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A Historical Survey of Czech Music

Jan Kouba, Tomislav Volek

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 Spongopeus 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 (Cambyses, 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.). Whatmore 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.

The date of the transition from the baroque to the classical style in Europe is usually said to be around 1740. The development of Czech music roughly corresponds to this, although in its case the dividing line between the two styles is by no means sharp. Social and musical events flowed at a continuous pace and only after a long lapse of time is it possible to place milestones to mark the border lines of the new style. The difficulties in precise periodization are in part due to the fact that the greatest amount of sources for the investigations of the beginnings of this period in Bohemia are still represented by church music, a sphere highly dependent on non-musical functions and ties: on liturgic ceremonies, on Latin etc. That is why admittedly one can soon speak of a frequent occurrence of the elements of the new style in Bohemia, yet they could flourish only in non-functional instrumental works determined exclusively for being listened to. In the 18th century such music was composed on commission for the music salons of the cultured aristocracy and the equally select *collegia musica* of several monasteries. Here groups of enthusiastic musicians from various social strata – friars, students, town and manor clerks, village schoolmasters, brewers and the like – used to meet to make music for their own pleasure. It was in this and for this milieu that the compositions for small instrumental groups were fashioned in the spirit of the early stages of the new style, which found its representatives among many Czech composers at home and abroad. When later the main trend of the style's development and its social significance began to be transferred to the sphere of symphonic music, requiring the existence of public concert halls and large professional bodies, the Czech composers lost the possibility of keeping up with the leading lights of the musical development. Yet the attempts were not lacking to form a permanent institution for presenting instrumental music in public. So much so that between 1616-18 there existed in Prague the *Collegium Musicum* performing secular music as well. A hundred years later public musical academies were arranged here under the auspices of Count L. J. Hartig. None of this though could have any lasting impact, because the aristocracy gave preference to their private orchestras. Only since the fifties of the 18th century Prague established – albeit under very modest conditions – the institution of public concerts, which did not become more than occasional supplements to the Prague musical life in the following decades.

Typical of the whole of the 18th century was the “overproduction” of musicians in Bohemia. The intensive tuition of music in schools and the fact that musical talent and skill brought considerable advantages in terms of well-being to even the poorest and under-privileged, led to the expansion of musicality. The talent of the nation that had no other outlet in other fields concentrated on music. In the course of two generations there was such a surplus of musicians that many were forced to leave the country.

The emigration of Czech musicians reached its climax both in quantity and historical importance as from the forties up to the end of the 18th century. An accomplished musician who was not ready to resign himself to a meagre subsistence as a village schoolmaster and organist, in a lackey's livery or in a friar's frock as a

“*praefectus musicae*”, or to the occasional fiddling and strumming in local inns, left for foreign lands. Not few escaped from bondage in this way. Among those for whom warrants for their arrest were issued on Bohemian territory were names that later gained European renown. The violinist František Benda (1709-86) became one of the most esteemed virtuosos, often termed the founder of the north German violin school. Later in his Autobiography he described his adventurous escape in the company of two other musicians to Poland. Jan Václav Stich-Punto (1746-1803) roamed throughout western Europe as the best player in his time of the popular French horn. Both Mozart and Beethoven composed for him. Benda as well as Stich evaded arrest, but Benda's parents were interrogated and Stich's mother – a serf in the service of Count J. J. Thun, later a famous patron of Mozart's – was imprisoned and shackled for her son's escape... Another future friend of Mozart's, the oboe and viola da gamba player Josef Fiala (1748-1816), who made himself known to audiences in Germany, Vienna, Petersburg, Warsaw and so on, was condemned for his first emigration to three years' imprisonment... In spite of this only a slender number of musicians went abroad with the prior consent of the authorities. This was only the case when agents from abroad came to Prague to hire whole ensembles to serve their masters of high social status, who had gained permission in advance from the Viennese court. Thus an eight-member band left Prague in 1767 to enter the service of the Polish Archbishop-Primate, Prince Gabriel Potocký, only some of whom returned home and the rest joined the Polish royal orchestra. In 1765 several musicians in Prague (including the composer Václav Pichl) were won over by Karl Ditters for the band of Bishop Adam Patachich in Hungary; when this group was dissolved some of the musicians continued to play in the Esterházy court orchestra headed by Joseph Haydn. In 1779 the Saxon elector and Polish king demanded the service for three years of one of the three bands(!) belonging to Count Kinský of Chlumec-on-the-Cidlina. The French ambassador to Constantinople, on entering the diplomatic service in 1785, acquired through the representative authorities in Vienna a three-member group of Czech musicians for three years. And so on.

Dozens of Czech musicians served in the bands of Austrian military regiments; in this way such prominent composers as Jiří Družecký and F. V. Kramář-Krommer, later the Viennese court composer, set out on their musical careers. Still other Czech composers were active at the Tsar's court in Petersburg. One of them – Antonín Mareš – later created new specifically Russian horn bands, which when on tour as late as in the thirties of the 19th century roused the interest of audiences in western Europe on account of their unusual sound and the mode of the musicians rendering. The largest number of Czech musicians were absorbed by imperial Vienna, whence the inhabitants from all parts of the monarchy made their way in search of a good fortune. The Czech musicians asserted themselves in the bands of the noblemen and in theatre orchestras (the brothers Pavel and Antonín Vranický, Vojtěch Jírovec, Václav Pichl and others), the players of wind instruments also found their way into the court band. Leopold Koželuh and František Kramář Krommer even rose to the status of court composers, Jan Václav Voříšek became court organist, Josef Štěpán a

teacher of the piano in the ruler's family etc. Jan Křtitel Vaňhal was so successful as a composer – especially of sinfonies – that he was one of the first to make a living as a professional composer without having to serve some aristocrat.

Bohemian musicians in the aristocrats' musical establishments in western Germany enjoyed an equally good reputation. The Bavarian Öttingen-Wallerstein family had estates also in Bohemia and hence nothing prevented him from hiring Czech musicians. The electors of Mainz had such faith in the Czechs that over the years 1724-87 they entrusted the office of court Kapellmeister to them. The first was the French horn player (!) Jan Ondráček (1680-1743), following the death the well-known composer Jan Zach took over and he was succeeded by a German from Bohemia Johann Michael Schmitt. The Palatinate-Bavarian elector ensured his orchestra in Mannheim the reputation of the best European instrumental establishment at a time when he appointed as its director the pioneer of the new style, Jan Václav Stamic; other Czechs played the violin, French horn and other instruments in this orchestra. In 1785 the elector of Köln summoned cellist Josef Rejcha (1746-95) to be the leader and later the director of his orchestra; young Beethoven played in this orchestra under his direction and also the conductor's nephew, Antonín Rejcha, later a famous composer.

A significant group of Czech composers was engaged at the court of the Prussian King Friedrich II in Berlin and in Gotha. It was here that the members of the Benda family, whose emigration is rather noteworthy, distinguished themselves. The eldest son, František Benda, used to sing in the choir of the native village as a boy, later as a student he sang in Prague and then in Dresden. When his voice broke, he returned home and then as a violinist he became a member of a succession of private aristocratic orchestras, which ultimately brought him to Vienna. In order to be free from the degrading position of a lackey, he escaped to Poland, where after a time he was engaged in the Saxony and later the Prussian court orchestra. At the court of Friedrich II he enjoyed such esteem that the Prussian king did not hesitate in complying with the wish of his musician to have the whole Benda family, secret non-Catholics, taken to Berlin in the middle of his Spring campaign in the Czech lands in 1742. Of this numerous Benda family it was Jiří Antonín Benda in particular that won fame with his melodramas.

