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## A Historical Survey of Czech Music I

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We can observe the fate of music on the territory of today's Czech Republic from almost time immemorial. The musical historian must piece together the picture of the past from sources of all kinds. The long stretch of time from prehistory until the early Middle Ages can be substantiated only quite rarely by direct proofs. It is not until the establishment of the Czech Feudal State that the sporadic archeological finds and scanty chroniclers' references are supplemented by manuscripts with musical notation as well as evidence gained from works of the fine arts; the combination of these various types of sources gradually began to mould the image of Czech music into an ever more distinct shape.

Archeological research in Dolní Věstonice in Moravia and in other localities has brought to light also simple *whistles*, documenting the music-making of the inhabitants of this region more than twenty thousand years ago, or even earlier. Finds of pottery drums are dated somewhat later, while the first thousand years B. C. has left in its wake rattles of various shapes. These and other central European findings indicate the existence of some form of musical activity corresponding to the mentality of the very early stages of human culture. The connection between the earliest settlement of the Bohemian territory and the later development is not quite clear; the beginnings of a continuous tradition apparently came into being only with the arrival of the Slavonic inhabitants as from the 5th and 6th centuries. Nor can we speak with any certainty about the standard of culture and music of the ancient Slavs on the territory of Bohemia and Moravia for a long time. The process of the disintegration of the tribal system seemed still to be accompanied by a type of elementary musical activity of a prehistorical community.

It was only the social and cultural advance in the 9th century of the first political unit known as Great Moravia that seemed to signal a new epoch in the local development of music. The differentiation of this society allows us to assume the existence of a differentiation also in the music: the music of the folk stratum, and secular and religious music of the group rising to power. This assumption is of course supported only by sparse documents: for example the bone whistle of the Great Moravian era bears witness to the existence of secular instrumental music-making. The most concrete concept can be gained in considering the Christian liturgic chant of the Great Moravian period, even though this sphere is also only proved by later or indirect reports. The epochal undertaking of the introduction of the liturgy in the Slavonic tongue – the world of the Byzantine mission of Cyril (Constantine) and Methodius dating from 863 to 885 – was without a doubt combined with the chant. The later fragments of the Old Church Slavonic texts have preserved at least the signs for can-

tillation, though the virtual existence of richer melodies in the time of Cyril and Methodius cannot be ruled out. In that case the chant of the Great Moravian liturgy would represent the seed of a new and fundamentally important sphere of European monophony. The Old Church Slavonic liturgy, which gradually spread from Great Moravia to the whole of the South and East Slavonic world, created in its melodies an independent branch of the Byzantine hymnography, thus counterbalancing the great culture of the West European Gregorian Chant.

The fall of Great Moravia and the formation of a new political centre in Bohemia under the Přemyslid dynasty during the 9th and 10th centuries also meant a further chapter in the history of the local music. But not even the early Bohemian state left us with any musical document of substantial significance, so that the origins of music on the territory of Middle Age Bohemia are lost in suppositions and hypotheses. It may be assumed that as from the 9th to the 11th centuries an uninterrupted tradition of local folk music persisted belonging rather to the primitive stages of human culture, untouched by Christianity. Singing in conjunction with the heathen rites and dances and the use of various types of instruments is indicated by their mention in the earliest writings, the ecclesiastical critiques of heathen customs and also by the preserved finds of whistles and other archeological proofs. The existence of epic songs at the court of the Přemyslids cannot be excluded. Nevertheless the dominating musical sphere of the early Bohemian state was the Christian sacred chant.

There are not sufficiently reliable grounds to consider in more detail the supposed influence of the Great Moravian religious chant on the territory of the young Bohemian state. No doubt though the decisive influence in the formation of the liturgic chant was soon gained by the western Latin church that imported to the Czech lands its organization and liturgy via the south German region. As the potency of the church organization in the Czech lands gradually increased so the Gregorian Chant gained a firmer footing. The Prague bishopric as from 973 and above all the network of Benedictine monasteries in the 10th and the 11th centuries became the most important centres of the new vocal culture. The Latin chant was brought to the country in liturgical books of foreign provenance. Soon, however, monastery scriptoria embarked on producing ever more liturgic books of their own. The earliest musical records of local scribes are proved to have appeared in the 11th century, and we may also fix the date here of the earliest known local musical work in Czech – the religious song *Hospodine pomiluj ny* (Lord, Have Mercy Upon Us). The next century gradually added to the network of religious institutions, particularly a number of Cistercian and Premonstratensian monasteries, and the chant – originally the import of a narrow social stratum – became one of the determining factors in the musical development in the Czech lands. Also the second original religious song of the Czech Middle Ages – *Svatý Václave* (St. Wenceslas) – based on the Gregorian Chant arose in the 12th century. The existence of secular instrumental music began to be demonstrated by the then contemporary works of art.

