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Jana Vöröšová

Folklore Revival Movement

Kašpar Cropacius

Vozembouch

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Dear readers,

After a lively September in which ensembles, theatres, and other organisations attempted to pack in as many activities as possible so as to fulfil their yearly plans, the months of October, November, and December have brought the Czech cultural scene to a virtual standstill. It is therefore appropriate that in this issue of *Czech Music Quarterly*, our focus is rather more historical. This year's final issue includes the third instalment of a series of poetry and music in Renaissance Bohemia, as well as a short text about a recent conference on Carolus Luython, a Franco-Flemish composer who worked at the court of Rudolf II in Prague. Matěj Kratochvíl contributed a historical overview of the revival of folk music in the Czech lands, as well as an interview with composer Jana Vřořšová, who recently composed an occasional piece for a pick-up symphony orchestra to accompany the Slavic carnival or masopust in Roztoky, near Prague. And finally, an in-depth study by William Connor on the history and construction of the vozembouch, a Czech folk percussion instrument closely associated with devils, provides another perspective on the foundations and developments of Czech musical culture.

With wishes of a calm holiday season,
Ian Mikyska
deputy editor-in-chief

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cover: The premiere of Jana Vřořšová's composition *Kdo je živý, tomu hop*. PHOTO: JAKUB SEDLÁK


A Point from Which Everything is Close By

AN INTERVIEW WITH COMPOSER JANA VÖRÖŠOVÁ

The music of Jana Vöröšová includes many colours, from gentle tone-painting and the restrained use of various extended instrumental techniques (and occasionally electronics) to dramatic waves and sections powered by raw energy. Her activities currently seem to take place along two paths. One of them includes performances of her music by contemporary music ensembles both at home and abroad, appearances at international festivals, and awards at various competitions.

Recently, her work has also been successful in more conservative waters: in 2019, she became a finalist of the Czech Philharmonic's composition competition, and that same year, the Prague Spring festival commissioned a new piece. These occasions saw the creation of *Písně vrbového proutku* (*Orpingalik's Songs*) for soprano and orchestra and *Atlas mraků* (*Cloud Atlas*) for saxophone quartet and accordion.

In addition to the public musical scene, Vöröšová also applies herself to music as an activity related to communal life, where group music-making is more important than official assessments. In Roztoky, a small town on the Vltava river a few kilometres north of Prague, she leads a children's choir for which she also composes, as well as participating in probably the most important event of local social life: the carnival (*masopust*).



Every February, the tradition – established over twenty years ago – fills the streets of Roztoky with masks and music of various genres. The carnival procession culminates with a gathering on a nearby hill, which is followed by an evening's entertainment. In 2020, carnival celebrations included the premiere of Vöröšová's composition *Kdo je živý, tomu hop* (*Jump if You're Alive*) in the circus tent, which brought together amateur and professional musicians, soloists in folk costumes, and the carnival masks of Death, the Bear, and the Cock. .

PHOTO: JAKUB SOUČEK

What is your compositional process from the initial idea to the final score? Which phase do you find most difficult?

It varies from piece to piece. I probably chisel away until I have the form. I put an idea down in notation – there might be blurry passages where I only have a kind of feeling of what it might be like. There is a moment when the notes start living their own lives and begin moving away from my ideal notions.

Is this move away from ideal notions an impulse to tame the notes, or to follow them instead and wait how it all develops?

Both.

Do you compose by hand or on the computer? Do you think the working method impacts the result?

First I come up with ideas and write them down by hand on various strips of paper. Only then do I move to notation and finally, I put it all in the software.

What is the story behind Kdo je živý, tomu hop, your piece performed at the carnival in Roztoky? How is it related to the local tradition of carnival celebrations?

The piece came with a precise commission. It had to include a parade of masks, a mapping of the carnival day from the morning alarm, provided by the huge Cock at 5 am, through the introduction of the Queen and her entourage, all the way to the encounter with Death. Every year, someone else represents the queen. Last year, it was Anežka; the bride: a violinist and folk music teacher – all this was reflected in the piece. The groom was an excellent clarinetist. The most beautiful section of the piece is an improvisation between the bride and groom.

The piece was created following an invitation from Jitka Tichá, the heart and mind of the Roztoč association and the entire carnival. Several years ago, Roztoč commissioned me to write a series of fanfares to open the carnival. And last year, they came up with the idea of bringing together enthusiastic amateurs with musical professionals who take part in the carnival. Then we arrived at many more elements: the set design, the dance/acting performance by the Queen – the bride of the carnival, the Groom, the Cock, the Bear. We also gradually added musicians and singers.

The carnival, taking place before lent, is a celebration that includes many elements and meanings and the regional variants can be considerably different from one another. It is also a universally attractive festivity, which has become clear at Roztoky's carnival in recent years. What interests you about the carnival and is that imprinted in this piece?

For me, *masopust* always seemed like a strange mix of celebrations, something between a carnival, a rural celebration, and a festival of gluttony. The Roztoky *masopust* allowed me to see all this from a different perspective. I now understand it as an encounter between Heaven and Earth. A point from which everything is close by. A possibility to look in the mirror or arrange the mirror to reflect someone else; something else. What's more, the masks in Roztoky are gorgeous, made tastefully and with a great deal of craft, and they give the entire procession the wholeness of an aesthetic experience; a great show. The number of bands and styles of music is incredible, it's essentially a multi-genre festival. And it's always different – there's a new surprise each year.

The piece was performed by MASYE, which, if I understood correctly, is an occasional group mostly composed of local musicians. Do you need to write differently for such an ensemble than a standard symphony orchestra?

At first, I wanted to take this into account and write some conducted aleatoric music, but what resulted was a more or less classically notated form, sometimes demanding and difficult,

rhythmically quite complex in places. The choir extends from a unison to a six-part texture whose top voices are highly exposed, and the choristers also provided various sound effects – it was all great fun.

The title MASYF was actually the original source of it all – we just really liked the idea of the Masopust Symphony Orchestra (MASYF). The original idea really was to involve all kind of amateurs and write a piece that anyone who so desired could play or sing in, even if they had no experience performing in larger ensembles. We put out a call and what assembled was a truly bizarre orchestration. We rehearsed diligently in the evenings. But the piece was scored for a classical symphony orchestra, so the remaining positions were filled with professional musicians. We succeeded in having a team made only of good friends and good players who gave the performance the lustre and shine of a symphony orchestra. The amateur musicians and the choir provided an enormous amount of joy and energy. Everyone's level of engagement was breathtaking. The performance was conducted by Tomáš Brauner.

You mentioned aleatoric approaches (imprecise or statistical forms of notation – editor's note). How important is it for you to balance your authorial idea and the amount of freedom you give the performers?

