

## Reviving the Classical ideal in Slovakia

by Elisabeth Hellenbroich

Only an hour's drive from the Slovakian capital Bratislava stands Dolna Krupa Castle, the former summer residence of the Brunswick family, which was influential in Ludwig van Beethoven's artistic efforts. There, on Sept. 20-22, something took place that will go down in the annals of the history of 20th-century music.

The first violinist of the legendary Amadeus Quartet, Prof. Norbert Brainin, had his first opportunity to hold master classes with two leading quartets, during which he "made visible" the fundamental principles of motivic thorough-composition (*Motivführung*) in Classical musical composition, especially in regard to the works of Ludwig van Beethoven. The three-day musical seminar, concluding with a concert given by Dr. Brainin and pianist Dr. Günther Ludwig in the Primatial Palace of Bratislava, was sponsored by the Schiller Institute, the Slovakian "Solupatricnost" Foundation, and the Slovakian Schiller Foundation for the Protection of Life and Human Rights. The inspiration for this musical seminar, however, as Schiller Foundation head Dr. Josef Miklosko emphasized in his greeting, came from Lyndon LaRouche, who one year earlier was the featured lecturer at a week-long student seminar with 150 young people from eastern and western Europe, who met in Smolenice, a town not far from Dolna Krupa. Miklosko said that it is LaRouche's hope that this project will develop into an institution of quartet master classes for young artists from East and West.

Anno Hellenbroich of the German Schiller Institute presented an overview of the purpose of the three-day musical seminar. Following the production of an initial documentary film of a master class held in 1993 by Norbert Brainin with

the German Henschel Quartet on the principle of motivic thorough-composition in Haydn and Mozart, the task now was to document this principle more extensively on film, using as examples Beethoven's String Quartet Op. 59, No. 2, and his late Quartet Op. 127 in E-flat major. This should provide an opportunity, especially for the young artists present, to come to grips with the crucial questions of the nature of a Classical work of art and its adequate interpretation—a kind of knowledge that we are in danger of losing altogether.

Beethoven scholar Dr. Ballova reported on the close connections between the Brunswick family and Beethoven (local legend has it, that Beethoven composed his "Moonlight" sonata in Dolna Krupa), and drew a compelling picture of Beethoven's influence on music-making in Slovakia. Such influences included Beethoven's close collaboration with Nikolas Zmeskall, and the important efforts of the Pressburg Liturgical Music Association in preparing a good reception for Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*.

### Making *Motivführung* visible

Professor Brainin then took the stage. "Actually, the reason why I am here, is to make *Motivführung* visible to you. This question has always been very close to my heart. For a long time I have been carrying it around inside me, and for a long time this idea found no echo with anyone else." The one person who did grasp the importance of the *Motivführung* of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, Dr. Brainin continued, was Lyndon LaRouche. "That is what unites us and brought us together. . . . Lyndon has understood the importance of *Motivführung* in Haydn; Mozart understood it—but when we



Dr. Norbert Brainin (center) with the Auer Quartet from Hungary, during the music seminar in Dolna Krupa, Slovakia, Sept. 20-22. "The reason why I am here," he told the audience, "is to make *Motivführung* visible to you. This question has always been very close to my heart."

look at the output of present-day Haydn and Mozart scholars, we must conclude that they haven't the slightest understanding of the problem. Yes, they have written a lot about it, but they not are dealing with the question in an adequate way."

*Motivführung*, Brainin explained, is a watershed in the history of Classical composition. What is meant by this term, is that the work is oriented to *one single* idea, thereby lending unity to the composition as a whole. Haydn, in his Op. 20 "Sun" Quartets, had *Motivführung* preconsciously in mind; but this only first became fully conscious to him with his "Russian" Quartet Op. 33, No. 3. Mozart, who intensively studied Haydn's quartets, adopted this *Motivführung* method and developed it further. "Beethoven adopted the method from Mozart, and once said of himself: Before I knew this method [of *Motivführung*], I could not consider myself to be a fully developed composer." *Motivführung*, according to Brainin, "is a unique revolution. It has implications for science, poetry, political policy, and philosophy in general. Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven comprehended it on the basis of their own inner creative knowledge. For, composers are indeed scientists—not scribes—and they are great philosophers."