The rule of the five last Czech kings of the Přemyslid dynasty (1197-1306) not only meant a turn in the social and cultural trends in the country, but also a new chapter in

the history of Czech music. Only this era featuring the establishment of towns, German colonization and the beginning of Gothic culture left us with a large amount of musical sources and documents giving a clearer idea at least of the high sphere of music culture- the liturgic chant. The records of the chroniclers of the time and the church edicts indicate an attempt to purify and unite the hitherto diverse practice of the sacred chant, the leading lights being the Prague Chapter and some monasteries. The organization of the permanent choirs pertaining to the main churches was strengthened and the number of preserved liturgic hymn – books of the 13th century increased. The troper of 1235, the beautifully illuminated antiphoner of the Sedlec monastery or the liturgic books of St. George's Convent and some others are evidence of the broad repertoire of the liturgic chant in the reign of the last Přemyslids and also the independent share of the local creativeness in the field of the Latin chant. Within the frame-work of the adopted foreign repertoire there also appeared new local Latin chants in honour of the Czech patron saints Wenceslas, Ludmila, Prokop and some other tropes, sequences, hymns or rhymed offices. Of interest are also the local Easter Sepulchre dramas, whose early tradition is documented e.g. by the above-mentioned liturgic books of the Benedictine Convent of St. George's at Prague Castle. Also the notation or the liturgic books of the Přemyslid era demonstrate a number of local elements gradually leading towards a special type of neumatic notation, characteristic for the majority of Bohemian sources since the 14th century.

The picture of the musical culture during the last Přemyslids is not, however, confined only to the liturgic chant. The new world of European chivalrous culture also reached the Czech royal court that played host to numerous German Minnesingers (Reinmar von Zweter, Heinrich von Meissen, Meister Sigeher and others). The court of Wenceslas II (1278-1305) in particular became the lively centre of this fashionable type of song of the Gothic era. Some idea of this imported culture is provided by the magnificent illuminations of foreign manuscripts; there are no local musical relics of Minnesinger music. On the other hand from the records at the court of the Přemyslids richer information about the instrumental music of the Czech Middle Ages can be obtained; also the illuminated manuscripts of the time began to bear witness to this sphere.

The period of the reign of the Luxembourg dynasty (1310-1437) and especially the reign of Emperor Charles IV (1346-1378) was doubtlessly the climax of the musical history of the Czech Middle Ages. The expansion of the church organization, the elevation of the Prague bishop to the rank of archbishop, the new impulses given by Gothic art, the foundation of the Prague university as well as the great augmentation of the sovereign's power – all this affected the advancement of the musical culture of the time. The number of preserved liturgical song-books and the reports of the organization of church choirs (e.g. bonifanti and psalm singers in the Prague Cathedral of St. Vitus etc.) are proof of the flourishing of the Gregorian Chant under the auspices of the Emperor Charles IV himself and the Prague archbishop. The number of liturgic chants inspired by the local environment increased, even some Czech translations of the Latin chant appeared. Czech also penetrated into the liturgical drama; in

the Laments of the Virgin Mary unusually expressive melodies in the vernacular can be found. The initiative of the Czech lands began to be remarkably manifest in the sphere of religious strophic songs. The atmosphere of the early humanism during Charles IV's reign and the pre-reformational efforts were conducive to Latin and Czech religious songs, which became the basis for the entire later song culture in the Czech lands. At the same time polyphonic compositions, also by local authors, began to play a more important role in the church.

Secular music too, however, found favourable breeding ground in the Luxembourg epoch. At the court of King John of Luxembourg (1310-1346) the tradition of the German Minnesingers was on the decline; for a time the most eminent contemporary French composer Guillaume de Machaut made his appearance at his court as the King's secretary. The foundation of the Prague University (1348) was an incentive for students' lyrics, preserved for our time at least as texts, and here and there melodies too. The social development of the Luxembourg epoch was obviously favourably inclined towards instrumental music. This sphere, whose tradition had an unbroken line from the past centuries, is documented only by two isolated written records of dance instrumental melodies. For that, though, there are many indirect proofs in the rich heritage of the Bohemian fine arts of the period – he it the famous Velislav Bible, the murals at Karlštejn Castle, or the book illuminations of the Wenceslas IV period (1378-1419). These documents indicate both the intensity of the cultivation of instrumental music in Bohemia and its varied function both in secular and church practice, and the popularity of certain types of instruments or some special local features (e.g. the *ala bohémica*).

The Hussite revolution made a deep impact on the life of the entire Czech society – and this included the course of medieval music in the Czech lands. The activities of John Huss in the cradle of the movement – in the Bethlehem Chapel (1402-1412) – are connected with the first presage of the new task of the song in this society. A rigorous and uncompromising attitude to music was adopted especially by the radical wing of the Hussite reformers, who condemned all forms of art not serving the cause of the reformation of the church and not accessible to the broader section of the population. This explains why the Latin chant, the secular song and more exacting polyphonic compositions had to recede for a time. For that the reformation made way for the expansion of other forms: the religious song in the vernacular, comprehensible to all and linked with every kind of situation of the revolutionary times, became the most typical product of the Hussite epoch. The song repertoire of the first three decades of the 15th century, ranging from the famous war songs down to the by-no-means insignificant production of topical songs and ditties is a unique contribution to the European culture of the time. Perhaps a still more radical novelty though for those days was the restriction of Latin and the translation of the divine service into Czech: the Czech sung Gregorian Chant preserved in the well known Jistebnice Hymn-book, anteceded by a whole century similar attempts by Lutheran Germany.