What I've had good experiences with is writing my idea out in notation, however complicated and difficult it is, and only then explaining it doesn't have to be exactly like that, telling the performers what mood it should have, and so on. That's the fastest way of rehearsing a piece for a larger ensemble.

You lead the children's choir in Roztoky. Do you also compose music for children?

Of course. We basically sing folk songs and my own songs – that's the simplest way for me. I don't enjoy grinding out the same repertoire every year, so we're always singing new material. It's lively.

Writing music for children is a specific discipline. Is it easier or harder than your "adult" compositions?

It's easier for me, but that follows from the technical facts – simpler textures; shorter sections. And children can manage all kinds of things. They're not encumbered by prejudices as to what can and cannot be played or sung. When you do a good job of explaining what you're after, they are excellent performers. Particularly the little ones.

In recent years, Roztoky has garnered the aura of a place that has an intense community life. Does music play a significant part?

I don't live in Roztoky and I basically only take part in the events organised by Roztoč. During the twenty years they have existed in Roztoky, Roztoč has gathered a considerable amount of know-how relating to the events it organises, and they're still perfecting it. Wonderful dramaturgy, a high level of quality, good ideas, originality, artful workmanship, humour, outreach, collaboration, excellent refreshments – these are all things you'll find at all of their events. And music? There's never one without it. Many bands were formed from teachers at Roztoč. The carnival is a festival of excellent groups and soloists.

This year's epidemiological restrictions have hugely affected cultural life, essentially freezing it in place. Some optimists, however, claim this could serve as inspiration to search for new approaches. Online concerts are produced. Are you an optimist or a pessimist in this respect? Have you taken part in any online musical activities?

I think those are statements made from necessity. Of course, the situation will force opponents of modern technology to learn to work better in the spheres of sharing,

preparation, communication, transmission, etc. But personally, I haven't succumbed to the charm of the online concert – perhaps the opposite, actually. I've also taken part in many online projects, but I see no advantages other than the fact that you can play back the result anywhere at any time. And I even doubt *this to be an advantage, as I believe the charm of the moment possesses a great deal of magic. And human consciousness and memory have the capacity to transform beautiful things to their own image.*

On the website of Czech Radio Vltava, I found a programme in which you introduce your favourite poets. What attracts you about poetry and what influence does it have on your music?

Crucial. Many of my pieces were directly inspired by poetry. I enjoy the space between the words that every poem has. I think poetry is very similar to music. It has the capacity to quickly lead you anywhere in time and space.

What kind of listener are you? How do you find new music?

I'm an awful listener. I always say to myself that I'll listen to this and that, but I either fail to completely, or I fall asleep. The idea of sitting down in the morning and listening attentively, perhaps even with the score – that really doesn't happen. But I can't wait for a time when it can happen.

You've composed music for several short films, you recently wrote an overture to the digitally restored version of Gustav Machaty's 1933 film Extase, you included a dance component in your piece Havran a moře (The Raven and the Sea), and the carnival piece also has a scenic element. Are connections of music with other forms inspired by specific people and a desire to work with them, or are you interested in these intersections more generally?

Of course, the link is almost always bound to specific places and people, otherwise it wouldn't make sense for me. And I'm already thinking about an opera.

You mentioned in an older interview that you play the cimbalom. What lies behind your interest in this instrument?

The cimbalom is the most beautiful instrument I know. On the one hand, it's indelibly linked to folk music, but on the other hand, it can produce a huge number of sounds of an almost industrial character. It's an ocean – I enjoy getting lost among its strings. I think it's still undervalued, waiting for composers to discover it fully.

In 2019, you were a finalist in the Czech Philharmonic's composition, while Cloud Atlas was commissioned by the Prague Spring festival. Do these successes, which grant you greater "media exposure", have any impact on your compositional career?

Speaking about a composer's career in the Czech Republic seems comical to me. That's probably why none of the composers do it.

Jana Vörösová

Born in 1980, Vörösová first studied at the Prague Conservatory, followed by composition studies at the Musical Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts. In 2006, she completed an exchange at the Koninklijk Conservatorium Brussel, where she became acquainted both with the most cutting-edge technologies of electronically processed sound, and various techniques of sonic analysis. She took part in workshops by various international composers and regularly attended lessons by leading Belgian teachers. She has taught at the Duncan Centre dance conservatory. Since childhood, she has been active as a choral singer. She is currently a member of the Prague Cathedral Choir, which focuses on music of the Renaissance and Baroque periods. She established and led the La Folia children's choir for four years and now directs the children's choir in Roztoky.

THE FOLKLORE REVIVAL MOVEMENT: AN INTERSECTION OF ART, SCIENCE, AND POLITICS

EVERY WEEKDAY AFTERNOON, A SMALL HALL IN PRAGUE'S DEJVICE DISTRICT FILLS WITH DANCERS RANGING IN AGE FROM CHILDHOOD TO ADULthood. THEY ALTERNATE SMALLER GROUPS AND PRACTICE FOLK SONGS AND DANCES FROM MORAVIA, PREDOMINANTLY FROM THE UHERSKÉ HRADIŠTĚ REGION. THE END RESULT IS A SET OF CHOREOGRAPHIES WHICH THEY PRESENT IN FOLK COSTUMES AND ACCOMPANIED BY A CIMBALOM GROUP (WHICH TRADITIONALLY INCLUDES THE CIMBALOM, STRINGS, AND A CLARINET) AT PERFORMANCES AND FESTIVALS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC, BUT ALSO INTERNATIONALLY – FROM THE USA TO SOUTH KOREA.



One might think this type of culture would attract an older and more conservative interest group, or else those who grew up surrounded by folk traditions, but that is not the case. Rosénka, as this ensemble is called, was established in the early 1980s by Radka Baboráková, who came to Prague from Uherské Hradiště and tried setting up a children's group for a few interested parties. Since then, Rosénka has grown to become a multi-generational group. Adults bring their children and teenagers also find their way here, even if they never encountered folk music growing up. Rosénka is only one of the hundreds of groups operating in the Czech Republic, coming together (along with festivals and other institutions) to create

an interconnected network of people who share an interest in folk dance and music. Despite its considerable size, this sphere of culture stands outside the media spotlight, even though festivals like the one in Strážnice attract thousands of visitors (in 2019, 32 000 people came to Strážnice) and have an atmosphere no less intense than rock festivals. This, however, is only one of many paradoxes linked to the phenomenon known as the folklore revival movement.

1) The author is a researcher at the Institute of Ethnology of the Czech Academy of Sciences.

BETWEEN HERDER AND STALIN

We mostly associate the folklore revival movement, as an organised form of resuscitating folk music and dance, with the second half of the 20th century. In order to understand it, however, we must search a little deeper in our past, specifically the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries. At this time, the interest of some European intellectuals began turning towards rural culture, which they believed to be under threat from the processes of industrialisation and urbanisation.