A Prague miller by trade, Josef Mysliveček excelled in melodic inventiveness to such an extent that at the age of twenty-six he was in a position to decide to go to Italy to compose Italian operas. Almost thirty of his operas were actually produced not only in Italy but also in Prague, Munich and elsewhere in his lifetime. Jan Ladislav Dusík (Dussek), the son of a village schoolmaster, dedicated the life and work to the piano. At first as a teacher, later as a popular virtuoso he made the whole of Europe his stage: Holland, Germany, Russia, Lithuania, Italy, France and England. He served the Polish Prince Radziwill, the Prussian Ludwig Ferdinand and finally the famous French politician Prince Talleyrand-Perigord. France, where Dusík died, is also connected with Antonín Rejcha (Reicha), a musical theoretician and teacher. His *Traité de melodié* (Treatise on Melody) was published in the course of one century

(1814-1911) eleven times and was translated into several languages, as well as his *Theory of Harmony*. Rejcha was nominated a member of the French Academy and a knight of the Legion of Honour etc.

Many Czech musicians had a leaning towards the theatre. They composed and performed for school plays in church schools, they wrote mischievous little skits for carnival tide, and on going abroad they again sought out the theatre. The character of their musical talent and education led the vast majority of these musicians to compose unpretentious merry light operas for the general public. Very popular, for instance, were the comic operas by Benedikt Žák (Schack) (1758-1826), who was also an eminent tenor. His friend Mozart entrusted him with the role of Tamino in the first production of *The Magic Flute*. Also the German operas by V. Jírovec (Gyrowetz) (*Der Augenarzt – The Oculist*, 1811), by P. Vranický, P. L. Mašek and others were staged in German speaking theatres. Vranický's *Oberon* (1790) was for a long time the most successful and from the musical point of view the most mature representative of the type of folk-fairy-tale opera, to which František Vincenc Tuček (1765-1821), for years active in Pest (Hungary) also had a close affinity. In the theatre orchestras in Vienna, in Bratislava, in Pest, in Warsaw, in Ljubljana and elsewhere many Czechs were active, some as opera producers and impresarios, and in the countries of eastern Europe they helped to establish music theatres in the vernacular. Jan Steffani did so in Poland (the opera *Krakowiacy i górale*, 1794), Arnošt Vančura in Petersburg (*Chrabryj i smielyj vitjaz Arkhideich*, to the libretto by the Tsarina Catherine II, 1787), Josef Chudý in Hungary (*Pikko herceg és Jutka Persi*, 1793). Only Josef Kohout (1736-93) strayed into the sphere of French comic opera. His *Le Serrurier* (*The Locksmith*, 1764) was staged in many European theatres and was presented in Czech, German and Swedish translation.

What did those who did not leave the country compose? Local musical production centred on compositions for the needs of the church, still representing the main musical institution in the country. The chief support of church music continued to be – especially in the country -baroque hymn-books. With the exception of large churches in the cities and those of the rich monasteries, the Czech churches mostly had one-manual organs with a modest number of stops and a preferred middle section suitable for accompanying the congregations. The organ compositions based their style mostly on older south German and Austrian models. The precious few noteworthy compositions from this period are connected with the names F. X. Brixi, J. Seger, K. B. Kopriva.

František Xaver Brixi (1732-71) was doubtlessly the most outstanding personality of this period with regard to local church music. He was the son of the Prague schoolmaster and composer, Šimon Brixi. He acquired several years of thorough musical tuition among the Piarists and at the age of twenty-seven he took up the appointment of the most prominent post a musician in Bohemia could have: he became the regens churi at the Cathedral of St. Vitus' in Prague. Although he never left the country during his brief life, his compositions were copied and circulated in all the catholic countries of central Europe. The charm of Brixi's extensive works,

including oratoria, festive and short masses, litanies and vespers etc., lies in his unique approach in combining and alternating folks-like melodies, teeming with rhythm, with a masterful command of counterpoint. Even in sections of minor extent he provided a variety of expression that continually offered something new to the listener. At the same time the number of his parts was usually small, the authors concentrating on vocal and violin parts. He applied his art of musical characterization in mischievous Latin operas based on the school milieu (his father composed them earlier as well), in which he wittily caricatured the schoolmaster and the disparity between his self-confidence and his actual musical knowledge (*Erat unum cantor bonus; Luridi scholares*).

In spite of this good-natured ridicule from the more talented and more erudite colleague, it was none other than the village schoolmasters, who, through their educational work, made the largest contribution in enhancing the musicality of the Czech nation in the 18th century. Thanks to these people, who had the closest contacts with the ordinary folk for whom and with whom they made music, Czech culture of the 18th century can display, besides the demanding works to Latin texts, also the compositions to Czech texts, written mostly for the Christmas season. The Christmas pastorales, as these compositions were called, regardless of their form or arrangement, enjoyed exceptional popularity. The story of the Nativity here was transposed to the Czech village, the shepherds were changed into musicians, who came to the crib with their instruments to offer the only thing they had in abundance – music. Their joy was expressed by the rich use of folk-dance elements, which in this way unexpectedly penetrated into the church. By the end of the century there appeared Czech pastorale masses, quite defying the liturgic regulations and rather reminding of a musical folk festival. Because of their secular character, the strict reformers of church music in the 19th century (the Cecilian Movement) banned Brix's pastorales and other compositions from the church repertoire.

In this brief outline mention can be made by name of the only representative of the Czech schoolmasters, whose works soon gained all-national significance: Jakub Jan Ryba (1765-1815). He too was the son of a schoolmaster and in his profession he suffered such mortification at the hands of the local priest and feudal overseers that one day he gave preference to voluntary death. Ryba was an educated man, enthusiastically professing the ideas of enlightenment and rejecting the traditional ridiculing of the “country bumpkin”. His attitude as a teacher and composer was guided by a sense of social responsibility and for the national awakening. He published text-books for youth, including a manual of musical knowledge; since Blahoslav's *Musica* (1558) this was the first book of its kind to be published in Czech. He also composed secular songs and church compositions to Czech texts. His Christmas mass “*Hej, mistře*”(Come, Master, Arise; 1796) enjoys exceptional popularity to this day.

Composers living in Prague had better possibilities for asserting themselves. Concentrated around the main Prague church choirs and aristocratic palaces, they formed an influential group, skillfully making use of their social contacts. They taught

music in the aristocratic families, to whose members and bands they dedicated their works, composed divertimentos and partitas, sinfonie and concertos and light dance compositions. A representative of this group was the conventional composer František Xaver Dušek (1731-1799), who with his wife Josefina, a celebrated singer, have gone down in history as Mozart's hosts during the latter's stays in Prague. The only great personality of Prague was Václav Jan Tomášek of some two generations younger. A self taught composer and pianist he held a position aside from the Prague musical institutions. Aside, not because he was enchanted by Mozart and Dusík, not because he regarded Beethoven critically and rejected Rosini, but for his broad cultural outlook and for his unconcealed exacting attitude towards music. Goethe held Tomášek in high esteem for the sensitive way in which he put his poems to music; Tomášek's pupils above all prized his thorough theoretical grounding in harmony. Tomášek gave Europe one-movement piano compositions, which he termed Rhapsodies, Dithyrambs and Eclogues, a genre that had no precedent in traditional musical schemes. Following hundreds of patternized classical piano sonatas and variations on a given theme, a free lyrical form appeared, which enabled the ascending romanticism (Schubert) to return phantasy and a rich palette of expression to the world of the keyboard.