Two works by Ludwig van Beethoven were the focus of the following master classes which, ending each evening with a concert, Brainin held with the leading Slovakian Moyzes Quartet (which has been together for 20 years), and

with the quite young, but extremely promising Hungarian Auer Quartet.

The master classes began with Beethoven's Op. 59, No. 2, impressively performed by the Moyzes Quartet. This is a product of the "middle" period of Beethoven's creative life, and, as Brainin remarked in an interview, for the first time reflects Beethoven's "conscious" work with the principles of *Motivführung* that he had adopted from Haydn and Mozart. At the same time, this work clearly points in the direction of Beethoven's late string quartets, all of which are built upon "a single foundation" and are connected to one another as a "motivic unity." In the Op. 59, No. 2, Brainin emphasized that everything can be derived from the very first measure—from the very first interval, a fourth. Whereas the second movement must be played correctly with an articulated *legato*, Brainin especially pointed to the third movement, with its "Russian theme," a theme which, as it were, met Beethoven's own idea half-way. Using passages from the Op. 59, No. 2, Brainin showed that *Motivführung* is derived from mutually related variants—"derivatives" of a single *Motivführung* idea that is heard in the initial measures and in the "Russian theme."

For the afternoon session, Brainin held a second master class, working with the Moyzes Quartet on Haydn's Op. 33, No. 3, and Schubert's "Death and the Maiden" Quartet (D minor, D. 810), and quite visibly demonstrated the prin-



Dr. Brainin (left) coaches the Istropolitan Trio of Slovak musicians (ages 15-17). What is meant by *Motivführung*, Brainin explained, "is that the work is oriented to one single idea, thereby lending unity to the composition as a whole." This is "a unique revolution. It has implications for science, poetry, political policy, and philosophy in general."

ciples of artistic interpretation. This is not simply a matter of playing nicely according to the rules; rather, one must, as he put it, be "free within certain bounds." One must play strictly in a certain sense, yet freely at the same time.

A young trio from the Bratislava College of Music, which in the evening performed works of the composers Suk and Martinu, played so impressively, that on the following day, Brainin held a master class with them, too.

On the second day, Brainin worked with the Auer Quartet on Beethoven's String Quartet Op. 127 in E-flat major, which, in the opening measures, marked *maestoso*, presents, as it were, the motivic exposition for the entire cycle of late quartets. Brainin, referring to the motivic kinship of the work's movements, let the Auer Quartet play the entire piece with little interruption, since the excellently educated young artists presented this exceedingly difficult piece in such an impressively artistic way.

To give unity to the course of thinking over the three days of seminars—the audience included guests from Slovakia, a leading musician from Austria, and guests of the Schiller Institute from Germany, France, and Italy—the renowned first violinist took out his beautiful Stradivarius and, using examples from the Op. 132, the Op. 130, and the "Grosse Fuge" Op. 133, delivered his own presentation of the principle of *Motivführung*, demonstrating practically all the instru-

mental voices on his own fiddle, and also singing in order to indicate crucial contrapuntal figures. "These compositions," Brainin said, "are all built on the same foundation, as a single house. If they had had separate foundations, the house would have been constructed illogically." Plunging into the Op. 132, Brainin showed how all motivic elements—i.e., the *Motivführung* of the entire work—are contained within the first 16 measures. He showed that, beginning with the first violin's line, which resolves upwards with a half-step, followed by a leap of a sixth (D-sharp–E–C–B), "derivative forms, and finally intervallic inversion of the motivic elements, are taken up in the working-through of the piece."

While the second theme was similarly worked through motivically, Brainin showed in the third movement, subtitled "A convalescent's holy song of praise to the God-head, in the Lydian mode," that this is transformed, in a contrapuntally altered form, into the key of D major—and so is subtitled "Feeling new strength." Beethoven is now working with the interval of the fifth. This is, as it were, "his poetic license to resort to inversions." In the *Andante con moto ma non troppo* ("Feeling new strength"), Beethoven wrote a *cantabile molto espressivo*, which is set contrapuntally only in the first violin; the movement ends with a *molto adagio*, played by all four voices and subtitled "With the most inwardly intense emo-

tion.” This is followed by the fourth movement, an *alla marcia assai vivace*, where it is particularly striking that the recitative played by the first violin contains echoes of the Ninth Symphony.