The central tenets of this stream of thought were formulated by Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803), for whom the people and its culture represented a pure stream that needed protection. In 1779, he wrote: “There can be no doubt as to the fact that poetry, and song in particular, were originally of folk provenance, in other words simple and effortless, created in the living conditions and language of the masses, as well as in the plentitude and fullness of nature.” Folk culture almost immediately became material to be collected and classified and a symbol of national identities through which it became possible to demonstrate the notion of the nation as a community sharing values and aesthetic manifestations.

During the 19th century, this idea became connected to increasing pressure on the formation of nation states, so interest in folklore gradually became a political issue. Folk song collections and folk-like stylisations in the works of the canon of classical music are also an indelible component of the national renaissance in the Czech lands. The Czech-Slavic Ethnographic Exhibition (Národopisná výstava českoslovanská), which took place in Prague in 1895, presented performances of folk customs, dances, and songs from the various regions of the Czech lands, demonstrating them to the urban audience, thus showing how folkloric traditions can be transformed into a public performance (though some similar – but considerably smaller – presentations also took place before 1895, e.g. on the occasion of the visit of the emperor).

The first half of the 20th century saw the creation of the first more or less official organisations devoted to maintaining musical and dance traditions, often established in cities by those who came from rural areas to work or study and wished to maintain at least a symbolic link to their homeland. These clubs, often called “krúžky” (meaning both circle and club or interest group) became the models for the ensembles of the future.

The first Czechoslovak Republic supported these endeavours and used them for promotion, but with the advent of Communism in 1948, folk culture became

an intensively mined tool of propaganda. According to the doctrine known as socialist realism, folk art served as a model for all creativity and was therefore the focus of attention of a number of institutions. The function entrusted to folklore is well described by this quote from one of many official resolutions:

“The dances express joyful and liberated labour, the songs a struggle for peace and a better life, the music rouses us to selfless and zealous work for the development of socialism. We learn from the rich experiences of ensembles in the Soviet Union, who show us the path for our own groups.”

After the war, new groups were established at many state companies, but there are also lavish events like the festival in Strážnice. Although it was established before the takeover, in 1946, it soon became the regime’s shop window for true culture. 1947 saw the establishment of the Czechoslovak State Group of Song and Dance, which had the same role and also served as an incubator for many significant figures of the dance and music scenes.

Throughout the 1950s, folk music accompanied most social events, becoming a kind of soundtrack to the collectivisation of the country’s rural areas. However, it had to be adapted for this role – particularly as concerns content. While songs with religious themes were erased from the repertoire, new works were also created that reflected the ongoing social changes. New songs were composed and new lyrics written to existing songs. The most popular themes were the consolidation of fields, the new possibilities of agriculture, and the increasing quality of life in the new form of social organisation. For an example, let us look to this anonymous song:

1. Ej, žito, žito, zlatóčký žito, podme, má milá, sežneme my ho. 2. Co bych chodila a se trápila, kombajner přijel, hlópá bych byla. 3. Žitko nám sežne, ba i vymlátí, naše JZD bude bohatý.

1. Oh rye, rye, golden rye, let us go, my sweet, and cut it down. 2. Why should I go and why should I worry, a combine operator has arrived, I would be the fool 3. He will cut down our rye, he will thresh it too, and our cooperative will be rich.

As for an accurate summary of the perception of the folklore revival movement in the 1950s, we could do worse than watching *Žít se bude tančit všude* (*Tomorrow, People Will Be Dancing Everywhere*), a film made in 1952. In many respects, it is a model of the film propaganda from the period of “constructing socialism” (the 1950s). In the context of the cinematography of the time, this was a high-budget movie that began the careers of a number of stars of the silver screen. Director Vladimír Vlček and screenwriter Pavel



Folklore revival performances in 1950s

Kohout (the poet and writer who later a leading figure of the Prague Spring movement, then a dissident, and then a refugee in Austria) describe the creation and development of a single folk group. For the authors, the group's original, obsolete form as a club focusing only on the correct technical combination of music and dance represents an unacceptably formalist approach and is gradually "innovated", leading up to a triumphant performance at the 1951 World Festival of Youth and Students in Berlin. The ensemble performs a choreography mostly based on collective energy and ideological content. Within the stylised carnival dance, a mask styled as an atomic bomb acts as the symbol of evil. The soundtrack was a collage of melodies of various provenances, unified through the opulent orchestral accompaniment. Folksongs mingle with the so-called "new pieces", as well as entirely un-folkloric material, such as the title song, with lyrics by Pavel Kohout and music by Ludvík Poděšť, which falls into the genre known as mass songs.

FROM THE WEIGHT OF FOLKLORE TO GLOBALISATION

The intensity with which the communist regime promoted folk culture was not without consequence. The general feeling that official culture was too unified was best expressed in an article by the Slovak writer and journalist Vladimír Mináč in his article *The Weight of Folklore*, published in *Literární noviny* (The Literary Newspaper) in 1958. His approach to the phenomena is courageous given the conventions of the time: "We

have attached to folklore a dogma of immaculate conception and on immaculateness more generally. We made art into a deity, we sighed and caressed it because it touched the most mysterious corners of our soul, but also because its existence justified our smallness, and we forbade access to these depths to all judgement and all analysis."

Mináč's article really reflected the spirit of the times, as we can trace folk music's retreat from the spotlight to the turn of the 1950s and '60s. The folk movement, however, did not cease existing: ensembles continued creating performances; festivals were still highly popular; recordings continued being published. The regime merely discovered it could allow a more varied and less dogmatic cultural offering. Opinions skeptical of folklore gradually spread, as attested to by this response to the Strážnice festival published in *Taneční listy* (The Dance Paper) in 1961: "This year's Strážnice is a warning. (...) A warning against overvaluing folklore, against overestimating its tenability in the context of contemporary art. (...) It warns against overvaluing amateur groups of folk song and dance and the part they play in our contemporary art. And, most importantly, it warns us against those theoretically unfounded, un-Marxist, even if perhaps politically appealing dreams of developing folklore into some new form of socialist art, one which would use the cimbalom to speak of the brigadiers of socialist labour and farmers' jargon to express the feelings of young people born under the threat of the atomic bomb but growing up with the grand perspectives of the conquest of outer space."



*"Through song and dance to peace and friendship among nations."
International bagpipe festival in Strakonice, 1960s*

As the folklore revival movement was shifted to a less prominent position, it became politically calmer and a little more open artistically. Throughout the 1960s, the groups provided a home to figures for whom there was no space in more official spheres, as well as to more daring artistic approaches. We can observe this on the example of the Chorea Bohemica ensemble, established in 1967 by the choreographer Alena Skálová and the composer Jaroslav Krček. Their performance brought folkloric material together with elements of modern theatre and classical music. They even managed to bring religious topics back to the stage, an entirely unacceptable decision just a decade earlier. With the onset of the period known as normalisation at the turn of the 1960s and '70s (following the invasion of the Warsaw Pact armies that ended the Prague Spring in 1968), the limits for creative work were, once again, narrower. The emphasis on the correct ideological position vis-a-vis folklore returned. This is illustrated well by a statement given by one of the officials from the cultural department of the South Moravian Region in 1974, claiming that "music – like all other arts – is a significant worldview and culturally-political component."