The cultural ideals of the Hussite movement left their mark too on the musical development of the 15th and the 16th centuries in the Czech lands; but of course they did not assert themselves with the same intensity everywhere and also never prevailed completely. The Hussite initiative proved most compelling in promoting the flourishing of religious songs in the vernacular: the tradition of this musical genre found a continuation in the 15th century, notably in the Utraquist Church, for which one of the most prolific authors of those days Václav Mířinský († 1492) wrote his works. Already in the 15th century though there is evidence as well of a polyphonic repertoire in church compositions, whose cultivation was not entirely suppressed by the Hussites either and which in the second half of the 15th century and in the first quarter of the 16th century blossomed as a distinctive realm of anonymous works, some of them apparently of local origin. The Hussite movement could not absolutely interrupt the life of the secular songs and instrumental performances in various strata of society, and after the end of the Hussite wars the tradition of the Latin chant again emerged from the sources. The reformational movement, however; – in spite of its indisputable valuable contributions – also had a negative effect on the course of the music of the 15th century: it excluded for the duration some strata of society from cultural activity and temporarily curbed the international contacts of Czech music. This is reflected in the rather narrow bounds of the preserved music of the 15th century. Only in the following century did Czech music again begin to unfold to embrace a greater wealth of types and forms.

The 16th century was an age of gradual economic consolidation, an era in which the cultural activity flourished, especially in the milieu of the towns, and this was also the time for establishing international contacts in the reign of the Habsburg dynasty (from 1526). Perhaps the most important centre for the cultivation of art music in the Czech lands in those days were the Literary Brethren – the church choirs, in which the burgher amateurs organized themselves according to the rules of the guilds of the time. The large manuscript hymn-books of these ensembles a unique relics of European book painting and have preserved for us on considerable broad lines in particular the chant and the polyphonic compositions of the 16th century.

The Literary Brethren choirs carried on the tradition of the Hussites in singing the Chant in Czech, which only receded for time under the rule of the Jagellon dynasty (1471-1526). The chant singing often took on a specific character in that they interspersed the Chant with songs. In the Jagellon period there began to penetrate into the repertoire of the Literary Brethren contemporary European polyphony of the Netherland sphere, under whose influence a new stratum of more artistic polyphonic compositions for the divine services came into being. But until the middle of the 16th century this polyphony of the local composers remained preserved as anonymous; only in the second half of the 16th century the names of Czech polyphony composers appear in the sources more frequently. Pavel Spongopus Jistebnický, Jiří Rychnovský, Jan Trajan Turnovský and a number of others from the milieu of the Brethren choirs elevated the Czech church polyphony to the technical standard of the pe-

riod, and some of the local elements in their works distinguished them from the enormous production of Europe of the time.

Besides polyphony the tradition of the religious song in the vernacular expanded. The creation of new songs was given an impulse by the complicated differentiation of the reformation movement and the general flourishing of Czech national culture; the invention of the printing press then enabled their diffusion. Printed hymn books – systematically compiled anthologies of ecclesiastical songs – appeared earlier in the Czech lands than elsewhere in Europe and surpassed their foreign counterparts both in the extent and typographic arrangement. The hymn-books of the Unity of Brethren took a prominent place; a number of song books published by this by-no-means large and often persecuted church from 1505 until the Thirty Years' War belong to the acme of older Czech musical culture. (The attention devoted to song is also reflected in the documents on musical education in the Fraternity and in the publication of musical pedagogic aids: *Musica* by Jan Blahoslav seems to be the first treatise on music in Czech published in book form; and maybe a similar Czech work published under the pseudonym Jan Josquin in 1561 also had some connection with the Fraternity.) Apart from the Brethren hymn-book the hymn-books of the Moravian Lutherans are, however, remarkable too. A whole number of compilations came into being among the Czech Utraquists and towards the end of the 16th century catholic hymn-books appeared as well. Besides the Czech song German hymn-books also came into Benin in the Czech lands, and side by side the religious songs there were also a colourful array of secular songs: particularly numerous are the preserved manuscripts and prints of topical and historical songs of the 16th century.

If the vocal music of the 16th century is preserved in a large amount of direct records, this cannot be said of the instrumental music of those days, where we only have indirect evidence in archive and pictorial documents and some preserved musical instruments. The participation of instrumental accompaniments in church choir singing is indicated by various depictions of musical instruments in the Brethren hymn-books. As in previous ages, so here there are documents of the activities of itinerant musicians in the 16th century. In addition though, there is evidence of the rise in social status of some of them to the ranks of town trumpeters. Moreover in the town and aristocratic communities the cultivation of amateur music-making was on the increase, particularly the playing of the lute, clavichord and related instruments belonging to the fashionable entertainment of the pre-White Mountain society.

