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GÁBOR TARKÖVI TALKS ABOUT HIS CAREER PATH TO THE BERLIN PHILHARMONIC

BY MARK DULIN

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GÁBOR TARKÖVI TALKS ABOUT HIS CAREER PATH TO THE BERLIN PHILHARMONIC

BY MARK DULIN

Gábor Tarkövi, principal trumpet of the Berlin Philharmonic, was born in Esztergom, Hungary, in 1969, where he grew up in a musical family. His first teacher was his father, István Tarkövi. He went on to study at the Richter János Conservatory in Győr. Gábor became a student of György Geiger at the Liszt Ferenc Teacher Training College. He continued his studies under Frigyes Varasdy at the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music as well as with György Kurtág, Hans Gansch, and Anthony Plog.

Prior to his appointment to the Berlin Philharmonic in 2004, he served as co-principal trumpet of the Württemberg Philharmonic Orchestra and as principal trumpet of the Berlin Symphony Orchestra and the Bavarian Radio Orchestra.

Tarkövi teaches at the Herbert von Karajan Academy of the Berlin Philharmonic and has presented masterclasses

around the world. As a soloist he performs regularly throughout Europe, Asia, and the United States. Recently he has performed Wolfgang Rihm's *Marsyas* with the Berlin Philharmonic and Luciano Berio's *Sequenza X* on the Philharmonic's "Late Night Concert" Series.

Since 2008 Gábor has been under exclusive contract with Tudor Classics and has released two CDs, *Italian Trumpet Concertos* with the Bavarian Radio Chamber Orchestra and *Trumpet Concertos* (Haydn, Hummel, Mozart, Neruda) with the Bamberg Symphony Orchestra.

This interview was conducted in New York City in December 2010, where Tarkövi was performing with Saito Kinen under Seiji Ozawa. I would like to thank Gábor for being so generous with his time. I would also like to thank Todd Walker for his help in the interview by way of his skills in German translation.

Dulin: *You came from a musical family. Can you tell us about that and your experiences as you grew up?*

Tarkövi: I grew up in Csolnok near the town where I was born, Esztergom, 40 km west from Budapest. My family came to Hungary from Austria and Elsaß (today France) around 1786. So my family is not really a Hungarian family. In my family we spoke German frequently, always with my grandparents and often with parents. My family was very musical. My grandfather was the first instrumental and solfège teacher in my town. The town of Csolnok is only about 3,000 people. He also had a wind ensemble until 1970. My father, István, was a very good amateur trumpet player. He would play many weddings. These were hard jobs because in my town the wedding was a two-day event. You would play on Saturday in the evening, play early the next morning around 6:00 or 7:00 A.M., get a few hours of sleep, and then play again in the afternoon.

I started playing music around age six. I played the piano for two years, and decided I wanted to play another instrument. My brother was already playing the trumpet. Because of this our father thought that both of us being trumpet players was not such a good idea, so he made me switch to clarinet. He felt this would be better for the family band. This lasted only a year or so. Then at age ten I really started to play the trumpet and take it more seriously.

Dulin: *Did your father teach you early on?*

Tarkövi: Yes, the first lessons were with my father and also from my grandfather. After three months learning, I was allowed to play with the town wind ensemble where I learned very much.

At age fourteen I went to school at the Gymnasium. [The Gymnasium is a secondary school, which prepares the student for higher education. They are thus meant for the more aca-

demically-minded students.] This was tough because you were practicing all day in school. By the time I was sixteen or seventeen, I was playing weddings almost every weekend. So having to play 12 – 16 hours in a weekend really built a strong embouchure. In the weddings we would have a band with trumpet, saxophone, trombone, accordion, and drums. So it gives you a feeling of playing as a soloist. This recurring solo playing every weekend proved to be of great help later.

After the Gymnasium, I was admitted to the Teacher Faculty of Liszt Ferenc Music Academy. My teacher was György Geiger, the solo trumpet player from the Radio Orchestra of Budapest. He did not discuss the embouchure so much. He was very musical and for me he was a very important teacher.