Brainin followed this up with a demonstration of the Op. 130. “You’ll notice where the similarities are,” Brainin said, and commented that the first movement, *adagio ma non troppo*, is often performed much too off-handedly. This is followed by the second movement *presto*, the third movement *adagio ma non troppo*, the fourth movement *dansa tedesca*, and finally the fifth movement, the famous *Cavatina*. “Originally, the ‘Grosse Fuge’ was intended to be the final movement. But Beethoven made a separate Opus out of it,” Brainin explained. The *Cavatina*, Brainin said, has to be played as if “gripped with anguish” (*beklemmt*), and he demonstrated the bow technique required to execute this passage with a “flutey,” raspy tone quality. “The entire piece is delicately transparent.”

In conclusion, Brainin played sections of the “Grosse Fuge” Op. 133 on his Stradivarius, and, in order to give transparency to the monumental fugal work, he lent the appropriate weight to the critical passages by using his voice to clarify the underlying motivic elements. “Although its key-signature is B-flat, the ‘Grosse Fuge’ starts out in F, and then Beethoven modulates it downward to B-flat.” On every note, Brainin showed, there is a *sforzato*. He expressed his regret that the subsequent culminations of fugal development could not be represented on a single instrument, but were really the task of an entire quartet.

### Schiller’s worldview

On the afternoon of the third day, Helga Zepp-LaRouche, president of the Schiller Institute in Germany, and Slovakian Schiller Foundation head Dr. Miklosko presented the work of the international Schiller institutes. Friedrich Schiller, in his “Aesthetic Letters,” stated that improvement in the political realm is only possible through the ennoblement of the individual human being. For Schiller, that meant that the person must be made into an aesthetic human being—which is especially important today, given the brutalization of our society. “There were two reasons for our organizing this music program right here in Dolna Krupa, a wonderful place, also in the spirit of Beethoven,” Mrs. Zepp-LaRouche said. “The first is the question of *Motivführung* as such. The second is the musical tradition of Slovakia, which especially distinguishes this country. This tradition has to be invigorated anew. The ‘Vienna Violin School’ originated not far from here, proceeding from Joseph Böhm, the friend of Beethoven, who developed a quite extraordinary violin technique. Norbert Brainin is one of the leading masters of this technique, and we wanted to contribute to communicating this method to young artists.”

The high-point of the seminar was a concert given by

## Dolna Krupa: a historic site

Dolna Krupa Castle, surrounded by a lovely English-style park, is located outside the Slovakian city of Trnava, in the little town of the same name.

Back in the 17th century, the castle was owned by the Brunswick family; its special significance as one of the leading noble residences extended to Beethoven’s lifetime, through the efforts of its owner during those years, Joseph von Brunswick. He laid the foundation of a significant collection of paintings and an extensive library, had a little theater built, and had the walls of the Great Hall painted by an Italian artist with frescoes, which still exist today.

Joseph was the uncle of three friends of Beethoven—the siblings Franz, Therese, and Josephine von Brunswick—and also the uncle of Giulietta Guicciardi, to whom Beethoven dedicated his “Moonlight” Sonata. The names of Josephine, Theresa, and Giulietta come up, whenever the question of Beethoven’s “immortal beloved” is investigated.

Joseph von Brunswick’s nieces and nephews often spent their summers at Dolna Krupa Castle, and it has been presumed by many scholars that Beethoven also visited there. If he really did, then it is possible that he worked on his “Moonlight” Sonata there. While there may be no definitive proof of this, still many Slovaks maintain, with a wink, that there is also no proof that he did *not* visit there.

The fact is, that Beethoven was very much esteemed throughout the region, and many of his compositions were performed in Bratislava very soon after their completion.

Dolna Krupa Castle is today a conference center, particularly for musicians. In a small neighboring building, a very impressive Beethoven Memorial has been set up. As soon as the financing becomes available, a beautiful exhibition catalogue is scheduled to be printed.—*Ortrun Cramer*

Norbert Brainin together with pianist Günther Ludwig of the Cologne Music Conservatory, at the Primatial Palace of Bratislava, to more than 260 guests. The program consisted of works by Mozart, Brahms, and Beethoven. In their performance, the two artists succeeded in making the ideas of these three great composers transparent to the listeners’ minds, serving up the music with the greatest and “most inwardly intense emotion.”