The fact that politically provincial Bohemia became in the period of classicism one of the places where this style arose and developed was confirmed by the role it played in the life of the greatest composers of the period. Gluck spent more than twenty years in Bohemia. He went to school here, he was also enrolled at the Prague University. It was here that he embarked on his career as a composer, he wrote his first sinfonie and church music here. It has also been proved that he spoke Czech; though his apparent pupil relationship to B. M. Černohorský doubtlessly belongs to the sphere of legends. In the theatre seasons 1749-50 and 1751-52 he was engaged as the conductor and composer to the Prague Italian opera company. His operas *Ezio* (1750) and *Issipile* (1752) had first performances in Prague. It is characteristic for the nature of the Czech public that Gluck's “prereform” operas were successful here, but his *Orfeo*, *Alcesta* and other reform works only penetrated onto the Czech stage in the course of the 19th century.

For the twenty-seven-year-old Haydn the offer made him in 1759 by Count K. J. Morzin to take over the leadership of his private orchestra meant his first significant engagement. It was at the summer residence of the Morzins in Dolní Lukavice near Přeštice that Haydn found his first opportunity to compose a symphony. After not quite two years Haydn left Morzin to follow up the grand offer made him by Prince Esterházy of Hungary.

Of fundamental importance for the musical repertoire of Bohemia and for its further development was the encounter with Mozart. Prague acclaimed him thanks to the successful performance of the singspiel *Entführung aus dem Serail* (Abduction from the Seraglio) by the K. Wahr company in the newly opened Nostitz Theatre in 1783. The Prague premiere of *Le nozze di Figaro* (The Marriage of Figaro) in 1786 met with tremendous response. Mozart then received assignments to compose for

Prague Don Giovanni (1787) and *La clemenza di Tito* (1791). Equally triumphant was *Die Zauberflöte* (The Magic Flute) performed in 1794 concurrently on three Prague stages: in the German original, in the Italian version, to which J. K. Kuchař composed additional *secceccitatives*, and in the Czech translation. The enthusiastic acclaim for Mozart's genius, for which the audiences of other European cultural centres – including Vienna – expressed little understanding in those days, proved the high standard of Prague's musical tradition. And the preserved financial statements of the box-office for the season 1793-94 indicate that the Prague Mozart audiences were made up mainly of ordinary folk, who bought the cheap tickets for standing in the gallery.

The extremely intense musical life in Bohemia almost throughout the 18th century was in striking disproportion to the subdued activities in many other cultural fields, especially in literature. Towards the end of the century, however, a penetrating change began to take place in the social structure of the country, which sooner or later had to undergo a fundamental reconstruction, and this with all the consequences also for the national and cultural life of the country: the centuries long era of feudalism came to an end as the bourgeoisie grew stronger and clamoured for their rights. This all-European process engendered by economic causes, accompanied by the reformatory activity of enlightenment and symbolized by the French Revolution, had its impact on the Czech lands belatedly and not directly, and therefore it took on some specific forms. The barriers set up by police measures and censorship had a long-range effect. The reforms dictated from above by Emperor Joseph II, in an effort to adapt the multinational Austrian monarchy to the new situation, often led to unexpected and even contradictory results. The Emperor's centralistic restrictions, motivated by the interests of the state administration, had unfortunate consequences for the non-German national cultures of the monarchy. The suppression of Czech as an official language in the kingdom of Bohemia, the limitation of the number of grammar schools and the enforcing of German as the tuition language, the knowledge of which became a condition not only for entry into the civil service, but also for taking up an apprenticeship – this all led to the further stifling of the national consciousness, or even to the complete germanization of a considerable number of pupils of Josephine schools. Consequently this brought about a palpable weakening of the narrow stratum of Czech intellectuals, who were vital for the forthcoming process of national revival. On the other hand by abolishing feudal bondage (1781) Joseph II freed the peasants from the fetters of the land and thus unintentionally he created favourable conditions for the development of the Czech national movement; the shifting of the country folk to the towns in some numbers swelled the ranks of the young Czech bourgeoisie in the course of the decades to come.

Further reforms by Joseph II had a direct influence on music. The abolition of the Jesuit order (1773) and roughly half the monasteries of other orders caused a high percentage of musicians in the country to be deprived of a livelihood. This also caused the education of young musicians to suffer, who in addition were hit by the pressure exerted on them by the educational authorities, now tending to curtail music

in schools. The abolition of the Literary Brethren – in 1780 there were still over 120 in Bohemia – was accompanied by a number of other measures limiting music in the churches. Administrative steps meant the liquidation of the traditional performances of great oratorical compositions at Easter. An indirect consequence was also the decline of the old musician guilds. The end of the epoch was signaled too by the fate of the private aristocratic orchestras: in the last years of the century there were already very few. The pressure of circumstances caused the Bohemian nobility to change its mode of life; they began to take more note of economic affairs and music ceased to be a question of prestige. This leaning in another direction was apparent in the case of the Italian opera in Prague, which the aristocracy had hitherto taken under its wing and supported as a display of their privileged interests. After the triumphal success of Mozart's works this stage, moreover, began to suffer from a lack of a suitable repertoire. The majority of theatre-goers now veered towards the German singspiel and the Czech plays with songs. In April 1807 the performance of Mozart's last opera composed for Prague – *La clemenza di Tito* – ended the local era of Italian opera. It had lasted almost continually since 1724 and it was the most important source of new musical impulses for Bohemia.

The German aristocracy and bureaucracy categorically resisted the development of Czech plays with songs both for national and class reasons. This was clearly expressed by a series of bans on Czech performances in the Prague Estates Theatre (1804, 1808 and others). The Czech play with songs was once more thrust aside where it had vegetated since the forties of the 18th century and from where it had tried to penetrate onto the professional stage in the last quarter of the century: it was thrust back onto the stages of make-shift wooden theatres, to suburban inns, to the country. At this time there existed scattered about the country a repertoire of scenes with songs, intermezzi and miniature operas often written in local dialects to strengthen the comic effect. These musically very simple works took their themes from the life of the country folk. They ridiculed the rough manners, the imitation of lordly ways, the shoddy work of artisans, the Prussian attacks on Bohemia and so on. After the great Peasants' Rising in 1775 an east Bohemian schoolmaster wrote the Opera about the Peasants' Revolt, faithfully describing the mentality and the failure of the rebels. When at the end of the century a Czech professional opera ensemble was successfully established in Prague and met with enormous response among its audience of the common people with its performances of translated singspiele and original Czech plays with songs (the Patriotic Theatre), it seemed that the way to setting up a Czech national opera was open. The above-mentioned bans interrupted this development. Also the publisher's V. M. Kramerius' application to be allowed to introduce a cultural column in his Czech newspaper was rejected repeatedly. This explains why at this time all critiques were written in German, as well as the first treatises on musical history in Bohemia. Among critics F. X. Němeček excelled and won international renown as the author of the first Mozart monography (1798). Much valuable historical material was amassed by the Premonstratensian J. B. Dlabáč in his Dictionary of Artists.

The aristocracy, jealously guarding their privileged social position, allowed the establishment of an insignificant imitation of the famous Viennese Tonkünstlersozietät (the Association of Music Artists in Support of Widows and Orphans, 1803-1903), it, however, thwarted the attempts initiated by the bourgeoisie to set up concert and musical educational institutions. Then – more or less forced by popular pressure – the Bohemian aristocracy opened as its prestigious institution the Prague Conservatoire in 1811, the first institution of its kind in central Europe, in many respects copying the Paris model. It was typical that V. J. Tomášek, the erudite teacher and composer, was not appointed to head it, but an unimportant German composer from west Bohemia.