Dulin: *What was your audition for him like?*

Tarkövi: After Gymnasium we had to take a final exam. Geiger had room for only one student. He listened to about 35 people play for him. I remember we had to play scales, etudes and three pieces, the Enescu *Légende*, the Neruda *Concerto*, and an Albinoni *Concerto*. For the etudes we played Oskar Böhme, Charlier, and Brandt. This was a long audition, probably a half an hour. I played everything and he chose me.

Geiger was very good for me. He helped me gain experience by playing in the Radio Orchestra as a substitute. This was a great time for me. I had money from playing in the orchestra, I was playing with my teacher often, and I practiced orchestra playing all the time.

Dulin: *What materials did you cover in lessons?*

Tarkövi: With Geiger I worked many scales, the Arban book, and I played mostly music; Baroque, classical, romantic and modern (Jolivet, Haydn, Hummel, Vivaldi, Albinoni, Arutunian, etc.) But no piccolo! Geiger didn't like the piccolo

"By the time I was sixteen or seventeen I was playing weddings almost every weekend."

trumpet, so I played a lot of D and E-flat trumpet. We didn't play such high pieces like the Telemann or Leopold Mozart concertos. But we did work on some Baroque pieces to learn phrasing. At home I practiced from Rolf Quinke's method book and Louis Davidson's *Trumpet Techniques*.

Dulin: *How old were you when you began to transpose?*

Tarkövi: I was very young. My father would write books of wedding arrangements in C. My father played C trumpet and I played B-flat and transposed up a step. When I was maybe sixteen or seventeen I learned to transpose by using books by Sabarich and Sachse. When I was seventeen and eighteen I began to play many gigs, concerts, operas, and ballet music in Budapest. And when you play opera and ballet music the transposition changes all the time. So your transposition must be very good.

Dulin: *Did Geiger play pistons or rotaries?*

Tarkövi: Pistons.

Dulin: *So did you play pistons growing up?*

Tarkövi: In my schooling yes, but my first trumpet was a rotary; however, it was not a good instrument. When I went to Gymnasium, my brother who is six years older gave me his Bach. In Hungary, until the 1950s, orchestras played on rotary trumpets. This was the old tradition. Most people played Heckel and Dehmal trumpets. But after the Second World War, Heckel did not make any more trumpets. In the middle of the 1950s, the first trumpets came from Bach. People liked them better right away because they had better intonation. But in the 1990s, many Hungarian orchestras came back to the rotary instruments. Now in Hungary every orchestra uses rotary trumpets to play Mahler. With the rotary trumpet you must play a rotary mouthpiece or the intonation will be bad. The rotary leadpipe is so short that if you use a mouthpiece with a small backbore it won't work so well. This will cause intonation problems. After the 1980s, the rotary trumpets were made much better and they improved even more in the 1990s, first with Monke and Lechner, then Schagerl, Dowitz, and Ricco Kühn. So now you have more trumpet makers that have designed instruments with good intonation and good sound. In the 1970s there was only Monke. With the Monke you have a very good sound but the intonation is difficult to deal with.

Dulin: *When did you switch to playing rotary trumpet full time?*

Tarkövi: When I won the job in Reutlingen in 1991, we played piston trumpets except on Brahms, Beethoven, Haydn, Mozart, etc., which we played on rotary trumpets. I didn't have a good mouthpiece for the rotary at that time. I won the audition for Berlin Symphony Orchestra in 1993 and started there in 1994 and from then on I played rotary trumpet.

Dulin: *What is your mouthpiece setup on the rotary?*

Tarkövi: On the rotary I play a Yamaha 15E4, and Breslmair mouthpiece. The Yamaha mouthpiece is a copy from an old Dehmal mouthpiece.

Dulin: *So what is your piston mouthpiece?*

Tarkövi: When I play easy pieces, I use the same mouthpiece as I do on the rotary. When I play very difficult pieces, I use a Breslmair copy of a Bach Mount Vernon 1¼ C mouthpiece. So this is what I play for modern pieces and pieces like Jolivet,

Tomasi, Zimmermann, or Wolfgang Rihm.