From this epoch though there are to be found but few relics of original instrumental compositions of Czech provenance. It was only at the end of this period that there appeared several tablatures for lute and organ in which the foreign repertoire of the time prevailed. It seems that the art instrumental compositions that were gradually evolved in Europe in the 16th century did not gain a favourable footing in the Czech lands. The same applies to secular vocal music of the renaissance character: the chamber ensemble singing of madrigals and related forms in burgher and aristocratic societies seemed to have to concentrate rather on foreign imported works. A certain local similarity to the fashionable art music of the European Renaissance in the Czech

lands were occasional polyphonic compositions from the humanistic milieu, which, however, only in exceptional cases went beyond simple homophony.

The most marked impact was made by imported foreign music on the repertoire of court orchestras at the Czech castles and mansions. The occasional participation of the musicians at parties and banquets of the noblemen can be continuously observed from the Middle Ages up to the 16th century. In addition, however, we have the first reports of permanent musical groups at aristocratic seats in the Czech lands. From the middle of the 16th century until the Thirty Years' War the Rožmberk orchestra played at Třeboň and Český Krumlov, whose mainly instrumental repertoire consisted mostly of fashionable compositions by European composers. An ensemble of a similar type was apparently owned before the Thirty Years' War at his castle in Pecka by Kryštof Harant of Polžice, himself one of the most distinguished composers of his day, as well as by several other aristocrats.

The most significant permanent musical ensemble, however, began to take shape at Prague Castle in the 16th century with the ascendancy of the Habsburgs to the Czech throne. The Emperor's orchestra, which in the reign of Rudolph II (1576-1612) settled in Prague for good in 1576, was one of the mightiest vocal-instrumental ensembles of its time concentrating the best foreign musicians and composers in its midst; over three decades it was headed by one of the leading composers of the height of the European Renaissance, Philipp de Monte. The cultural atmosphere of Rudolph's Prague also attracted further composers: it was then that the outstanding Slovene polyphonist Jacobus Gallus-Handl was active here. At that time too the local printing press published magnificently designed prints of the works by those European composers engaged in Prague.

The two centuries between the Hussite Revolution and the beginning of the Thirty Years' War brought Czech music from its initial isolation to a broad contact with European developments: if the repertoire of the musical genres of the 15th century was rather limited, then in the 16th century the main genres of the compositions prevalent in the Europe of those days found their way to the Czech lands too. Of course Bohemia became acquainted with some of these types of music only as a foreign import: the slight interest in secular art-compositions, vocal and instrumental, remained a characteristic feature of local works since Hussite times. For that though Czech music created distinctive works of merit in the sphere of hymns that also penetrated abroad, as well as in some spheres of polyphony and in specific forms of the Gregorian Chant in the vernacular. This varied and ever more multiform development of the 16th century was interrupted only by the defeat of the Czech Protestants at the Battle of the White Mountain (1620). The forceful turn of events led Czech music onto a new and in many ways different road.

If the Thirty Years' War was a landmark in the epochs of the whole of central Europe, the more so was it inscribed in the national, social, cultural and religious history of the Czechs as an era of profound and devastating consequences. It destroyed much of worth and caused such an upheaval in relationships and the lines of continu-

ity, that by the end of the war practically everything in the country was reversed, resulting in a generally detrimental effect on the national culture.

A new stage in the history of the country had been inaugurated by the nationally and religiously motivated resistance movement of the Protestant Estates against the Catholic Habsburgs (the congress of the party for the cause of the Holy Communion to administer the Sacrament in the two kinds, that is bread and wine, the defenestration of the royal deputies, the deposition of Ferdinand II from the Bohemian throne in favour of the election of the Protestant Frederick of the Palatinate as king in 1619). The defeat of the Estate forces at the Battle of the White Mountain shattered this resistance movement and the victorious Catholic side began to retaliate cruelly: twenty-seven Czech noblemen, knights and burghers were executed, among them the distinguished composer Kryštof Harant of Polžice. The property of the participants of this "hideous rebellion" was confiscated, the country began to take on another image, shaped by alien forces.

Ferdinand II, a zealous disciple of the Jesuits, unleashed a mighty anti-reformation campaign, which was supposed to uproot everything that contradicted the Catholic faith. On the death anniversary of the founder of the Jesuit Order, Ignatius Loyola, he issued the so-called Anti-reformation Patent in Vienna in 1629, which decreed that the Bohemian noblemen and burghers "return to the holy, only redeemable Catholic Church", or leave the country without any of their goods and chattles. The new - Constitutional Law, issued in the same year, turned back the clock of the promising pre-White Mountain developments in the social structure of the land: instead of strengthening the rights of the Estates' Assembly, on the contrary the Estates and all the selfgoverning bodies were divested of their rights and the power of the ruler strengthened (absolute monarchy). The towns and the masses of serfs lost most in this respect.