The majority of feudal forms of the musical life in Bohemia did not die out because they failed to fulfil a social function, but again due to interference from without in the form of administrative restrictions. Meanwhile the local bourgeoisie was still too weak and incapable of substituting the extinguished musical institutions for new ones corresponding to the changing forms of social life. There was a particularly perceptible lack of public concerts of orchestral music. As a result of these disproportions the first decades of the 19th century was a period in which Czech music no longer kept up in many fields with the musical developments in Europe.

The structure of Czech society of those days still impeded the formation of a compact and, with regard to types and forms, a fully developed national culture. As yet the forcible confining of vocal production in the vernacular to compositions for the common folk was not conducive to imprinting Czech music as a whole with those characteristics that always follow for music from a conjunction with the national tongue. This severance from the inspiring power of the word and mother tongue did not, however, deprive Czech music of every characteristic feature. Some traits were the direct result of the nature and type of social assignment. This only rarely led the composers towards any large-scale forms, to any skill in elaborating on a musical theme over a long section. On the contrary they were usually commissioned to write works of small dimensions; these works not only corresponded to the social needs, but also to the mentality and aptitudes of the Czech composers. Their natural musical talent was nurtured from their youth by simple dance melodies (see František Benda's memories of playing in inns at dances in his young days), which consisted of the stringing together of eight-bar phrases without modulations. Attention was paid to the melody and the distribution of the accents to suit the needs of the dance. The listening and performing habits of the majority of Czech composers were formed on this basis, from which their own work emanated later. From the artistic point of view this was rather a primitive technique, especially in comparison with the rich counterpoint of the baroque music, but in the European context it became an aesthetic novelty (roughly as from the thirties of the 18th century), whose more mature forms made a strong impact upon a considerable section of foreign audiences. Jan Václav Stamic was capable in the favourable Mannheim conditions of combining this heritage of spontaneous Czech musicality with the advanced tradition of the

Italian opera sinfonia. He not only laid the foundations of the classical four--movement symphony, but what is more of modern symphonic art. He did not excel in the melodious inventiveness of the Italians, nor the Germans' elaborated construction of tonal plans, but he was a pioneer in elevating rhythmic-metric relations to one of the dominant components of composition. He applied the usual Czech stereotype of stressed regular pulsations and at the same time disturbed this metric norm by a whole system of asymmetric accents. The European music so gained an orchestral movement, based on the inner rhythmic-metric, thematic and dynamic conflict, which Mozart and Beethoven made full use of.

In spite of no small effort musicologists have not yet succeeded in defining the individual features of the musical structure of a particular national style. For it was always possible to prove that the cited elements are not the exclusive preserve of a particular nation. Nevertheless the differences of the national musical traditions and styles are beyond all doubts and on listening to such music they are just as recognizable as the characteristics of the personal styles of eminent composers. None of the above-mentioned features of Czech music were a singularly Czech trait; they can all be found in the music of the day among other nations too. The special character of Czech music in the period of classicism is, however, apparent in a summarizing view investigating the whole and comparing it with the musical culture of the surrounding countries. In such a comparison the different manner of performing music must also be borne in mind, for in actual musical practice the music of individual nations is mutually more diversified than can be assumed only by reading musical scores.

The 19th century in Europe was an era of vast social changes and conflicts. These were presaged and inspired by the French Revolution. The structure and the division of political power in many European states was alien to the ideas of national self-determination and democratic rights guaranteed by a constitution as proclaimed by the middle class on the ascent. Therefore revolutionary conflicts were inevitable. Where out-dated feudal relations hampered the progress and expansion of production forces – and this was the case of the multi-national Austrian monarchy – there the conflicts were unavoidable. Whereas England and France broke the monopoly power of their respective aristocracies, and innerly strengthened by the success of the industrial revolutions turned their interests towards the building of colonial empires, whereas 38 states and statelets of the German Bund set their objective at the unification of the German nation into one mighty entity, which was to include the Austrian Slavs as well, the Habsburgs in their monarchy were incapable of offering anything beyond a convulsive attempt to preserve the state of affairs in the good old style. The emperor, the aristocracy, the police and the whole bureaucratic machinery represented the supports of the conservative regime, which following the state bankruptcy in 1811 was unable to promote the industrialization of the country and keep up with western Europe.

The legal inequality of the nations of the Austrian monarchy – the Czechs, Slovaks, Poles, Slovenes, Croatians, but also Italians, Hungarians, Rumanians etc.- could not let them rest in a state of passive inactivity, as the rulers would have wished, in this century of nationalism. Of course each of these nations faced a different situation, having experienced a different history, having stocked up a different set of values and having a different social structure. The determining features that left a marked impression on the development of Czech nationalism was that, following two centuries of economic, social and cultural oppression, the nation was insufficiently prepared to accept the ideas of nationalism at the point when they were sprouting in Europe. The nation had been weakened too much. In some respects it was at its very nadir. Before it could assert its political rights, it had to find strength to revive itself from within and prove to Europe its viability even in unfavourable conditions. This prolonged the road to be on par with other European nations numerically stronger.

Great complications and conflicts arose from the existence of the politically and culturally influential German minority, who held the reins of the political representation of the country and who also sought their own solution of the national question in the country. It was the Germans who actually raised the issue, when towards the end of the 18th century – in opposition to the Josephine reforms – they began to revise their attitude to the Viennese central government. The in the main French speaking and nationally fully indifferent aristocracy with its awakened local – not national! – patriotism had but one interest in mind: to defend its hitherto acquired privileges in the country, including the overall power over the subjugated people. Guided by this narrow class interest the Bohemian aristocracy began to point out their historical rights in the Bohemian kingdom and supported the initial steps of research into history. Their Diets were again inaugurated with the traditional ceremonies in Czech, the highest burgrave welcomed Emperor Leopold II in Prague for the coronation in Czech, and so on. The begun study of Bohemian history approached now with enlightened tolerance – headed in the first generation by the native Germans from Bohemia G. Dobner, M. A. Voigt and others – first removed the thick deposit of anti-reformational teachings regarding the condemnable past of the Czech heretic nation. Thanks to the remarkable results, especially in uncovering sources, it soon began to function also among the broad masses as a new fount of national pride. The ensuing development proved that most of the aristocracy had nothing more in mind than to take advantage of this situation to further their own interests by identifying themselves with the historic rights of the country. When the Czech speaking lower social strata began to seize spontaneously on the idea of national self-determination, most of the aristocracy showed a negative attitude towards this movement, considering themselves threatened as a class.

The process of forming a modern Czech nation was fraught not only with external obstacles such as the resistance of the Viennese government to any kind of reform and decentralizing tendencies, but also with internal obstacles. The Czech middle class, on whom the responsibility for the course of this process lay, since there was a lack of a national aristocracy, (which was an essential difference as compared with the

situation in Poland or Hungary) was economically weak, its political thinking was backward and it took a long time before it managed to form its own political leadership in the given conditions. It was more successful in the sphere of science and culture. Linguists in particular made a penetrating contribution by reverting to the written Czech language of the humanistic era and by drawing up a programme to enrich Czech with new expressions from related Slavonic languages, so forming a modern language norm. The five volume Czech-German Dictionary by Josef Jungmann in the thirties crowned this “language” phase of the national revival. Thanks to the successful solution of this fundamental problem the up-and-coming generation was able to extend the national horizon to further spheres, including questions of home policy. An expression of these endeavours was the revolutionary year of 1848.