Dulin: *What are your instrument choices?*

Tarkövi: In the orchestra all the rotaries are Schagerl. I also play a Schagerl flugelhorn. I play a Schilke E-flat and piccolo.

Dulin: *Does the section in Berlin always play B-flat?*

Tarkövi: It changes depending on the piece. The first trumpet always plays C. For example on Mahler 7, the entire section plays C trumpet.

Dulin: *At the end of Petroushka I noticed you play C trumpet.*

Tarkövi: Yes, I think it is dangerous to switch. If you play it on piccolo and you are out of tune you have no time to adjust. Next week we are playing *Pictures at an Exhibition* and I will use the piccolo for "Goldenberg and Schmuyle."

Dulin: *When did you study with Hans Gansch?*

Tarkövi: Officially I didn't, but Hans had a huge influence on me. After I studied with Geiger I had had a lot of freelance work but there were no orchestra jobs open in Hungary. So I started to take auditions in Germany. I won a job with the Württemberg Philharmonic in Reutlingen and then I won another position in the Berlin Symphony Orchestra. When I was in the Berlin Symphony, I heard a live concert of the Vienna Philharmonic playing *Symphony Domestica*. This was the

first time I heard Hans live. This made a very big impression on me. So after the concert I went to meet Hans. I told him "Hello my name is Gábor and I play in Berlin" And Hans said, "Ah, you are a trumpet player, here play *Leonore 3*." He handed me his

trumpet and I played it and we went for a beer. Then I asked if I could come and play for him in Vienna. He said I could, so the next week I drove to see him. So I played for him maybe ten times and he really helped me, especially with articulation. I also recorded all of the lessons and listened to them many times. Then when one of the trumpet players left the group Pro Brass, Hans asked me to join. Over the years we have played many times together. We have become good friends. I have asked his advice many times and at every step of my career I have consulted with him.

Dulin: *You have made a few stops along the way before the Berlin Philharmonic. Because the tenure process is different in Germany than it is in the US, you have played in two orchestras at once on a few occasions?*

Tarkövi: Yes, I started with my first job as assistant principal trumpet in Reutlingen starting in 1992. I was there until 1994, when I left to become the principal trumpet in the Berlin Symphony (formerly East Germany). The audition for this position was held in 1993 and I started there in March of 1994. I became principal trumpet of the Bavarian Radio Orchestra in Munich in 1998. So during my trial period in Munich, I worked both in the Bavarian Radio Orchestra and Berlin Symphony Orchestra simultaneously from 1998 to 2000. This period lasted about a year and a half. The same situation occurred when I started with the Berlin Philharmonic. I started with the Philharmonic in 2004, but I played in the Bavarian Radio Orchestra and in the Berlin Philharmonic at the same time. In Germany we have a crazy first year during the trial period. In the period when I played with the Bavarian Radio Orchestra and the Berlin Philharmonic, the schedule in Berlin was difficult, but fortunately the schedule in Munich was rather light. But, in the period between the Berlin Sym-

"I played in the Bavarian Radio
Orchestra and in The Berlin Phil-
harmonic at the same time."

phony and the Bavarian Radio Orchestra, it just happened to be during the same time as the 50th anniversary of Richard Strauss's death. So we played Strauss all the time. All the time Strauss, Strauss, Strauss, Strauss! This would go on for months at time. It really helped to have great colleagues during a time like this. I have had great luck throughout my career to have always had great colleagues. We have very, very, close friendships with the trumpet section from the Berlin Symphony and the Bavarian Radio Orchestra. In the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra everyone is so kind and supportive. Georg Hilser, Martin Kretzer, Guillaume Jehl, and Tamás Velenczei are all great to work with and we have a good time together.