Beyond these phrases and mandatory performances at official occasions, however, folk music did not return to the position of a universal aesthetic ideal. The groups became another part of the offer of leisure activities and represented an opportunity for self-realisation for many people, as not many options were available at the time. The folklore revival movement found itself in a kind of grey area, which sometimes allowed for the participation of artists that would be unacceptable elsewhere, but that was also sometimes affected by

the repressive mechanisms of the regime. This became fateful for Jaroslav Staněk, founder of the Hradišťan ensemble, who was banned from performing in public due to the political positions he adopted in 1968.

Control also took the form of political supervisors who travelled with the luckier groups (meaning those who were allowed to perform abroad), as well as a general awareness of which member of the group could be informers for the security services.

With the fall of the Communist regime, it seemed that folklore was far too ideologically contaminated and interest in it would disappear in the competition of all the new possibilities and the music coming in from around the world. After a brief dip in interest in the 1990s, however, it transpired that the dense network of groups also has the capacity of attracting new generations. Ensembles also began relying more on local support over state-wide coordination, gradually passing under the patronage of city governments and local organisations.

ORGANISATIONS AND THE MEDIA

The development of the folklore revival movement is closely related to the growth of the media scene in the latter half of the 20th century: radio, television, and the recording industry. Given the later dates of the television, the radio played a key part in this area. Radio editors included figures such as the pedagogue, composer, and folksong collector Albert Pek (1893–1972), who began preparing shows such as the daily *Žpěvy domova* (*Songs of Home*) as early as 1939.

The Brno radio also broadcast folksong since in the 1930s, but the genre was given much more airtime



PHOTO: HANA MAJUR SLÁDKOVÁ

The Vypálkovci folklore ensemble, 2016

after World War II. 1952 saw the creation of the Brno Radio Orchestra of Folk Instruments (BROLN), a group that became a model for the interpretation of Moravian folk music for several decades. After the establishment of the radio in Plzeň, the Plzeň Folk Ensemble became closely associated with the station, defining the tradition of the interpretation of music of western Bohemia under the leadership of composer, choreographer, and collector Zdeněk Bláha. The position of folk music in the media transformed along with changing perceptions of folklore across society, so after intensive radio support in the 1950s, folk music migrated into the position of unobtrusive stuffing in the form of documentaries about local traditions or children's shows, such as the televised *Žpivánky* (Singsongs), a short education-entertainment programme introducing a different folksong every day. The media, of course, was subject to censorship. In 1953, the government established the non-public censor organisation Hlavní správa tiskového dohledu (HSTD; the Central Administration of Print Supervision), without whose agreement publication and broadcast were illegal. Censorship also affected broadcasts of folklore programmes, most significantly in the first half of the 1950s and then during the normalisation period. It mostly concerned religious motives contained in the lyrics

of folksongs. Restrictions affected practically all song lyrics that mentioned anything even vaguely related to Christianity. Even love songs such as *Ž polanského kostelíčka vyletěla laštovička* (A Swallow Flew Out of the Church in Polany) or *Když sem šel z Hradiště z požehnání* (When I Walked from Hradiště After the Blessing) were considered objectionable. But if the creators steered clear of these topics, folklore represented a safe zone in the 1970s and '80s, practically devoid of politics.

LET IT BE IMPRESSIVE

The essence of the folklore revival movement is the transfer of music and dance from its original environment into a staged form, more or less stylised. Dances originally performed at village festivities for the dancers' own pleasure thus become a performance for an audience with a different background. Different situations demand different approaches to the aesthetic component of the music and dance, and this aesthetic is influenced by the period situation, including political demands. In short, the function that folklore is to play in society is reflected in how it sounds and looks. We can glean the sonic ideal of socialist folklore from recordings, of which there are many, particularly from the 1970s. One of the few examples from the 1950s are recordings made by the Czechoslovak State Ensemble

of Song and Dance from 1956, published by the state music publisher, Supraphon. Though they tell us nothing about the aesthetics of common regional ensembles, they represent the official model of the times. The seven tracks on the album are a collection of Czech, Moravian, and Slovak songs complemented by an instrumental medley of Roma melodies.

All this music is brought together through a dense orchestral texture with many doubled and tripled instrumental parts and a high degree of orchestration and arrangement. This includes the use of various interludes, a complex harmony, and work with dynamics and changes of tempo. For instance, the arrangement of the Czech folk song *Sluníčko za hory zachází* (*The Sun Sets Behind the Mountains*) is preceded by an oboe introduction, the individual verses are divided by interludes, the instrumentation and harmony changes with each verse in order to set the stage for a huge choral and orchestral tutti, concluding the song with a dramatic *ritardando* and crescendo on the words “the gentry will tremble in fear of us”. This “symphonising” approach is common to all the pieces. The record production of folk ensembles of the 1960s, ‘70s, and ‘80s attest to the gradual transformation of musical tastes among both performers and audiences, although some elements endure. The 1970 album *Czech Folk Music* includes recordings of Konrády’s Pipers’ Band and the ensemble of the Škoda Plzeň Group of Song and Dance, reflecting the traditionalist conception of Czech bagpipe music, whose instrumentation and style changed little since the interwar period. On the very opposite spectrum of musical stylisation lie the recordings by Chorea Bohemica, marked by Jaroslav Krček’s historicising approach. Recordings made during this time by his group Musica Bohemica are marked by a highly considered dramaturgy, professional performance standards, and overlap with classical music. Moravian ensembles employing a highly arranged musical structure and an effective sonic palate include Technik and Ondráš.

WORLD MUSIC?

In the second half of the 20th century, when folk music in its original form had all but disappeared from the Czech lands, the folklore revival movement acted as its surrogate, and, for most listeners, the only experience of folk music, as it was easier to hear folksong rendered by folk ensembles than as accompaniment to the work of villagers in the field. The ensembles’ production thus became a bridge through which influences of folk music made their way into other fields.

The influence of folk music on other genres of Czech popular music can only be discerned in the 1960s, at the time when the officially sanctioned omnipresence of folk music faded away and folk music was replaced by now officially recognised forms of jazz, rock, and popular music. This gave folk music back its aura of freshness and the links to the ruling ideology were, to an extent, severed, all of which contributed to making this an attractive source of inspiration for young artists and listeners.