For Czech music the first half of the 19th century was not a great age. Although the emigrant Czech composers of the classic era still enjoyed some successes (Dusík, Voříšek, Rejcha), at home music lost its firm footing with the changing social situation and with the exception of V. J. Tomášek there was not a single outstanding individuality among composers for several decades. If the Czech musicality was so innerly close in style to that of Mozart’s and Haydn’s, linked to the Italian musical tradition, so that a similarly orientated Czech element could immediately identify itself with it, the acceptant of the supreme Beethoven and later Berlioz, Schumann and other romantics required a considerably longer time in the Czech lands. The widening of the chasm between the works of the protagonists of musical advance and the composing of socially topical music began to appear in almost all European countries, but in Bohemia some local social events accentuated it the more. No doubt a contributing factor was that in the Czech national movement music did not enjoy such a privileged position as for example in the German romanticism. The revival movement did refer to the foreign successes of the Czech musicians of the 18th century as one of the conclusive proofs of the Czechs’ creative ability, but for comprehensible reasons it turned its attention above all to the culture of the language.

Music, which had already lost much towards the end of the 18th century, due to the upheavals incurred in its traditional institutional basis, could not expect the reinstatement of its one-time privileges from the ascending Czech middle class. The new possibilities opening up for poetry, literary and dramatic works, for journalism and for some scientific disciplines, were sound and extremely welcome from the point of view of the national culture as a whole, of course this drained away many talents and diminished social interest in music. This was apparent from the tangible weakness, or rather complete lack, of Czech music critics and theoretical reflections, which could have served as an effective corrective agent for the limited horizon of the local musical professionals.

The traditional practical approach to music, void of any connection with the inspiring aesthetic or social ideas, was also characteristic for the activity of the key musical educational institutions in the country. The Prague Conservatoire (1811) had on its staff from the beginning a number of distinguished artists and soon they had

considerable pedagogic successes to vaunt, especially among graduates of the violin (Jan Václav Kalivoda, Josef Slavík, Ferdinand Laub, Otakar Ševčík, Frantisek Ondříček and others). The Conservatoire's administrative board made up of aristocrats did not receive a subsidy from the Provincial Committee until 1855 and from the central authorities until 1855 – a marked difference as compared with the analogical and younger Viennese institution – and the entire costs were covered by voluntary contributions from aristocrats. Therefore the character of the institution and the composition of the staff had to conform to the ideas of the narrow circle of patrons. So that it was characteristic for the Prague Conservatoire to distrust new artistic tendencies – except when J. B. Kittl was its principal – and to unilaterally orientate itself on the technical aspects of musical rendering, while rejecting the Czech national demands. Although the pupils of German nationality were always a minority at the school, German was the tuition language until the seventies, which had a detrimental effect on the teaching of theoretical subjects in particular (with regard to this critical comments were made in the press as early as 1816!). The Conservatoire supplied mostly foreign orchestras with graduates. Of fundamental importance for the local musical life were the Conservatoire's carefully prepared orchestral concerts, of which otherwise there was a much felt dearth. The needs of the country were better met by the more modestly equipped Prague Organ School (1830), founded by the Society for the Cultivation of Church Music in Bohemia (Verein der Kunstfreunde für Kirchenmusik). Fair enough, its teachers were just as conservative in artistic matters, but considering its mission it took into greater account the requirements of the national culture. Firstly valuable editions of old Bohemian organ compositions came from this milieu, later also the first modern textbooks on harmony, composition and so on in Czech. A marked feature of this Organ School is that a number of prominent composers such as A. Dvořák, L. Janáček, J. B. Foerster and others issued from the ranks of its pupils.

The dominant position among the types of music was maintained by the opera, which was not undermined even by the current social changes. As the audiences varied of course, so the demands put on the opera differed. After the departure of the Italian Company (1807) and after the liquidation of Czech attempts to set up a professional musical theatre, German prevailed on the Prague opera stage. In the interest of box-office successes a German native from Moravia, Wenzel Müller, who had already gained popularity in Vienna with his unpretentious folk singspiele, was appointed conductor. He also presented these singspiele abundantly in Prague, where of course he had to supplement his repertoire with German translations of the operas by Mozart, Cherubini, Méhul, Grétry, Paër etc. It was only under the energetic direction of the versatile and demanding Carl Maria Weber that in the years 1813-1816 the Prague opera was again raised to the standard of a significant artistic institution. The numerically weak theatre audience of those days, however, did not appreciate Weber's efforts; they almost let Beethoven's *Fidelio* become a flop (1814), they were not impressed by the first performance of Spohr's *Faust* (1816). It was of no avail that Weber engaged outstanding German singers from Vienna. The local

musical authorities did not accept among themselves the “intruder” Weber, and the musician disgusted by Prague, left. For the next twenty years the directorship of the Prague opera was entrusted to a solid routinist, the South Bohemian Josef Triebensee. In his time the Prague stage kept in step with the current European repertoire, permanently displayed a good standard of interpretation and to a growing extent offered opportunities to local artists. It cannot be overlooked that from the point of view of sujet, opera was then definitely superior to plays in Prague. One essential thing was, however, not forthcoming: original local works. The Biedermeier mentality of the so-called Restoration period, indulging in its neat, conform and unexciting orderliness was no inspiration for artistic works. And so here too it was the idea of nationalism that took on the assignment of a strong creative stimulus.

In the musical sphere the Czech national revival began its era first of all in the composition of songs. This was around the year 1800, closely following the first manifestations of Czech modern secular lyrics. The artistically modest products were welcomed enthusiastically by the Czech society and for a certain time proved to be so satisfying that no need was felt to aim higher. The European wave of interest in folk-songs caught up with this situation. Prač's collection came from Russia, from Serbia there was the collection by Vuk Karadžić, J. G. Herder pointed out in a broad context the importance of folk-songs. The three volumed Slavonic Folk-songs by F. L. Čelakovský (1822-27), the Czech Folk-songs by J. Rittersberk (1825), K. J. Erben's Czech Folk-Songs and Rhymes (1862-64), the sizeable edition of Moravian Folk-songs by F. Sušil (1853-60) and other authentic collections, whose series, by the way, is still not complete, drew the attention of the Czech cultural public to the type of musical production, which is the only one to have moved continuously throughout the whole national history without being recorded until the 19th century, but for a few exceptions. What had been ignored for centuries was now in turn greeted with enthusiasm.

Scientific research into the development of Czech folk-songs today knows more than a hundred preserved melodies from the second half of the 15th and the 16th centuries. Naturally the church keys prevailed, but the group of melodies in the major keys have surprisingly much in common with the folk-songs recorded in the 19th century (chordal motion of melody, periodic phrases etc.). In the several thousand melodies and lyrics contained in the above-mentioned collections the stage of development of the folk-songs of the 18th century is above all preserved. From the point of view of themes and functions the spectrum of these songs is extremely broad and shows how song intermingled in all the situations in the life of the people. We may find here many types of ceremonial songs, further dance songs, lyrical, military, drinking, humorous ones, songs about various professions, socially critical songs commenting on topical events etc. From the musical point of view the folk-song in the Czech lands is divided essentially into two large regions. the line of division running roughly through the middle of Moravia. The determining factor of the western type of folk-song is the musical structure to which the attached lyrics are adapted, proved above all, by the number of texts sung to one melody. Of great

influence here was the traditional combining of the Czech folk-song with dancing, which made necessary the regular, symmetric construction of the melody. The structural basis are two-to-four-measure periods joined into bigger units ending with a cadence and mutually replying to each other (corresponding melodies). The major keys strongly dominate. The melody is diatonic, does not modulate, makes use of chordal and scalar progressions. The east Moravian song with its affinity to neighbouring Slovakia stems in the main from the lyrics. The flow of the melody adapts itself to the words (prose melodies) and their rendering and is abundantly ornamented. The song avoids regular schemes, is metrically free and rhythmically irregular; many of the songs have a rhapsodic character underlined in their rendering by rich agogics. In comparison with the Czech song it makes more use of the minor and church keys and modulates often. The specific features of some regions are considerably marked. The east Bohemian and north Moravian districts show some common traits with Poland, the Šumava borderland again with the Bavarian folklore (dances with changing measures, songs with Czech-German lyrics etc.).