Dulin: *Who sets the rotation of the repertoire?*

Tarkövi: Tamás and I do. This year I played Mahler 2, next year Tamás will play it. Last year I played *Petroushka*, so the next time Tamás will play it. We do this with all the big pieces. Last time when we played Mahler 3, I played the Posthorn solo, this year I will play in the orchestra. If one of us is out playing as soloist we work to accommodate each other. The last time we played *Ein Heldenleben*, I played the 1st B-flat part and Tamás played the 1st E-flat part. But in the Berlin Philharmonic contract we are not supposed to be playing at the same time so we can have some relief. There are a few exceptions to this. Mahler 3, and *Ein Heldenleben* are among those exceptions. When we go on tour we can both play, but when we are in Berlin we are not supposed to be playing together. Next year I have a tour scheduled of Japan, and *Ein Heldenleben* is scheduled, so Tamás will play the B-flat part and a substitute will play the E-flat part. We have the same situation with all the solo instruments in the orchestra.

Dulin: *Can you describe your audition for the Berlin Philharmonic?*

Tarkövi: Yes, this was the third time that the audition had been held for this position. Maybe there were twenty-two or twenty-three players invited. In the first round we played the entire first movement of the Haydn *Concerto* with cadenza and most of the second movement. I felt like this round for me went very well. In the next round there were three of us. Jeroen Berwaerts, Guillaume Jehl, and myself. Guillaume is now of course, our second trumpet player.

This round consisted of the *Leonore* calls, the off-stage fanfare from *Carmen*, *Petroushka*, *Parsifal*, Mahler 5, *Alpine Symphony*, Bartok *Concerto for Orchestra*, and Ravel *Piano Concerto*. I didn't feel as good about this round. I had a little error in *Parsifal*, and *Petroushka* wasn't quite where I wanted it. But fortunately I made it into the final round. Then it was down to two of us, myself and Jeroen. The next round was just the Posthorn solo and *Don Juan*. I was fortunate I had played these pieces many times before with Maazel in Munich. I played the Posthorn solo on a flugelhorn. The audition itself went very fast. The audition started at 9:30 in the morning and by noon, I had the job.

Dulin: *That's a very quick audition!*

Tarkövi: Yes, but in Germany you don't have as many players at the audition. The rotary is a big part of this. Really there are only two countries where people play rotary all the time, Germany and Austria. So to come and play an audition in Germany, you really have to know the rotary style. This is

something I learned from Hans Gansch. Before I heard Hans, I had the idea that you can't play beautifully on the rotary trumpet. Then when I heard Hans I realized that it is beautiful. So for me Hans's influence on the rotary was very important.



Gábor Tarkövi

Dulin: *Was it hard to leave Munich for Berlin?*

Tarkövi: I had played as a substitute many times in the Berlin Philharmonic when I was in Munich before the orchestra hired Tamás. But I didn't decide to really take the audition in Berlin until about a week before because I had such a good life in Munich.

Dulin: *Was there a screen?*

Tarkövi: Not for the Berlin Philharmonic audition. But it's different everywhere. In Munich there was a screen on the first round and then they removed it for the later rounds. In Berlin, you walk in the great hall and the whole orchestra is looking at you. It's a democratic process. Everyone has one vote. After everyone is heard, the section speaks a little and then the vote happens. To get past the first round you must have fifty percent of the vote and to get to the finals you must have sixty-six percent of the vote.

Dulin: *How do you warm up?*

Tarkövi: I start every day the same (a little bit boring). I do some mouthpiece exercises from Boyd Hood. Then Stamp. I do No. 3, The Basic Warmup, and 4a. Then I go to arpeggio studies from the Louis Davidson book, *Trumpet Techniques*. In the Davidson book I play the arpeggios in major, minor and diminished both slurred and articulated. I don't feel it's a good

“...to come and play an audition in Germany you really have to know the rotary style.”