The high-handed deformation of the social structure in contradiction to the general trends of social development in Europe had a fundamental influence on the character of further musical activities in the country. The loss of all vestiges of political power of the lands of the Bohemian crown did not only manifest itself in that Prague definitely ceased to be the residence of the Emperor and the Czech lands were hence deprived of the most significant centre of secular artistic works. A far more unfavourable consequence was the fact that the new foreign aristocracy, privileged by the Emperor to settle in the country on the confiscated property of the exiled Protestant families, was not interested in literature, drama and vocal music in the local vernacular. Not even the burghers, reduced in numbers by the war and weakened by the turn of political events, were capable of creating suitable conditions for compositions to Czech texts to be forthcoming. The unifying super-national aims of the Catholic Church to whose power the entire sphere of ideology was entrusted led rather to a forsaking of national elements in the cultural activities of the country – only Latin texts were offered to be put to music – than to supporting its development. The sum total of these social and national shortcomings fundamentally procratinated the time of the formation of a Czech national musical style, and on the

contrary led to an unbalanced structure of Czech music in the 17th and 18th centuries. In spite of the immense musical activity there were some types and forms that just could not find a footing in the given conditions. Above all prerequisites were lacking to give rise to the composition of secular songs and professional opera works in the national language, that is to say two fields of composition that are vital in constituting a national style. While in other freely developing national cultures composers were often faced with the task of setting to music texts in the vernacular and thus had to accommodate their musical inventiveness to the specific demands of their mother-tongue, correct declamation etc., *Czech composers of the 17th and 18th centuries were deprived of such a verbal inspiring force of the mother-tongue.* (The essential difference is more apparent in comparison with the situation in other countries by pointing to the Italian madrigalists, the composers of early monodies and the first operas, to the German H. Schütz, the Englishman H. Purcell, J. B. Lully in France etc.) Music to Czech lyrics was virtually limited to the sphere of folk-songs and hymns, it did not touch upon the more complicated structures of the higher standards, which was almost entirely the preserve of Latin and Italian, later of German too.

Of the music of the pre-White Mountain period the songs of the common people, both church and secular, maintained the highest degree of vitality in the new social situation. The potent tradition of the church songs of the Bohemian Brethren endured in two lines. The Protestant exiles drew from them and spread and perpetuated them in Europe, while at home the new Catholic hymns linked up with them also. The internationally renowned and active pedagogue John Amos Komenský – Comenius (1592-1670) elected bishop, that is to say the head of the Unity of Bohemian Brethren in 1608, expressed his personal and also the traditional Brethren relationship to church songs by publishing his Hymns, i. e. a book of Psalms and church songs (in Amsterdam in 1659). A manifestation of the continual interest in the song was also the Cithara sanctorum, the work of Jiří Třanovský (Tranoscius, 1591-1637), published for the first time in Levoča, Slovakia, in 1636. The effectiveness of the melodies and the synthetic character of the collection ensured this book of songs a reputation for centuries to come; up till now it has been published over one hundred times.

It was a great boon for the local production of catholic songs that at the beginning of its Baroque chapter there was a personality gifted with such original creativeness as Adam Michna of Otradovice (c. 1600-1676). His native town of Jindřichův Hradec was an important cultural centre as early as the 16th century. On the whole the town was spared the horrors of the war, and so music was able to flourish happily with the ample support of the local Jesuit monastery. Nevertheless the poet and composer in one, actually an organist by profession and an innkeeper, was able to publish his works in print only after the cessation of the general turmoil, as from 1647. It was then that his *Česká mariánská muzika* (Czech Virgin Mary Music), a collection of four-to five-voiced religious songs, appeared. These are in keeping with older traditions as far as arrangement is concerned. Otherwise Michna's approach is genuinely original, new in its marked stress on subjective experiences and in the discovery of new lyric themes, which also applies to his further collection of hymns *Svatoroční muzika* (Holy

Year music, 1661). The thirteen songs with instrumental interludes Michna conceived in his collection *Loutna česká* (The Czech Lute, 1653) deviate completely from the traditional schema of hymn-books. The love themes in these songs, whose full-blooded sensualism could not be toned down even by the presence of religious symbols, considerably extended the range of the subject matter of Michna's works. The aesthetic components of his songs highly superseded the religious ones and the songs took on the character of a refined art. Therefore Michna's songs have retained their appeal to this day, they are captivating in their emotional intensity, in their bold images and metaphores, as well as in their rich vocabulary based on the vernacular. Thus it is not surprising that Michna's vocal compositions had a decisive influence on the entire further line of Catholic songs in the Czech lands. Granted, only one of his Christmas carols *Chťíc, aby spal* (May He Sleep) can be said to have merged with the folk music, the rest though were appropriated in the works of generations to come. His lyrics were set to new melodies as late as in the second half of the 18th century.