The collection, study and popularization of folk-songs and simultaneously the migration of country inhabitants to the towns created conditions for the up-and-coming burghers to carry on uninterruptedly, and now as a programme, the folk-song culture. In fact the imitation of texts and the popular response to folk-songs was such that a new type of so called “folkyfized” song came into being. Art-songs with piano or guitar accompaniment diffused through print became a characteristic part of Czech music from the twenties to the forties of the 19th century. (The publishing of new songs was one of the main tasks of the monthly *Věvec ze zpěvů vlasteneckých* [Wreath of Patriotic Songs] published 1835-39 and 1843-44; its literary supplement was the first Czech musical journal). In the final analysis, of course, the Czech art-songs of this period were more significant from the sociological and ideological point of view rather than from the artistic.

Although some of these songs were termed “romantic” in their time, it seems more suitable to consider them, and with them the whole first half of the 19th century in Bohemia, rather as a preparation for romanticism. Beside the sublime patriotic moods, anacreontic rhymes and sentimental lyric verse, there appear also such themes as “my grave” or “in the churchyard”, but their insipid form do not allow them to be termed as anything more than works with a little pre-romantic colouring. Besides, the negative reaction to the artistically strong launching of romanticism in the poetry of the “torn assunder Byronite” K. H. Mácha (1810-1836) proves that the young middle class did not even have among their literary critics the necessary sense of appreciation of the new artistic trends. The cult of social entertainment begrudged sufficient space for other themes.

The enormous interest in songs, arias and piano transcriptions was exploited to build up a livelihood for several new music publishers and dozens of private schools where the piano was taught. The results of this publishing and pedagogic activity were applied in the burghers salons and in the dance halls at “patriotic socials”, where new poems were also recited. The century long unity of Czech music with the dance could

in these new conditions bring forth an original Czech dance. The polka, whose musical pre-history can be traced back into the Czech past many dozens of years before the period of its social rise in the thirties of the 19th century, spread its way throughout Europe and across the seas. The lithe movement in 2/4 or 4/4 time supplemented the more salon-like Viennese waltz. The name of the dance is connected with the general wave of sympathy towards the Poles, who following the suppression of the revolt in 1830 passed through the Czech lands when emigrating to the west.

The national culture in the process of revival could not, of course, do without its own opera permanently. The Czech drama had shown some success, especially with regard to comedy, the Czech theatre audience had grown in numbers and so the attempt was again made to assert Czech in operas. In 1823 – seventeen years after the Czech performance of the *Abduction from the Seraglio* – again Czech was heard on the stage of the Theatre of the Estates. A group of enthusiastic students and “singers for love”, as the amateurs were nicely called, produced a repertoire piece of the period – Weigl’s *Swiss Family*. The audience’s response was motivated more out of national sympathies, nevertheless this move opened the direct way to the foundation of the Czech opera. After Weigl there followed in quick succession Cherubini’s *The Water Carrier* and Weber’s *Der Freischütz*, Rossini, Méhul, Mozart’s *Don Giovanni* etc. The Czech opera productions also drew the attention of literary circles and gave the impulse to the first big discussions about the specific literary problem: should the opera libretto be translated with regard to metre or stress? It was left to practice to make the decision, and so within a short time a number of opera translations appeared; Mozart’s operas and *Der Freischütz* even in several versions. Here it is interesting to note that the older generation was of the opinion that the opera translation should submit to the music view-points even at the price of a deformation of the language. Josef Jungmann himself in his translation of the *Abduction from the Seraglio* (1825) was guided by these viewpoints, moulded no doubt too by the tradition of performing vocal music in Bohemia in the 18th century, which was in the main church music to Latin texts subordinate to the musical component. In the new social situation when the ideas of nationalism raised the language and its rights to the heights of a social value, the younger generation were opposed to any kind of language deformation and in their theoretical debates insisted that Czech texts be put to music not only with an unequivocal regard for quantity (the length of syllables), but also above all that the stress be respected. The artistic realization of this demand, which supposed to provide the works of Czech composers with more marked national features, had to wait for Smetana and his contemporary poets.

In 1826 the Czech opera company – in part now a professional body – was in a position to stage the work of its member, František Škroup, a lyrical singspiel with the title role of the Tinker spoken and sung in Slovak. Musically entirely the work of an epigone, it nevertheless fulfilled its basic social mission: an original composition from the pen of a Czech composer in the vernacular became a fact indeed. Following this success, Škroup abandoned his studies of law and accepted the appointment of

second conductor in the Estates Theatre. From 1836, when he headed the Prague Opera, he more than once found that his dramaturgic plans went against the grain of the theatre box-office and the authorities. For instance, Škroup presented for the first time in Prague Gluck's *Iphigénie en Tauride* (1843), but the performance was never repeated. The audience wanted Donizetti. Meyerbeer's *The Huguenots* were permitted to be staged only after the libretto was completely revised in accordance with the demands of the censors and under the new title *Die Ghibellinen in Pisa* (1840). By the end of his employment in the Prague Opera Company (1857) Škroup had also managed to present four of Verdi's operas and three of Wagner's. In the Czech national consciousness he has made his indelible mark with the song *Kde domov můj?* (Where is My Home?), from the music to the play *The Shoemakers' Holiday* (1834), which thanks to its popularity has later to become the National Anthem. Otherwise, of course, Škroup's works in no way strengthened the national character of Czech art-music and this also applies to the other composers of this period. The provincial character of the local production was outstripped by the lyrical talent of the composer of church music R. Führer (1807-1861) not counting the aging Tomášek and J. B. Kittl. All this was a scanty yield as compared to the previous period.

A landmark in the further social and cultural development in Bohemia was the year 1848. The mighty revolutionary wave that arose in January with the anti-Austrian revolt in Italy, and in February with the rising in Paris, swept over all Europe. Czech national life too suddenly transferred its stress to the political sphere. The speed with which after the long years of the silencing of political activity two basic political conceptions were formed in the ranks of the Czech bourgeoisie – the liberal and the radical democratic – was conditioned by the preparatory work accomplished by journalism devoted to the arts, too. (At the beginning of 1848 37 magazines, including 17 in Czech, concerned with various aspects of entertainment were published in Prague.) The complications and the mutual criss-crossing of social, national, state and other relations and interests on the European continent helped the old order to such an extent that, when the disturbances calmed down, the only immediate positive result of the revolution proved to be the abolition of the “*corvée*” (the work of unpaid labour due by the vassal to the feudal lord) in the Austrian monarchy. The risings were suppressed by military force one after the other in Naples, Milan, Paris, Prague, Vienna, Budapest and elsewhere. The monarchs again retracted from the promised reforms tending towards some democratic changes. The Habsburg absolutism reasserted its rule for further decades. Mercilessly it strangled political and cultural life, spied on people, imprisoned them and had them deported. The irony of history lies in the fact that the politically inexperienced Czechs, following their national interests and trusting the perfidious Habsburgs, in actual fact contributed by their loyalty to saving the shaken Habsburg monarchy in 1848. They were manoeuvred into this position by the outrageous aims of the Pan-Germans – conferring in the Frankfurt Diet – to embody the Austrian Slav nations, regarded as an element without rights, into a unified German grand state, and on the other hand

by the threat of the expansion tendencies of despotic Tsarism. Aware of these dangers, the Czech bourgeoisie formulated in 1848 the idea of Austroslavism: the Austrian monarchy, in which the Slavs had a numerical superiority, could be changed by peaceful parliamentary means into a democratic Federal State guaranteeing the same rights to all citizens and nationalities. This idea essentially remained the basis of the political thinking of the Czech bourgeoisie until the disintegration of the monarchy (1918). In spite of the fact that the Emperor and his government put every obstacle in the way of this tendency, they could not, however, prevent the advance of industrialization, which caused an unrestrained disruption of the anachronistic feudal relations, engendered the numerical growth of the bourgeoisie and gave rise to a proletariat and in conjunction with it forced a gradual democratization. This included the assertion of the rights of the Czech nation.