The turn of the 1960s and ‘70s thus saw the emergence of groups for whom fusions such as this one were important working methods. One of the first was the Ostrava-based group Bukanyři (The Buccaneers), who brought together a rock rhythm section with elements of jazz and the melodies of Moravian and Slovak songs. While their first single, featuring the songs *U staré Břeclavi* (*Near Old Břeclav*) and *Ha, ty svatý Vavřenečku* (*Ha, You Saint Laurence*), released by Supraphon in 1970, was recorded in a trio of guitar, violin, and flute accompanying a vocalist, their eponymous first LP from 1975 features folk songs with a jazz-rock rhythm section and the legendary jazz multi-instrumentalist and composer Karel Velebný appearing as a guest on vibraphone.

Another landmark was the publication of the album *Nikola Šuhaj loupežník* (*loupežník* means *robber*; *Nikola Šuhaj*, also known as *Mykola Sjuhaj*, *Микола Пемпович Чоцаї*, and *Miklós Szuhaj*, was a WWI deserter who became a semi-mythical figure – editor’s note) by the group Javory in 1974.

It featured original songs by Petr Ulrych inspired by Ivan Olbracht’s 1933 novel *Nikola Šuhaj loupežník*, accompanied both by the Gustav Brom Orchestra (*the leading Czech swing big-band since 1940 – editor’s note*) and by BROLN and their leader Jindřich Hovorka. Another significant, stylistically divergent album was singer-songwriter Jaroslav Hutka’s 1975 offering *Stůj, břízo zelená* (*Stand, White Birch*), for which Hutka set several ballads from a collection by František Sušil. While in the main stream of popular culture, folk music was only rarely used as an inspiration, in more marginal, original areas of music, several artists searched for folk inspiration throughout the 1970s, ‘80s, and beyond. In the world of jazz, pianist and composer Emil Viklický has consistently explored this intersection, beginning with his 1978 album *V Holomóci měšťě* (*In the City of Olomouc*). In 1991, he published *Ža horama, za lesama* (*Beyond the Mountains, Beyond the Forests*), which featured not only Viklický and other jazz musicians, but also folk-oriented musicians such as Iva Bittová, Jiří Pavlica, Milan Malina, and Věra Domincová.

This album was followed by an intensive period of collaboration between Viklický, the cimbalom

player and vocalist Zuzana Lapčíková, and violinist Jiří Pavlica, which resulted in their first album, *Ad lib Moravia* (1994), presenting original work arising from the foundations of folk music and jazz. A similar approach, but in connection to folk-rock musicians, was taken by Jiří Pavlica and Vlasta Redl on CDs by the groups AG Flek and Hradištan. Jarmila Šuláková, a folk singer from Moravian Wallachia, made an album with the rock band Fleret. In more recent times, we can point to such examples as *Hrubá hudba*, published this year, in which *Hornácká muzika* Petra Mičky meets elements of jazz, rock, and electronics. In the vast majority of these cases, folk music (most commonly experienced through the manifestations of the folklore revival movement) served musicians from other genres predominantly as a source of original melodic ideas, or else as a sonic enrichment through the “exotic” sounds of the cimbalom and violin. More unique are the cases in which the artists focused more on the lyrics of folk songs, which is the case of Jaroslav Hutka, who confirms himself that he perceived the ballads in Sušil’s collection as an antithesis to the officially sanctioned form of folk music.

A VIEW FROM THE INSIDE

The folklore movement can be described as a network of ensembles, their source of subsidy, and other institutions, but this network is brought to life by specific people whose motivations and relationships to folk music can be vastly different. Exploring the official side of the movement leaves a number of questions unanswered: To what extent did participants understand performing under a portrait of Stalin as a libation to the regime that had to be tolerated? Were they attracted to folk song as a symbol of regional culture, or as an experience of a purely aesthetic kind? What resources did musicians use to learn repertoire and style?

A team of researchers from several institutions decided to “infiltrate” the folklore revival movement. Led by Daniela Stavělová of the Institute of Ethnology of the Czech Academy of Sciences, the team spent three years interviewing several dozen members of folk ensembles from all corners of the Czech Republic. Representatives of various generations – including those that still remember the 1950s – told researchers about their lives spent with folk music and everything that might have been connected to it.

The result is a much fuller picture of the folklore revival movement as a community within which music and dance became (and continue becoming) a lifelong fulfilment for many people. A community that allowed for musical realisation on both the amateur and

professional levels, where artistic creativity is indelibly linked to interpersonal relationships. The result of this research project will be transformed into a monograph, which will be published in 2021 (in Czech) under the title *Tíha a beztlíž folkloru* (*The Weight and Weightlessness of Folklore*) by the Academia publishing house.

The project also demonstrated how the folklore revival movement in the Czech Republic operates within the international context. It appears that the states of the former socialist bloc share the legacy of the socialist view of folklore and the arising emphasis on the effect of the scenic stylisation of folk music (though now without the ideological burden of communism). Another shared element are the dense institutional networks.

However, the Czech movement differs from others in this geopolitical region in displaying a greater influence of the theatrical tradition, including the heritage of the Czech avant-garde. In addition to Chorea Bohemica, mentioned above, an important figure in this lineage is E. F. Burian, avant-garde theatre-maker and composer, and particularly his interwar productions employing folkloric elements, especially *Vojna* (*War*), which was revived both after the war and in the new millennium. Compared to Bulgarian or Hungarian ensembles, Czech groups more readily go beyond the mere presentation of songs and dances, connecting them with other staged elements. The international context is explored in one of the other outputs of this project, a publication in English titled *Folklore Revival Movements in Europe post 1950: Shifting Contexts and Perspectives*, published by the Institute of Ethnology of the Czech Academy of Sciences.

Currently, the revival of traditions is moving from the ensemble-based movement to less formal spheres. One example is the series of events called *Folklorní mejdlo* (Folk Party), held at various venues in Prague. Their initiators and performers are usually individuals linked to various folk ensembles, but the audience is composed of members of the general public who are attracted by the informal atmosphere and the possibility of participating in the singing and dancing depending on their capabilities. Through the folklore revival movement, then, folk music is making its way back to the context in which it was created: spontaneous enjoyment.

Photos: Archive of the Institute of Ethnology of the Czech Academy of Sciences

The Luython Year Conference (Prague, July 30 – August 13 2020)

August 2020 was the bicentenary of the death of Carl Luython (1557/8–1620), composer and organist at the court of Emperor Rudolf II in Prague. For musical historians and others, this significant anniversary was a remarkable and unique occasion to commemorate the legacy of this remarkable yet often overlooked artist, whose activities were most closely linked to the Prague Castle and the Cathedral of Saints Vitus, Wenceslaus, and Adalbert.