Gábor Tarkövi

idea to go too long in the warmup without practicing some articulation. I once went to a masterclass that Maurice André gave. He said the most difficult thing for a trumpet player to do is to start in the low register, go into the high register and then come back down. So he practiced this everyday using arpeggios. So I do this as well. I try to play every function of the trumpet when I warm up. If I am tired from playing in the orchestra at a very loud volume I practice soft attacks. Also I like to use Clarke's *Technical Studies* and Rolf Quinke's method. My warmup usually takes about an hour. I don't use Schlossberg so much because for me Schlossberg moves along too fast and it's difficult. It's a little too heavy for my everyday practice. But that's up to the individual. When I have an hour or two more to practice I work on playing music. I have a few recital programs I like to keep up. I feel this works the best for me.

Dulin: *You have very clear articulation. How do you practice*

"I don't feel it's a good idea to go too long in the warmup without practicing some articulation."

Hummel with a Schilke E trumpet, but on both the E and E-flat trumpet I use the same mouthpiece that I use on my rotary.

Dulin: *Other than pieces like Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuyle and Rite of Spring, are there pieces that you use the smaller trumpet for in the orchestra?*

Tarkövi: Yes, I play the *Nutcracker* on E-flat because it's better for intonation. But in the orchestra I use the C 95% of the time. There are a few pieces like the beginning of Schumann

Second Symphony where I use B-flat. But mostly I use the C trumpet.

Dulin: *So now how much do you practice every day?*

Tarkövi: Usually three half-hour sessions, not including the warmup, which is about an hour. This changes of course depending on what's coming

up. I really feel that it's important to practice in the low register at the end of the day, maybe fifteen to twenty minutes.

this and how did you develop it?

Tarkövi: Yes, well as a student I had a very slow single and double tongue and my triple tonguing was even worse. So in my first lesson with Geiger he heard this. He said, "Okay Gabor, it's now September; in June you will play the Hummel *Concerto* and the third movement you will play with single tongue. And play it around 140 to the quarter note." So at this point I could only play it at maybe 112. Geiger had a great single tongue. He really got the point across that you can't stop the air when articulating, that, you really must keep the air moving. During this time I played exercises similar to the Stamp Staccato Control exercises. But when you are playing these it's very important to play long notes. For me, with articulation it's very important to use a "t" consonant not a "d." With students I tell them to say the word "ticket," because it helps the first part of the articulation to be clear. When you have a good single tongue it really helps you play many pieces in the orchestra like the Ravel *Concerto* or the Bartok *Concerto for Orchestra* (sings second trumpet solo from the last movement), Mahler 5, which in Europe we play it a bit slower than it's often played in the us. I also like to practice the Goldman studies for articulation as well as Bosquet, Charlier, and the Michael Gisoni Bach studies. For lyrical studies I like Concone. I play them on C and B-flat trumpet to change things up a little bit.

Dulin: *Do you still practice on the B-flat?*

Tarkövi: Yes, I practice every day on the B-flat. I begin the warmup every day on the B-flat. But when I practice other material I will alternate between B-flat and C trumpets. When I play the Haydn *Concerto* I play it on a Schilke E-flat and the

When I can articulate well in the low register then it helps me to feel better the next day. Then I don't feel stiff.

Dulin: *When did you study with Tony Plog?*

Tarkövi: I studied with him when I played in Reutlingen and after I was in the Maurice André competition. I went to Freiburg to take lessons with Tony ten times. He was very helpful with Stamp and various methods, and has been very supportive of me.

Dulin: *Who did you listen to when you were growing up?*

Tarkövi: I was very fortunate to hear Maurice André live four times. He was in his fifties. That was very important for me. He played so perfect and so beautiful. Wynton Marsalis was also a very big influence, very different from André but the playing was very fascinating. It has been great to have a friendship with Wynton. He is so friendly and so kind. We met when he came to Berlin for the premier of his *Swing Symphony*. Naturally, I listened to CDs with Hans Gansch quite a lot... he had the greatest influence on me. Also I learned a great deal about music from the composer György Kurtág at his lessons.

Dulin: *The Berlin Philharmonic tours quite a bit. How do you stay in shape on the road?*

Tarkövi: Every year the Berlin Philharmonic tours in November. This year it was Asia—China, Korea, Taiwan, and Japan. Next year we go to Africa. Then in February we have a small tour in Europe and we also go to Salzburg in the summer. So every year we are on tour for two and a half to three months. When I am on the road I practice in hotels, without a mute. I think using a practice mute can be dangerous. You really can't tell what is going on.