The mighty current of Czech religious songs set into motion by the Hussite movement continued to flourish in the Czech lands to a no lesser degree throughout the Baroque period and endured as one of the main pillars of Czech musicality. The compilers and arrangers of Catholic hymn-books after Michna had to meet the demand for the extension of the repertoire by providing further songs. The large post-Michna hymn-books contained hundreds of items, including too some of the Brethren songs nobody had succeeded in exterminating and so it was preferable to dress them up in new texts according to the Catholic faith and so let the people continue to enjoy them. These huge hymn-books published in large editions were circulated in the whole country – and especially in the villages they represented a fundamental aid to church choirmasters in shaping the repertoire. Apart from songs for one voice they later contained choral compositions, arias and duets with instrumental accompaniment (e.g. *Capella regia musicalis* -The Royal Chapel of Song and Music – by V. K. Holan-Rovenský 1693). The last significant collection of Catholic baroque hymn-book literature was *Slaviček rujský* (The Paradisean Nightingale) (Hradec Králové, 1719), compiled by Father J. J. Božan. Here the tendency towards a variety in genre and the addition of secular elements was apparent too in that some of the Christmas pastorale compositions were written in the form of dialogues, which was no doubt influenced by the popular Nativity Plays. Besides the songs that were published in print, the folk singers compiled manuscripts of songs for their own needs, usually without notes, from time to time, however, very decorative in presentation, including a careful record of the melodies. Such large manuscript song-books were then passed down as a heritage from one generation to the next and maintained the continuity of the Czech religious songs.

Secular folk-songs were not so prestigious socially and hence were not recorded. Only exceptionally, some of them – especially if they were concerned with some topical social event of wider import – were written down by friar-chroniclers. Some texts of songs have been random findings in the investigation records of various disturbances etc. The ballad-mongers' prints determined for the broad masses enjoyed

great publicity; but they did not contribute in any way to a new musical quality and their texts were fully in the service of the ruling ideology.

A characteristic feature of European Baroque was the mighty ascent and development of instrumental music. If in Italy, France, England, but also in Poland and elsewhere the noblemen's courts, the seats of the top church hierarchy, ample endowments of the monasteries and higher church schools could ensure suitable conditions for the cultivation of instrumental music from the very beginning of the epoch, then in the Czech lands it was necessary only now, following the profound social upheaval, to create an institutional basis for this type of music. This took quite a time. First the new foreign aristocracy's hunger for land and property had to be satisfied. Usually music did not come into its own until the third generation: from the yields of the estates, the grandfathers had gained as booty – generally as soldiers in the Emperor's service – their sons had palaces built in Prague and mansions on the various estates. The grandsons then had it all lined up for them, and when they had done with their education among the Jesuits, followed by a grand tour of western Europe, they could fill in their time with various diversions and boast of being cultured. It was then that the time had come for the great era of music in the subjugated Czech lands, for this seemed to the baroque cavaliers to be an adequate form of entertainment, a suitable way of spending time, since otherwise the days were usually devoted to paying visits, writing letters, horse-riding, coach tours, hunting, dancing and playing cards etc. The tuition of singing and the playing of a musical instrument was included. Besides the learning of language, fencing and dancing, among the "compulsory subjects" in the private education of young noblemen. As a consequence of this changed style of living instrumental groups became an integral part of the aristocrats' seats in the Czech lands at the beginning of the 18th century. Mostly it was a case of ensembles in livery, consisting of the musically talented and tutored serfs, who on the one hand served as retainers, on the other hand were charged with providing the music at table and on social occasions. In the summer they served their lords in their country residences and in the winter in their Prague – or Viennese – palaces.

The first in a position to acquire such an ensemble as early as the second half of the 17th century were the highest church representatives, since the continuity of their property holdings were in no way threatened by the events of the war, on the contrary their wealth increased thanks to the confiscations. In this respect the orchestra of the Bishop of Olomouc, who was wont to reside in nearby Kroměříž, excelled. The ensemble was headed in succession by distinguished musicians: H. I. F. Biber (1644-1704), a native of a German family coming from north Bohemia, later active in Salzburg, and renowned in particular for his violin compositions, and Pavel Vejvanovský (c. 1640-93), an outstanding trumpet player, a native of Moravian Silesia. Not all the bishops had an equal interest in music, some abolished the orchestras, while their successors maybe re-established them. It was the same later in the case of the ensembles of the secular aristocracy. A significant episode of this kind is demonstrated especially by the musical ensemble of the Count Johann Adam Questenberg in Jaroměřice on the Rokytná. A great admirer of music and the theatre,

himself an excellent player on the lute, passing his life alternately at the Viennese court or at his grand castle in Jaroměřice, he assembled with the aid of his valet cum "maestro", František Václav Míča (1694-1744), a company with which he produced the latest Italian operas of the Viennese and Neapolitan repertoire in the castle theatre in the original language and in some cases in the Czech or German translation respectively. Míča composed incidental insertions for these operas, festive cantatas and then complete operas e. g. *L'origine di Jaromeriz* (The Origin of Jaroměřice, 1730). A similar attempt was made by K. Müller (Cambyzes, 1743) his successor as head of the orchestra. Following the example of Count Questenberg, the Rottals in Holešov and particularly the Olomouc Bishop, Cardinal W. H. Schrattenbach, had Italian operas staged in their Moravian castles in the thirties. The latter patronized in his theatres both in Kroměříž and Vyškov besides the production of Italian works also the operas of his musician Václav Gurecký (*Antico*, 1729, *Griseldu*, 1730).

