The juxtaposition of the two encapsulates Teige's duality of Constructivism and Poetism. Similarly, the contrast between 'The Moon and I' and its surrounding movements brings into focus a number of characteristically modernist incongruities. This can be explained by analogy with the contrasting episode within 'The Wild Night'.

The dominant carnivalesque character of 'The Wild Night' is contrasted (yet, in a way, enhanced) by the insertion of Haas's amorous song. This section, metaphorically speaking, throws a spotlight on an individual, singling him out from the crowd, suspending the surrounding rave, and revealing his or her inner subjective experience. This is a moment of authenticity and sincerity; it is devoid of all the irony, masquerade and role-playing inherent in carnival. The section thus offers a statement about the challenge posed by modern cultural reality to the human subject and the viability of subjective expression (here confined to the realm of 'hallucination' functioning as quotation marks). However, the resulting effect is not one of Expressionist despair; the carnivalesque celebration of modernity is subtly qualified but not subverted. After all, to paraphrase Teige, Haas's piece was 'born [...] in a world which laughs; what does it matter if there are tears in its eyes?'

Juxtaposition of incongruities (binary or not) is a salient feature of carnivalesque imagery. It is therefore significant that in 'The Wild Night' Haas juxtaposes musical idioms that are incongruous in terms of style and that are associated with different sociocultural contexts. Thus, the rumba theme with its 'oriental' pentatonicism, 'South American' rhythmic pattern and 'African American' blues-scale inflection, appears next to the 'east European' folk modality of the Janáčekian introduction. Janáček's folk primitives and Smetana's rather old-fashioned comedians and modern cosmopolitan 'jazz-band' lovers all take part in the dizzying whirlpool of dance. 'The Wild Night' thus appears as a carnivalesque allegory of the perplexing heterogeneity of the modern world, disorientating and potentially threatening, replete with contradictions that cannot be reconciled but that can be rendered harmless through the principle of laughter.

As 'The Wild Night' constitutes the climax of the piece, carnival assumes prominence as a point of view, from which all the characteristic and culturally connoted features, contrasts and contradictions of the work are regarded. Thus, carnival functions in Haas's work not only as a prominent topos of Poetism but also as a world-view, a pertinent metaphorical characterization of the particular culture from which Haas's quartet emerged and of which it remains a testimony.

#### ABSTRACT

It has been claimed that Pavel Haas's string quartet 'From the Monkey Mountains' (1925) demonstrates the composer's alignment with the 'Western' musical avant-garde of the 1920s. However, Haas's avant-garde affiliations remain largely unexplained, as does the influence of Leoš Janáček, with whom Haas studied. Combining the methods of music analysis, semiotics and discourse analysis, I explain how Haas reconciled Janáčekian compositional technique with the ideas underpinning the contemporary Czechoslovak avant-garde movement known as Poetism. Focusing particularly on notions of the body, the grotesque and carnival, I propose an interpretative framework for and a reading of Haas's quartet 'From the Monkey Mountains'. In doing so, I also illuminate the aesthetic and cultural context of Haas's music from the 1920s, which has received little attention in previous scholarship.