Dulin: *What changes did you see in the culture of Berlin after the fall of the Berlin wall?*

Tarkövi: Yes, this was very interesting. I was a newcomer in Berlin; I had an interesting perspective on the wall. My first job in Berlin was in old East Berlin, but I was the first one in the orchestra (Berlin Symphony Orchestra) to live in the West. So my colleagues asked me "Why do you live in the West?" My answer was "In Hungary I lived in the East under the communists, and my dream was to live in the West and to live better." This was after the wall had come down but there was still the same feeling of separation. The separation lingers on even today, which was East Berlin and which was West Berlin, which offers the city a particular color, and this inspires quite a few artists.

Dulin: *You have made a few solo recordings recently. Can you talk about those?*

Tarkövi: I have also recorded a CD with my colleague Tamás. On this CD we perform Tony Plog's *Double Concerto* for trumpets and strings with Tony conducting. My first solo CD is a collection of Italian trumpet pieces with the Bavarian Radio Chamber Orchestra. The second is a recording of classical pieces by Haydn, Hummel, Mozart, and Neruda, which I did with the Bamberg Symphony Orchestra. The third disc will be a trumpet and organ CD. Making a very good CD is of course an expensive and difficult proposition. So I was fortunate to have a great producer who I knew from the Bavarian Radio Orchestra. He was fantastic and very helpful. The Bavarian Radio Chamber Orchestra often records

"...it's important to practice in the low register at the end of the day..."

on Tudor Records, so when I asked my producer if he thought a CD was possible he sent Tudor live recordings of the Hummel *Concerto* and *Mysteries of the Macabre*, which I played with the Bavarian Radio Orchestra. They liked the recordings and agreed to record six CD. For the first CD I didn't want to play Haydn. I wanted a little more time with the piece. So instead we recorded the Italian concertos. They are very flexible at Tudor. When I have an idea they are very accepting. The third disc will come out next year and I will play the

works by Telemann, Corelli, Bach, Handel, and Petr Eben. This is the idea right now. The organist will also arrange some songs.

Dulin: *Do you have any plans to record the Hindemith or other solo sonatas?*

Tarkövi: Yes, I find the Hindemith to be a very strong piece. In the Berlin Philharmonic we have a place called the Berlin Philharmonic Salon and I played the Hindemith on a concert there where many works from the 1930s were played. In between the works, letters were read from that time and I played the Hindemith *Sonate* on this concert. It was a much different feeling, more powerful because of the context of the concert. This is something I try to get across to students because it is so important to understand all that you can about context.

Dulin: *How many recitals do you do per year?*

Tarkövi: Every year I play about 15 – 25 solo concerts. This includes organ concerts, concertos, recitals, etc. I also try to

"...it's good to play solos. I feel it helps me play better in the orchestra."

play many new pieces as well as playing standard works by Haydn and Hummel. With the Berlin Philharmonic I play Wolfgang Rihm's *Marsyas for Trumpet, Percussion and Orchestra* and Bernd Alois Zimmermann's *Nobody Knows The Trouble I've Seen*. I think it's good to play solos. I feel it helps me play better in the orchestra. Too many solos make me tired in the orchestra, so it's important to find a good balance.

Dulin: *How has the Digital Concert Hall affected the Berlin Philharmonic?*

Tarkövi: When you play a concert without it being on TV or radio or the Internet, it's a bit more relaxed but when it's recorded through one or more of these mediums, it adds stress, especially for solo instruments like trumpet or horn. But there are two kinds of stress, the positive and the negative. When you think positive stress it helps you to concentrate more. So I had to realize "Okay, this is my life and I must be able to live with the Digital Concert Hall." I think this is the new thing for music publicity. But for me it's a little too much show business. But, many people throughout the world watch the Digital Concert Hall and it helps me go to places that I might never go. The first half year that we had the Digital Concert Hall I felt it was very difficult, but then I got used to it.