Several institutions joined forces in organising the three-day international symposium initiated by the Musica Rudolphina research centre: the Foundation for Cultural History in Central Europe, the Institute of Musicology of the Faculty of Arts at Charles University, the Archdiocese of Prague, and the Metropolitan Chapter of St Vitus. Even though the organisers were forced to cancel much of the originally grand plans for this academic and cultural event, the conference programme itself was only lightly affected by the coronavirus pandemic, and those who could not participate in person were at least present through video calls (this was true for most participants west of the Rhine and overseas). Cardinal Beran Hall, at the Archbishop's Palace, hosted eighteen papers mapping not only Luython's life and work, but also the historical and musical contexts

in which the music of the Flemish master found such resonance.

The first day of the conference (July 30th) began with a keynote by Václav Bůžek (University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice): *Rudolf II. – Persönlichkeit, Regierung, Hof und kulturelle Repräsentation in den adeligen Sitzen* (*Rudolf II: Personality, Government, the Court, and Cultural Representation in the Aristocratic Seats*), which established an important contextual framework for the entire conference. In her contribution, titled *The Ennoblements Acts of the Rudolfine Musicians as an Important Biographical Source*, Michaela Žáčková Rossi (Foundation for Cultural History in Central Europe) made good use of her long-standing research into the personnel of the court orchestra based on the imperial court's bookkeeping. Also heuristically valuable was a paper presented by Ferran Escrivà Llorca (Valencia International University) titled *Sacred works by the Rudolf II Imperial Chapel Composers in the Iberian World: Circulation, Reception and Context*.

The extremely broad contexts of musical works surviving on Czech territory (and not only in relation to Luython) was explored by the following section, introduced by a paper by Alanna Ropchock Tierno (Shenandoah University), *Hymns, Martyrs, and Prophets: Czech Reformation Identity in Polytextual Mass Ordinaries from the Brno Choirbooks*, which focused on the repertoire of remarkable polyphonic choir-books recently discovered in the St Jacob parish library in Brno. In his paper *Lamentations in the Liturgy in Central Europe and Especially in Moravia around 1600*, Vladimír Maňas (Masaryk University, Brno) explored the part which the polyphonic lamentation (of which we also find examples in Luython's compositional oeuvre) played



in the liturgy of the Paschal Triduum in Moravian churches around the year 1600. Martin Horyna's paper (University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice), *Ein Schatz-Kasten voller Clainodien, Hradec Králové (Königgrätz) 1618, ein wenig bekannter Musikdruck (A Treasure Chest full of Gems; Hradec Králové in 1618; A Little-Known Music Print)* brought attention to a previously unknown polyphonic print of secular songs furnished with religious texts by composers from the circle of the Rudolfinian court, apparently quite popular at the time.

The second day of the conference (Friday the 31st of July) opened with a block focusing on Luython's masses. Petr Daněk's paper (Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences) *Liber I. missarum von Charles Luython. Der Schwanengesang der rudolphinischen Polyphonie* (Charles Luython's First Book of Masses. The Swan Song of Rudolphinian Polyphony) thoroughly introduced the composer's collection of masses printed in Prague in 1609 by Mikuláš Štraus, and also proposed a stimulating

hypothesis: that this might be the first volume of an intended but unrealised complete edition of Luython's works. Bernhold Schmid (Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften) focused on one of the Luython masses that survives in manuscript form in his paper *Carl Luythons Missa à 5 super Tityre tu patulae und seine Vorlage (Carl Luythons Missa à 5 super Tityre tu patulae and its Predecessors)*, refuting the often repeated theory on Orlande de Lassus' motet *Tityre tu patulae* serving as a model for the composer. Jan Baťa (Institute of Musicology of the Faculty of Arts of Charles University) then explored a particular group of Luython masses, which the composer subtitled *Quodlibetica*.

The composer's secular vocal works were the focus of a section introduced by Christian Thomas Leitmeir (Magdalen College, University of Oxford) and his paper *'Madrigals in Italian as well as Latin': Towards a Radical Re-definition of the Madrigal in the Late 16th Century*. He drew attention to an important phenomenon connected most intimately to central

European musical culture, for which the profane madrigal was not as closely tied to the Italian text (as was the case elsewhere in Europe) as it was to the Latin text, as attested to by many examples from the Rudolphinian court. Kateřina Maýrová (Prague) presented her long-term research of the Rokycany collection of music, focusing on Luython's compositions (*The Contemporary State of Research on the Rokycany Music Collection and Charles Luython's Sacral Compositions, preserved in these Music Sources*). The block was rounded off by Scott L. Edwards (Universität Wien) and his paper *From Convivial Dispute to Social Ferment: Luython's Vinum bonum et suave*, in which he analysed the literary and social context of the composer's drinkers' parody of the Medieval Marian sequence *Verbum bonum et suave*.

The last block of the second day focused entirely on Luython's motet work. Marc Desmet's paper (Université de Lyon-Université de Saint-Etienne) *On the Relation Between Structure and Detail in Luython and Handl-Gallus* was read in absentia. It compared the motet works of both composers on the example of two motets setting a single text (*Filiae Hierusalem a Gloria, laus et honor*), particularly comparing compositional approaches to setting the word "draco". Jan Bilwachs (Institute of Musicology of the Faculty of Arts at Charles University), in his paper *Karl Luythons Sacrae cantiones vom Gesichtspunkt der Textvorlagen*, explored in detail the various textual sources of Luython's motets. These have their foundations not only in liturgy, but also in the humanist environment. Erika Supria Honisch (Stony Brook University New York) then focused on the composer's motets as they were disseminated in the then-popular anthology *Promptuarium musicum* and the troubled context of the collection's creation: *Confessions, Anthologized: Heartbreak, Vandalism, and the Promptuarii musici (Strasbourg, 1611-13 and 1617)*.

Saturday morning (August 1st) accented Luython's works for organ. Markus Grassl (Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Wien), in his paper Luythons *Instrumentalmusik im Kontext*, critically assessed the state of our knowledge of the composer's instrumental music and drew attention to the need for revising the list of works in this section of the composer's oeuvre, which is replete with questionable attributions. Luc Ponet's paper (Leuven University) *In organis et*

in discantu. The basics of a multi-cultural European organ in the early 17th century presented the period's sonic-aesthetic ideal of an organ. Martin Kirnbauer (Schola Cantorum Basiliensis / Fachhochschule Nordwestschweiz) discussed the composer's chromatic harpsichord, mentioned copiously in the literature, which he rid of its exceptionalist and esoteric labels, as more instruments like this one existed in Luython's time and were used for the purposes of practical music-making (*Carl Luython and the "Clavicymbalum Vniuersale, seu perfectum" – Finding a Historical and Musical Context*). The concluding video-presentation of a modern reconstruction of Luython's clavicembalo, presented by Winfried Dahlke (Organeum Weener), created especially for the occasion, was a striking confirmation of what had been uttered previously, practically introducing the disparate chromatic possibilities of the instrument.