In Bohemia the Černíns, Thuns, Morzins etc. had their own orchestras as from the twenties of the 18th century. Count Franz Anton Sporck maintained a smaller ensemble, but for that he did not hesitate to invest large sums in an Italian opera company, to whom as from 1724 he put at its disposal the theatre in his Prague residence and for the summer months the theatre at his Kuks Castle. Thanks to Count Sporck, Prague acquired conditions for cultivating the most representative musical form of secular baroque art permanently – except for a brief interval caused by the events of the war. This was of no small importance for the further musical development in the country. For up till then the Italian troupe was a mere guest in the Czech lands, which paid visits usually only as part of the Emperor's entourage (1627, 1648, 1680). Fair enough between 1699 to 1700 several Italian companies tried their luck in Prague, but in unsuitable establishments and without the aid of patrons it was impossible for them to gain a permanent foothold. The final impulse for Sporck's decision was no doubt given by the grandiose production of the opera by the Viennese court composer J. J. Fux *Costanza e fortezza*, staged in Prague in 1723 as part of the coronation celebrations of Charles VI as Bohemian king. The local aristocracy spent vast sums on this issue of prestige to demonstrate to the Emperor in the most marked possible fashion the significance of the lands of the Czech crown for the Habsburg monarchy. The expected political profit was not forthcoming, for that though this splendid imported theatrical show provided a unique opportunity for the Prague social and musical elite to see a perfect example of ostentatious imperial baroque, that sum total of the most pretentious display that could possibly be procured in the huge wooden amphitheatre nearby to Prague Castle. The opera company, whose patron was Sporck, came from Venice and was soon to be headed by Antonio Denzio. He not only brought along an excellent group of singers, but also enabled friendly contacts with Antonio Vivaldi, who for a number of years acted as a kind of agent in Venice for the Prague company; he engaged new singers for it and secured new compositions. He himself contributed to Sporck's opera era with six works, four of which had their first performances in Prague. Vivaldi's instrumental works too had a great influ-

ence on the further development in Bohemia of solo and ensemble violin music as well as in the realm of the formal construction of instrumental compositions.

A characteristic feature of the Bohemian aristocrats' bands was the prominent participation of wind instruments, which were highly functional in view of the tasks of the musicians in those days, (they often played in the open-air, there was a need for festive sounds, the possibility of many combinations of instruments etc.). What's more this was in keeping with the nature of Czech folk musicality. The French horn took pride of place, usually represented by a couple of players. The beginning of the popularity of this instrument in the Czech lands is traditionally connected with F. A. Sporck, who in the eighties of the 17th century had two of his serfs sent to Paris to attain accomplishment in the playing of the "cor de chasse" (the hunting horn). This instrument spread incredibly quickly in the Czech lands and already c. 1700 we find it in several church ensembles in the country. Later horn players from Bohemia were in great demand and made their mark in many outstanding European orchestras.

Of the other instruments the flutes (recorders and transverse flutes), oboes and bassoons formed the basic group of woodwinds of the Czech Baroque period, which of course in individual cases was further differentiated according to the voice range (soprano, contralto etc.), or maybe in modifications: oboe de caccia, oboe d'amore and so on. The cornett ended its era with the 17th century. In the brass instrument group there dominated the high trumpets and trombones appearing usually in three sizes and voice ranges. Among the string instruments a transfer took place in the Czech lands in the 17th century from the viol to the violin, while the lower voice range continued to be supplied by the viola da gamba and violon (double-bass). Among the plucked and strummed instruments the lute dominated, often also the theorbo, in the 17th century also the colascione; here and there you could find a guitar, mandora and others. Clavichords and harpsichords became a vital component of aristocratic drawing-rooms, organs dominated in the church galleries. In the Baroque period one-manual organs with a small number of stops were typical for the Czech lands. The pedal used to have only a one octave range. Usually German organ-makers were invited to construct two to three-manual mechanisms with a larger number of stops. Many of these skilled craftsmen settled in the country and often for several generations remained faithful to their craft. Similarly in the case of the distinguished Prague violin-makers' school, whose founders came from Augsburg and the Tyrol.

In the field of folk music there very frequently appeared apart from violins and wind instruments in the main bagpipes and in some regions the dulcimer; in general use were various types of the hurdy-gurdy, zithers, harps, tromba marina and so on. In the Baroque period attempts at constructing new types of instruments were not rare, of which of course only some asserted themselves for a certain time. A drawing is preserved of a keyboard instrument, whose hammers elicit tones by striking on glass basins of graded sizes, bearing witness to the existence of an early type of glass harmonica in the thirties of the 18th century. The instrument is evidently identical with the glockenspiel F. A. Sporck ordered to be made by the organ-maker of Doksy

for use as an accompanying instrument to the singing in the grand hall of Kuks Castle.

