

## BE BOP BAR

### *And then you crossed the ocean to study jazz?*

The strings department at the Ježek Conservatory did not work the way I imagined it would and in any case nobody taught jazz violin there. So I decided to break off my studies at the school in the fifth year and to go to the Berklee College of Music in Boston. I knew it was the most prestigious jazz school where they have an interest in students who want to use of the knowledge they gain in practice but that people who don't want to be professional musicians also study there. I completed two semesters there and altogether I studied four at once during the first one. I am enthusiastic about that school. Everything functions there and they work at a far greater intensity than they do here. The system of tuition is very well thought-out and as a result jazz theory and practice tied in very well for me. You have to work very hard though, because it is a very tough school. They don't give you your scholarship until the end of the semester when you have proven your worth. I trained conscientiously from hour to hour. Thanks to the positive approach towards students, this school really motivated me. I learned to believe in myself. Without having to force myself, I got up every day at six in the morning and practiced before I went to school for six hours a day on average, so that you could see some sort of progress. It was so intense that I completely gave up practicing for the three weeks between the two semesters when I was on vacation in the Czech Republic. I am still living off the practice I did while studying at Berklee to this day. Even now, after two years, I'm still finding out about the experiences that I gained there.

### *Were you not tempted by a career in America?*

I received an offer of a scholarship for another semester as well as an offer to play in America, but I had managed to do an awful lot of work during that year in Berklee. At the same time, the very strong bond I felt to my home surprised me. I wanted to come home, because I want to live in the Czech Republic. In America, I would have become a foreigner. The first year after returning to the Czech Republic was hard, because nobody knew me. I finished my last year at the Ježek Conservatory and I had a graduation concert with a group at the Divadlo U Hasičů theatre. That's where Tomáš Spurný the artistic director of the Reduta Jazz Club noticed me. He offered me a gig there and that opened doors in the club scene for me. Thanks to Reduta a whole series of other concerts and jazz festivals followed.

### *Do you have your own group?*

Yes. Our line-up consists of violin, piano, double bass and drums. I arrange Hungarian themes and virtuoso classical compositions. The basis must be melodic. I select a theme and this is improvised upon. We then return to the theme. I improvise from my head.

### *Where can we hear you?*

I regularly perform at the Semafor theatre in concerts called "Jazz Show" (Jazzparáda). I also invite guests to these such as Jiří Stivín or Petr Malásek. These are people I really respect. We always only meet up on the day of the concert, so it is always a little bit of an adrenalin rush for us in anticipation of what will happen. I present my concerts, but I also organize them as well. I don't have a manager so it is sometimes demanding. During the concert itself I'm fine. By then it's simply pleasant. I know how to relax and I can play well. If I'm enjoying it I can pass this on to the audience. I know that I can trust myself to handle it.

### *But you also have an acting role at the Semafor theatre...*

When I had my first concert at the Semafor, Jiří Suchý also came to watch me. Fourteen days later he called me and offered me a



small part in the play *Sukně smutnou jehlou spíchnutá* ("A Skirt Stitched Together With a Sad Needle"). I'm used to doing my own concerts. When I perform alone for myself, I don't feel shy. But playing another character is quite hard for me. I have a short monologue and a conversation with Jiří Štědrón. I play a writer who then becomes a jazz violinist. At the start she plays badly and then she launches into an improvisation on a Paganini composition.

### *Do you have any role model?*

I don't have any role model. As far as jazz violinists are concerned, I mostly prefer not to listen to others so that they won't influence me. I want to have my own style. But I do look at who is working. I appreciate real professionals in their fields.

### *You also perform in the Alcron. What's it like for you to play here?*

I was approached about performing in the Alcron by the pianist Vladimír Štmad, who plays here regularly. I like playing here. Foreigners like jazz, the staff here are wonderful and there's a great atmosphere. It's different compared to a normal concert, because people for the most part are not coming just for the music. Consequently, it means a lot to me when they clap. Whereas in the theatre you have to clap because it's the custom, here applause is a sign that people really like the music. Sometimes they're also surprised to see a female jazz violinist, because in jazz women are mostly singers.

### *What other musical events await you in the autumn?*

I'll be attending the Czech-Slovak violin summit in Přerov, where I'll be meeting with colleagues and jazz violinists. One thing that will be an interesting opportunity and experience is an autumn tour with the first Czech SuperStar Aneta Langerová. She has professional musicians playing with her who know what they want. It's good-quality music. I can play different styles, but it's all about the quality of the work. I appreciate Aneta. I like how she sings and how she and her brother have approached her career. I appreciate how she maintains her privacy, how she works on herself and I also appreciate her strength and humanity, which reminds me of Hana Hegerová.

### *Have you any plans for the future?*

Always, whenever I've planned something or thought that I wanted something, something else has come along that was even better or more interesting than the original plan. One day, I would like to organize jazz courses, but who knows what's around the corner. At the moment, I'm getting important musical offers. I always give my all in every concert and thanks to this everything takes care of itself. I only hope that it continues. My goal is contentment and good work.