Conference proceedings were framed by an accompanying programme, which included a concert by the Dyškanti vocal ensemble, led by their musical director Martin Horyna (July 30th) and a recital by the St Vitus dome organist Josef Kšica (August 1st). The entire event was then symbolically concluded with Sunday Mass in the Cathedral of St Vitus, accompanied by Luython's liturgical music, once again presented by the Dyškanti ensemble.

The Luython symposium brought to the surface many new and valuable observations about the composer's work. Unexplored areas of knowledge were identified, and, most importantly, the need was emphasised to reexamine attributions of authorship partially based on unfounded claims in older literature. All the papers presented will be published in the *Clavibus unitis* journal. However, it is also apparent that the time has come to create a more extensive monograph on this overlooked and underappreciated composer. This monograph is sure to become one of the great challenges of the Musica Rudolphina research centre.

CZECH MUSIC EVERY DAY

EVENTS LIVE AND ONLINE

IN THE AUTUMN OF 2020

As the overview that follows makes clear, the autumn of 2020 was considerably poorer in musical events than previous years, for obvious reasons. Even so, however, several new pieces were performed for listeners to enjoy either live or online. The autumn saw the stable progress of the Berg Orchestra's "Music for Sirens" project, which continued presenting micro-concerts each first Wednesday of the month to accompany the nation-wide siren tests. The composers on these three occasions were Jakub Rataj, Ondřej Štochl, and Jonáš Starý. All of these premieres, however, took the form of live streamed events, without the presence of a live audience. One of the last events at which listeners and performers inhabited the same musical space was a concert aptly devoted to the linking of music and space. During an evening titled "Space in Space", Prague's Convent of St Agnes resounded with three compositions by pedagogues at the composition department of Prague's Academy of Performing Arts (AMU), each exploring in a different way the spatial aspects of sounds through the use of a mobile acousmonium created at AMU as part of the Soundspace/Spacesound research project. In contrast to classic acousmatic works, the sound emanating from the speakers was brought together with performances by live performers – and also, of course, with the specific and natural sonic properties of the high ceilings and ancient stone walls of St Agnes' Convent.

30 September 2020, Convent of St Agnes, Prague. Space in Space. **Slavomír Hořinka: Murmurings (world premiere)**. Roman Zabelov – bayan, Slavomír Hořinka – fixed media. **Michal Rataj: Cellacumata (world premiere)**. Tomáš Jamník – violoncello, Michal Rataj – live electronics. **Jan Trojan: Infinitesimal Miracles (world premiere)**. Jiří Hodina – voice, Jan Jirucha – trombone.

7 October 2020, live video stream from Duncan Centre, Prague. Music for Sirens... micro-concerts with emergency siren test. **Attention! for 3 saxophonists, 3 megaphones and 2 performers (world premiere)**. **Concept / music: Jakub Rataj**. Jakub Rataj – megaphones, Shahab Tolouie – megaphone, voice, Miroslav Tóth, Michael Jermář, Roman Fojtíček – alto saxophones.

10 October 2020, Chateau Mikulov. Lednice|Valtice Music Festival. **Jan Rokyta: Wallachian Sonnets for voice and chamber ensemble (world premiere)**. Klára Blažková – voice, Ensemble FLAIR.

20 October 2020, live stream from the Corpus Christi Chapel of the Palacký University Art Centre, Olomouc. MusicOlomouc. **Marek Kepř: V zásněží úpytu motýli nedokvétají (akustický chVějíř – 2) (world premiere)**. Marek Kepř – piano. **Pavel Zlámal: No Need to Follow the Snowman's Thoughts (world premiere)**. Lichtzwang (Pavel Zlámal – clarinet, Jan Přibil – trumpet, Jiří Fajkus – violoncello).

4 November 2020, 11:55am, live video stream from the Jan Deyl Conservatory, Prague. Music for Sirens... micro-concerts with emergency siren test. **Euterpe (world premiere)**. **Concept / music: Jonáš Starý**. Anna Romanovská Fliegerová – violin, Helena Vovsová – viola, Helena Velická – violoncello, Štěpán Hon – percussion.

2 December 2020, 11:55am live video stream from Fortna, St. Benedict Church, Prague. Music for Sirens... micro-concerts with emergency siren test. **Sotto Voce (world premiere)**. **Concept / music: Ondřej Štochl**. Barbora Šimůnková – French horn, Adam Honzírek – double bass, Jan Tuláček – guitar.

HUMANISTS IN RENAISSANCE BOHEMIA AND MUSIC III

KAŠPAR CROPACIUS (1539–1580)

The Poet Who Inspired Composers

In this third instalment of Marta Vaculínová and Petr Daněk's series on the role of music and poetry in Renaissance Bohemia, we explore the life of the poet laureate Jan Cropacius.

Music and poetry have had a closer relationship since antiquity. It is no coincidence that Latin uses the same verb (*cantare*) for both singing and poetic activity. However, we have many more surviving poems from antiquity and early modernity than we do notated music. If we compare the enormous production of printed Latin occasional poetry in Bohemia in the 16th and early 17th century with the few surviving notated prints made in the same area, we would easily be misled into believing that music was a marginal affair amongst the community of educated, humanist Czechs. The reality is such, however, that many occasional poems were written as texts for religious and secular pieces of music. Only rarely does notation appear in the surviving occasional prints. Sometimes, the title of the poem included a note on its musical setting, but in most cases, we simply do not know whether the poems (particularly occasional ones) also had melodies. We know of a few poets that were also composers. This generally applies to figures from the sphere of the universities and Latin schools (e.g. Jiří Carolides and Jan Campanus, of whom we wrote in the previous instalments of this series). Others, and this mostly concerns the poets laureate, who had a privileged position in the intellectual hierarchy, as laureation created a symbolic link to the imperial or regal court, wrote texts for professional musicians and court orchestras. Professional musicians usually adopted texts without listing the author, even when the author was well known.

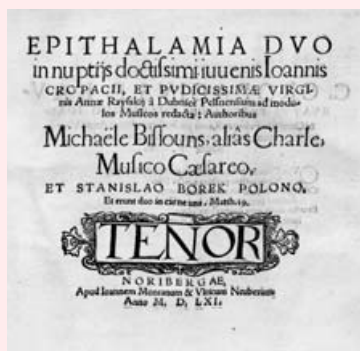
Cropacius and Cropatius

In our series on the relationship of humanism and music in Bohemia, we have already encountered the surname Cropatius (Kropáč) once (see CMQ 2/2020). In that case, it concerned the remarkable travelling poet and composer Jiří (Georgius) Cropatius, who managed to establish himself in a number of places at the peak of the Renaissance, including Italy and the Holy Land. In this text, we will focus on his namesake, the poet Kašpar Cropacius. Though they both lived at the same time, there is probably no bloodline relation between them.