The military failures on the Italian battlefields in 1859 brought to an end the centuries long era of absolute rule thrust upon the Czech people by the Habsburgs by the right of the sword after the Battle of the White Mountain. There now began the fruitful period of constitutional life and with it a general flourishing of culture. After the October Diploma of 1860 the concerted activities of various organizations, societies and the press were set in motion. The role played by the choral societies of the day, which were established at an avalanche rate all over the country, corresponded to the traditionally significant position of music in Czech social life. By the end of the sixties there were already 250. Similarly as in the one-time Literary Brethren societies, so here representatives of the middle class came together. The performances of the societies enjoyed great public interest. Their outings and parties accompanied by the inevitable banners and speeches often took on the character of anti-Viennese demonstrations, especially when they took place with the participation of the popular physical training organization Sokol (The Falcon), founded in 1863. The musical repertoire of the choral societies, drawing almost entirely from local works, gradually grew into broader dimensions. In the initial years a vital part of the programme were paraphrases of folk-songs with topical, usually ridiculing, allusions to politics. A similar campaigning mission was fulfilled by numerous compositions, making impassionate and sentimental exclamatory addresses to the Native Land, the Nation etc. Choirs with a tendency to improve their rendering such as the Prague Hlahol Choir (1861), the Beseda in Brno (1860), the Moravan in Kroměříž (1863) built up their repertoire from the refined choral works by Pavel Křížkovský, inspired by Moravian folk-songs. The dramatically inclined choruses by Smetana gave a new, very demanding orientation to Czech choral works. For many decades to come Czech choir singing, both from the point of view of composition and as a performing art, became one of the prominent branches of Czech music.

In 1863 the Umělecká Beseda was founded, where writers, artists and musicians joined forces and Bedřich Smetana was elected leader of the Music section. This society introduced itself to the general public with a celebration on a grand scale of the tercentenary of Shakespeare's birth (1864), which was conceived as a demonstration of the programme of the progressive group of Czech intellectuals: to

create a national art and maintain a close contact with the top ranking world culture. Smetana, who was responsible for the musical component of the celebrations, assigned as the centre-piece Berlioz' Symphony Romeo and Juliet and added to this his own Shakespearean March. Soon after this the Music Section of the Umělecká Beseda took up Smetana's suggestion to arrange subscription concerts of symphonic music. Another group of the members of the Music Section were commissioned to work on the unification and a complete compilation of Czech musical terminology. An attempt to cultivate a historical continuity of Czech music was the delegation of Smetana to Dresden with the task of studying the works of D. Zelenka. Much credit is due to the musical publishers of the Umělecká Beseda, the Hudební Matic (1871), which concentrated on publishing original Czech works.

For several decades, however, the national cultural life pivoted round the project of the Czech National Theatre. The first application for a licence was submitted to the authorities of the Provincial Diet in 1845. The Parliament, which used its resources to finance in the main the German operating Estates Theatre, rejected the proposal to give equal rights to the German and Czech activities in this theatre and also refused to grant a sufficient subsidy for the building of a Czech theatre. It thus turned the cultural interest of the Czech public into a political issue, experienced from the beginning of the constitutional era with a new intensity and on a national scale. Under the motto "The Nation To Itself" collections were made to erect a grand National Theatre. Thanks to the influence of a group of Czech politicians, eager to strengthen their position by a speedy success, the small Provisional Theatre was built in 1862, not suited to the needs of opera, nor adequate to any national prestige. The orchestra pit had space for only 34 players, a thirty-two member choir could barely move on the stage; thanks to considerable standing room the auditorium could hold over one thousand people. Smetana described this theatre ironically as the "entrance hall to the temple of the muses" or "an operatic rehearsal ground with stage in miniature". For all that it was he, who managed to create the Czech national opera, moreover in several genres, here in these cramped conditions. When in 1881 the National Theatre was at last opened – in this case too the existence of the music preceded the establishment of the institution – the compositions on the repertoire could be mapped out evenly, alternating local and foreign works. Opera then ceased to play the role of imported foreign goods to the Czech lands and became an integral part of Czech cultural life.

The advance of Czech cultural life, including also the fashioning of the national musical style in its entirety, came about in a rankled atmosphere of the Czech-German national conflict. Until then a numerically fairly strong camp of so-called Utraquists, avowing allegiance to both languages and to the ideology of the provincial patriotism, were fast losing ground in bourgeois circles. From the Czech side they were reproached for stagnating and adhering to old forms, and thus virtually contributing to the maintenance of a subservient position of Czech culture. In the course of the gradual polarization of the national groups the administratively influential German camp appropriated almost the entire existing institutional basis,

which gave it again and again the possibility to prevail on individuals looking for a lucrative livelihood, but it lost the opportunity of concentrating its adherents around the all-inspiring cause. As opposed to the Czechs, the Bohemian-Germans were incapable of acquiring a unifying idea, neither from the heritage of the country, nor from the German world beyond the frontiers of the Czech lands, for whom they only played the role of an occasional political factor and the owner of capital. A drawback for any systematic cultural work at home was the narrowing basis of their own public and the fact that their best forces were leaving the "Bohemian Province" to integrate with the Austrian or German culture. In spite of this, of course their activity in many respects continued to be of benefit to the local musical life as a whole. While the Czechs concentrated almost exclusively on their national tasks, often understood in a very narrow sense, the moving lights leading the German cultural world turned their attention to the European horizon. They introduced to the Czech lands Liszt, Wagner and Berlioz and many distinguished European virtuosos; their mature musical critique writing served as an example to the Czechs. On the whole they took a negative view of the Czech attempts at all-round cultural independence, which was motivated by fears of forfeiting their privileged position; the German bourgeois press often argued the rights of "der geistig herrschenden Nationalität" (the spiritually ruling nationality). Nevertheless, it was the Czechs, abounding in constructive enthusiasm, who took the initiative in the cultural political activities and artistic questions after the fall of absolutism in the sixties. Simultaneously and paradoxically – the Czech party striving for independence from the Germans, by its concerted observation of or reaction to the German attitude caused itself in many fields – including musical theory, aesthetics and historiography -to be in actual fact in the wake of the German bourgeois conception.