Dulin: *In addition to the Berlin Philharmonic and the solo work you also play in several chamber groups.*

Tarkövi: Yes, I play in the Austrian Brass Connection with Hans Gansch. We usually play together about once a year

because we are all so busy but it is a great time and we are all good friends.

Dulin: *And you also have a new brass quintet?*

Tarkövi: Yes, the Wien-Berlin Brass Quintet. It's made up of members of the Berlin and Vienna Philharmonics. Thomas Jöbstl is our horn player, Küblböck Dietmar on trombone and Christoph Gigler plays tuba, all from Vienna and Guillaume and I play trumpet. In 2012 we will tour Japan and this will be the beginning of the group. We may also play in Austria this summer. We will play a program with a lot of different types of music including Viennese waltzes, a Hungarian czardas, the Bernstein *Dance Suite*, the Arnold *Quintet* and the Victor Ewald quintets, John Stevens's *Four Seasons*. We'll also present new pieces from Christian Mühlbacher and Thomas Gansch, and good arrangements from the quintet players.



The Wien-Berlin Brass Quintet

Dulin: *Do you always play first trumpet?*

Tarkövi: No, no, we switch things around.

Dulin: *What are your favorite pieces to play in the orchestra?*

Tarkövi: I like the Mahler symphonies, every one of them. When I had my first car I listened to Mahler 4 on the one-hour drive to Budapest all the time. Also I used to listen to the Bernstein recording of Vienna Philharmonic playing Mahler 5 with Hans Gansch and also the New York Philharmonic with Zubin Mehta. When I would drive from Reutlingen to Vienna I would listen to the Vienna Philharmonic on the way there and on the way back the New York Philharmonic. So I knew each city along the way by which movement was playing in the car, sort of like a musical landmark. I think for trumpet Mahler 5 is great to play because of the heroic character of the trumpet, but for me personally, I like to play Mahler 2 because the trumpet writing is so beautiful. One of the things I like about Mahler is that every note that he wrote is possible for the trumpet. Mahler wrote in a way that made the trumpet sound good. I also like Stravinsky and Richard Strauss. Being Hungarian, naturally I enjoy playing Bartok, especially the *Concerto for Orchestra*. When you play the Bartok you know that every note is Hungarian. When you play the piece outside of Hungary you have a very warm nostalgic feeling because it reminds you of home. When Bartok wrote this he was in New York and was a little home sick, so when I play it outside of

"It is very important to relax after practicing—take a longish walk in the hills or a good swim."

"Mahler wrote in a way that made the trumpet sound good."

Hungary I feel that way too.

Dulin: *Is there anything that you find difficult to play in the orchestra?*

Tarkövi: I try to have a positive outlook. I think if you become negative you can make things harder than they are so it's important to have good attitude going in whether it's Schumann *Second Symphony* or *Zarathustra*, or *Symphony Domestica*. But that being said, I think *Alpine Symphony* is a hard piece for trumpet. It's musically strong. When you are in good shape it's a lot of fun. I think *Petroushka* is the same way. One thing about playing principal trumpet is that you must really like to play the solos. It is very important to like what you are doing. We all have the feeling of "Oh no, I don't feel so good today!" But then I think, "Okay, use the air well and go for it." So you have to have a very balanced approach to the way you choose to think. Knowing something is challenging gives you a respect for a piece, but you must stay positive to stay in balance.

Dulin: *Is there anything else you want to add?*

Tarkövi: Yes, I think that in life balance is important. I think when you are a student you practice many hours but if you don't learn about art and architecture you will miss out. You must practice a lot. It is important that you practice well. Holding the trumpet for hours to your lips does not mean that you'll be a better trumpet player. It is important to think about your practice and know what you are doing.

It is very important to relax after practicing, to keep the balance—take a longish walk in the hills or a good swim. What really helped me was learning other forms of art, such as architecture and painting, which can help tremendously in musical expression.



Gábor Tarkövi

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