In the second half of the 17th century and particularly in the 18th century the Czech musicians were known for their versatile competence and skill. They used to play at least two instruments, which enabled them to find employment more easily and aging players of wind instruments were able to fall back on the second violin and double-bass "to mark time" until retirement. The talented youth became accomplished in the rudiments of music at an early stage in schools. Since both the lords of the manors and the Church wanted to fetter their serfs and keep them in their place as a cheap labour source, it was not in their interest for the serfs to be educated, they therefore decided that the curricula in the schools should be mainly devoted to the catechism and music. This is why and how musicians for the mansion orchestras and church choirs were trained. The further education of the musically talented was entrusted to the endowments of monasteries of the Jesuits and Piarists and other orders; talented young instrumentalists from the ranks of the serfs were sent by the aristocracy for six months or a year to some famous musician to be tutored and given board and lodgings. It was quite exceptional for this expedient type of musical training in the form of direct absorption of experience and habits to be supplemented by any theory. The result was a rich and ever rising tradition of good music-making with an obvious shortcoming of theoretic knowledge. The only musical dictionary compiled in Latin-the first of its kind in Europe – by Master of Philosophy and the organist of the chief Old-Town Church in Prague, Thomas Balthazar Janovka (1669-1741) *Clavis ad thesaurum magnae artis musicae* (1701) remained an exceptional work for a long time.

In the last third of the Baroque period there appeared a phenomenon in Czech musical life, which was to come to a climax in the course of the 18th century and never quite ceased to exist. It is termed the musical emigration. Initially it was caused by the surplus of musicians in the country and because foreign countries offered essentially a better livelihood. The most gifted musicians also found better conditions for creative work beyond the borders of the Czech lands, which both chief representatives of the height of the Czech Baroque period Jan Dismas Zelenka (1679-1745) and Bohuslav Matej Černohorský (1684-1742), as well as František Tůma (1704-1774) standing on the division line of this epoch, fully utilized. Zelenka, brought up in the Prague Jesuit college, delved more deeply into his musical studies in Vienna and Venice, then for over forty years he was active in the Elector's orchestra in Dresden as a double-bass player and composer. He was thoroughly accomplished in counterpoint, which was applied in his environment above all in religious compositions, but he also composed several concertante works in a festive mood and a number of orchestral works of the suite type as well as a remarkable cycle of three to four-voiced instrumental sonatas. Zelenka's permanent contacts with the Prague Jesuits caused him to be commissioned to compose a gala allegoric religious play with a patriotic theme *Sub olea pacis et palma virtutis*, whose production in the Prague Clementinum represented an original Czech contribution to the coronation celebrations of 1723. If on

the one hand Zelenka's works have to a greater extent been preserved in the original autographs and copies of manuscripts in the Dresden archives, then on the other hand Černohorský's musical heritage has been widely scattered and today we know only a torso including some church and organ compositions. This has no doubt been caused by the fact that Černohorský – a member of the Franciscan order – spent more than 20 years as an organist in the Italian monasteries and died on his way to his native country in Styria.

Without the existence and participation of a numerically strong community of burghers it was not possible even in the capital city of the kingdom to give public concerts. This is why the Czech Baroque period can boast of – but for some rare exceptions – few great orchestral works of the concerto grosso type. For the same reasons it was impossible for composers to form an independent professional group, moreover almost all the composers had to rely on making a living from non-musical sources. Šimon Brixi was a teacher, V. Jakob, J. Mašat and others were members of religious orders, N. Wentzeli a choir-master and clerk etc. Almost all the music of the Czech Baroque age came into being not as works of art in their own right determined for listening to only, but always to perform many functions. There where these functional ties were eased in keeping with the developing tendencies (in the music of the castle drawing-rooms, in the private practice of musicians and amateurs of the wealthy), the composers' range of inventiveness was again limited by the modest means of the small ensembles at their disposal. Also the above-mentioned lack of Czech literature in the national language essentially narrowed down the scope of the sources of inspiration of local musicians.

In the context of Europe as a whole the Czech musical Baroque period had some specific features following from the special social aspects and from the character of Czech musicality. There can rarely be found in this music any monumental forms, any broad stretches of polyphonic contrapuntal movements. Since the music is strongly marked by folk components it is simpler in style, complicated polyphony is apparent only in the works of the most distinguished personalities. The intellectual capacity of the composers and their audiences at home was not troubled by musical symbolics currying favour. This music wooed the Czech audience with its most intrinsic principle: beautiful tone, melodies and marked rhythm. The sensuous delicacy of the sound was more highly appreciated than elaborate polyphony, the weaving of themes, meticulous voice-leading etc. The resourcefulness of the composers concentrated above all on the aspects of melody and its rhythmic shaping. Those compositions whose musical stream drew along with it frequent and maybe quite unexpected changes of mood and accent achieved success. Melodious instruments were much preferred to keyboard instruments. The melodious musical culture of Italy was accepted enthusiastically, the rigorous severe style of neighbouring northern Germany found no response in the Czech lands. These facts in their entirety soon led to the appearance of elements of a future style within the scope of Czech music; there arose from this environment in the further course of the 18th century a number of composers who helped to form European musical classicism.