The internationally renowned music historian W. A. Ambros (1816-76) belonged to the group of those who showed an understanding for the Czech cultural endeavours. The mechanism of the ruling power, however, in the end shackled to itself even such a personality. Young Ambros could not make a livelihood with his musicological qualifications, and so, having graduated in law, he was forced to join the civil service. In 1848 he was appointed Attorney General for matters of the press. This man, who during the revolutionary events of that year also signed the joint proclamation of Prague writers on the concord between the Czechs and Germans and a protest against the bill on the press, had to charge two of the signatories of the proclamation in his new capacity. In March 1849 he charged the journalist Karel Sabina, later Smetana's librettist (*The Brandenburgers in Bohemia*, *The Bartered Bride*); a month later he brought a charge against a leading personality of Czech journalism Karel Havlíček, who thanks to his moving defence was acquitted by the jury. And yet one can find the name Ambros, who also wrote for Czech music journals, among the members of the Society for establishing the Czech National Theatre. He was among the first to recognize Smetana's exceptional talent, whom he termed "the whale in the Czech pond", and Smetana's first opera *The Brandenburgs* in Bohemia was recommended by him for an award in the competition for a new

Czech opera (1863). As an official he again gave a high appreciation of Smetana, when the latter applied for the vacated post of Principal of the Conservatoire (1865), but he did not dare suggest him; maybe with regard to the conservative composition of the Board of Directors, maybe because he reproved him for “a doubtful continuation in the musical trends of Liszt”. It was in Prague that Ambros wrote his famous *Geschichte der Musik* (The History of Music), it was here that he embarked on his career as a University lecturer on the history of music. Then they sent for him from Vienna. Similarly as G. Adler, who was active in Prague later, Ambros hardly touched on the problems of the Czech history of music; both left this theme to younger Czech historians, no doubt conscious that this was primarily the domain of the latter.

A younger friend of Ambros' and later his opponent E. Hanslick grew in time to be immensely prejudiced against the Czechs. His father Hanslick (!) belonged to the circle of admirers of the composer Tomášek. He translated his Czech songs into German and sent his son to him to study the theory of music; young Hanslick even wrote songs to Czech lyrics. In Vienna, however, as an influential critic and aesthete he grew biased against the Czechs, which was shown, among other things, by the repeated pressure he brought to bear on Dvořák to leave the humble Czech milieu and not to compose to Czech but to German texts.

All the positive efforts and Czech ideals of the 19th century are reflected in the works of Bedřich Smetana. A composer, who like other romantics was able to express his inner experiences (e.g. the quartet *Z mého života* [From My Life]), who in addition though proved himself capable in a quite unprecedented way of finding a musical form and expression for what his nation was experiencing and striving for. He projected into his ethically great and tragic life all the developing peripeteia of his age.

Born of a middle class family he showed a great musical talent from his early youth, but the road to asserting it was complicated. A German grammar school (there were no others in the country), playing for dances as a student, an enchantment with the polka. A thorough grounding in composition from Josef Proksch, the teaching of the piano in aristocratic families. In 1848 he composed marches and songs for the students' legions, in the fifties he fell under a delusion regarding the Emperor's good intentions towards the Czechs and dedicated his symphony, quoting the melody of the Austrian anthem, to him; the dedication was not accepted. True to the Czech musical tradition he also experienced emigration; then an easing of the political situation brought him home from Sweden. Again he went in for teaching, he was a demanding music critic, a choir-master, a conductor with a considerable dramaturgical programme, a concert pianist. He applied for a government arts grant; the reference from the chief-of-police, however, characterized him as “ein sehr warmer Anhänger der böhmischen Partei” (a very ardent supporter of the Czech Party) and hence he did not receive the grant (1865). His career as a musician came to a climax in the years 1866-1874, when he headed the Prague opera company. Sudden

and complete deafness forced him to retire, but his potentials as a composer did not suffer.

Smetana adored Mozart, admired Berlioz and Chopin, and highly respected Liszt, with whom he maintained friendly ties for many years. He travelled to Munich to see Wagner's new operas, was particularly enthralled by *Tristan*, yet avoided actually meeting the composer. Apart from Liszt's influence on his first symphonic poems, we cannot find any signs of Smetana's submission to foreign examples. He did not imitate. He made some concessions to his audiences, but never was he obsequious and his art cannot be merely narrowed down to national viewpoints, having just local validity. His superbly acquired technique, exceptional sense for the style of each work, polished aesthetic criteria, progressive artistic orientation and exacting standard made him a personality rising high above the Prague horizon. Since he rejected any sciolist theory of composing national operas by imitating folk-songs and advocated the ideal of a musical drama, he was declared an alien, a Wagnerian etc. by influential conservatives. Yet his deep rootedness in the local musical tradition is evident, which does not only apply to his Czech Dances. Points of contact with the works of Dusík and Tomášek were mediated through the piano; the use of the Hussite Chorale in several instances, on which he also based the finale of his opera *Libuše*, is the outcome of his orientation towards the period of the nation's greatness. In his eight operas, taking their themes from national history and mythology, from the life of the country folk and the middle class, in his symphonic poems, piano cycles and chamber works he gave Czech music humour and tragedy, the heroic and the comic and the long lacking monumentality. The Czech national musical style became a fact indeed.

Smetana's works were suitably supplemented by his younger colleagues V. Blodek, K. Bendl, K. Šebor and particularly by the future writer of symphonies and master of chamber music, Antonín Dvořák. Czech music again ascended onto the European forum, this time under its own name. A quarter of a century of a constitutional system was sufficient to enable the national culture to unfold to the full in all artistic directions and genres. It built up the fundamental institutional basis and found a sufficient number of personalities with creative powers in the arts to fulfil all the necessary social functions for the nation as a whole. The age long argument of the foreign ruling stratum concerning the spiritual inferiority of the Czech nation was refuted; it was nothing more than the ideological instrument of class and national oppression. The Czech nationalism of the 19th century does not lose its essentially positive character even in retrospect from the 20th century, which witnessed the most perverse distortion of the nationalist ideas. This was a defensive nationalism of a small nation striving to save its very existence and the values it had created. An illustration is the climax of the national festive opera containing *Libuše's* prophecy: “My dear Czech nation shall not perish...” Here there are no desires of conquest, only a faith in the preservation of the nation's existence and the inspiring lesson that this end can only be attained by a small nation through the proliferation of its creative abilities. It of course also applies to Czech nationalism that within its framework social inequalities remained unsolved.

The fact that the continuity of the musical development was interrupted more than once in the Czech lands by interference from without, makes it imperative to search this material above all in the context of social history. In historical retrospection some characteristic features of the hundred year old musical practice of this ethnic entity stand out in the foreground:

- During the major part of its historical existence Czech music was tied to fulfilling various social functions; autonomous aesthetic viewpoints were asserted rather exceptionally.
- The share, of folk music in the total volume of Czech music was greater, its influence on the sphere of artistic music more penetrating than among the majority of west European national cultures.
- The effect of social events caused some musical genres not to be realized in the Czech context, or they appeared belatedly; this shortcoming was usually compensated by intensive activity within the framework of another genre.
- Music had a greater importance for this country and drew upon more talent than in other countries, whose nations were in a position to fully develop their potentials in other fields and in the other arts. In Bohemia music often took upon itself, at least in part, the functions of other strongly suppressed cultural branches and became the preferred field of social activity.
- As music intermingled freely with everyday life during long historical periods, it led to the formation of an animated, spontaneous type of musicality, free from complicated reflections or a speculative approach and capable of a quick adaptation through improvisation.
- The severing of the inspiratory capacity of the word at certain historical periods was compensated for by close ties with the dance, which led to the shaping of characteristic habits in composition and in interpretation.
- Valid for long historical periods was a preference for certain groups of instruments, especially the melodious instruments such as the strings and the winds, which is no doubt connected with the position of the song in Czech music.
- Being anchored down to a humble milieu with modest means at its disposal fashioned the Czech musical talent to adhere to minor forms, while monumental ones were achieved in isolated cases.
- The values created here were not usually significant for their magnanimity nor for an analytic insight. There was no leaning towards an eccentric stressing of a single component, an overloading of the capacity of musical perceivability. The values of Czech works have entirely human dimensions, lucid and accessible, usually not too sophisticated for the listener, with a preference for the happy medium. There is almost always a closer proximity to genre paintings than to

monumental frescos, to the common people than to the sublime, to variety rather than to monotony.