Kašpar Cropacius was born in Plzeň in 1539 to the citizen and councillor Václav Kropáč and Voršila, daughter of the printer Jan Mantual Fencl. He was educated at the Latin school in Plzeň, after which he continued his studies first in Zwickau in Saxony, and, after a short break spent in Prague, at the university in Vienna. His poetic gifts became apparent in Vienna, and he received the title of poet laureate in 1560. That same year, he and his brother were ennobled with the predicate “z Kozince” (of Kozinec). He returned to Plzeň in 1563 and married a wealthy widow, Magdaléna of Brodčejovice. He managed the family estate and became a member of the city council. He continued to apply himself to poetry in his free time. During a period of heightened religious conflict in Plzeň, he, as a non-Catholic, was forced to leave the city. He moved to the town of Stříbro near the end of his life

¹ Centre for Classical Studies at the Institute of Philosophy, Czech Academy of Sciences

² Academy of Performing Arts, Bratislava



Title page of the tenor print of wedding motets Epithalamia duo in nuptiis doctissimi iuuenis Ioannis Crocaciai, Nuremberg, Johannes Montanus, 1561



An extract of the alto part of Michael Des Buissons' composition on a text by Kašpar Cropacius



The text of Kašpar Cropacius' wedding song dedicated to his brother Jan

and is also buried there. He died in Plzeň on the 13th of January 1580.

Kašpar Cropacius and Music

Kašpar Cropacius doubtless received an elementary musical education as a young man. For students at the Latin schools, "musica" – the singing of songs and psalms – was part of their timetable, and their singing, directed by the cantor, also formed part of liturgical services and other occasions (city council meetings, wedding receptions, christenings, etc.). They sung both chants and polyphony, but mentions of instrumental music are scarce. Poems by the authors of antiquity were often set (or provided with supporting music) for these occasions, in order to facilitate the students' knowledge of classical metres.

Music was also practiced at universities, where musical theory formed part of lectures in mathematics. In addition to his schooling (of which we know almost nothing), another crucial moment for Kašpar Cropacius was his encounter with Paulus Melissus (also known as Paul Schede), with whom he studied in the late 1550s in Zwickau. They also met later in both Vienna and Prague. Melissus, who also had a short career as a cantor, also set his own texts and befriended important musicians, including Orlande de Lassus. In his poem to Tomáš Mitis, *De P. Melisso Schedio, eiusque Poematis et harmoniis Musicis* (*On Paul Melissus Schedius and his Poems and Musical Compositions*), Cropacius later reminisces on their time in Zwickau and Vienna. In addition to Melissus' poetic gifts, he also expounds on the beauty of his friend's singing voice and praises him as a capable musician. Melissus repaid Cropacius through a posthumous edition of his collected poems. The title of some of these poems states that they were set to music. Cropacius' surviving texts for musical setting

are classic manifestations of secular occasional poetry: panegyrics, epithalami, and epicedia.

Music in the Life of Renaissance Society

The life of people in the 16th century was accompanied by music at every significant occasion. Most often, it related to ecclesiastical and spiritual life, but secular music also played an important part, e.g. in the form of occasional pieces performed during wedding festivities. Court musical production represents a particular phenomenon. The texts used included a considerable portion of panegyric character. While only few occasional musical pieces from the city or court survived, and most often without notation, panegyrics aimed at the members of the ruling families were sometimes published in print along with the notation, or else were transformed into representative artistic renditions – this copy was usually intended directly for the recipient of the piece.

Cropacius' Text for a Motet by the Court Composer Jacobus Vaet

The first direct sources on Cropacius and music or musicians come from his stay in Vienna. He was inscribed at the university there on the 14th of April 1559 along with Jan Stašek of Dubnice, with whom he had previously studied in both Míšeň and Zwickau. He soon asserted himself through his poetic gifts, publicly reciting his poems on academic grounds and contributing to various occasional anthologies printed for the Viennese academy by Rafael Hofhalter. He was represented in these next to poet laureates such as Veit Jacobaeus.

The printer Hofhalter is also connected to the first musical print related to Kašpar Cropacius: a notated



A veduta of Plzeň, 1602, Jan Willenberg

print containing a six-part motet by Jacobus Vaet (1539–1567), Kapellmeister to King of Bohemia and Archduke of Austria Maximilian II., to whom it was also dedicated. The surviving copy is printed on a folio made of quality parchment, decorated with colour and gilding. The dedication to king Maximilian is followed by a poem by Veit Jacobaeus which extols Maximilian as a friend of music. Under the gilded and coloured coats of arms of Austria and the Kingdom of Bohemia are Veit Jacobaeus's elegiac couplets (signed with the initials V. I. P.) and a couplet by Kašpar Cropacius (signed only by the initials G. C. P.).

A ruler born to the famous Austrian house
Who bears in his noble hand the Bohemian sceptre,
Accepts by right tributes for his courage,
As the lion bows his head in servitude.

Vaet's motet is in six parts, as is made clear by data printed after the introductory poems. The four central voices – Superius, Tenor, Contratenor, and Bassus – are arranged in blocks under one another, as was then common in the "Chorbuch" conception. The fifth and six voices are conceived as a puzzle and a humanist game: they are printed together in a part titled Canon, placed in a particular spot between two symbols: a key, symbolising St Peter, and a sword, relating to St Paul.

Cropacius' Text to Christian Hollander's Motet *Nobile virtutum culmen*

Another example of Cropacius' collaboration with musicians is the text of the motet *Nobile virtutum culmen* (*Noble Culmination of Virtues*) for Christian Hollander (ca. 1510/15 to 1589), a member of the court orchestra of Ferdinand I. The piece was probably composed for the occasion of the coronation of Maximilian II as King of Hungary. The piece was printed in the first edition of a collection titled *Novus Thesaurus Musicus*, compiled by Pietro Giovannelli. The text in this edition differs in some details from the form we know from Melissus'

edition of Cropacius' *Pomata*, where it is listed under the title *Ad Maximilianum II. Rom. Hung. et Bohemiae regem. Modulis musicis* (*To Maximilian II, King of Rome, Hungary, and Bohemia, Composed for Music*). In the version set to music, the less common Latin words are replaced by words more generally understood and easier to pronounce, which could have been a change made to accommodate the singers.

The first period of Cropacius' documented contacts with music involves the university in Vienna and the city's court environment. Neither laureation nor ennoblement helped the poet in receiving a position in courtly service or a professorship at one of the universities, as was the case of other crowned poets of his time. He visited Vienna until 1563 and is listed as an author in occasional speeches published by the university. After that year, however, he definitively returned to Bohemia and married the widow of Vincenc Rajský of Dubnice in his home town of Plzeň. He spent the rest of his life as a wealthy townsman, administering the estate of the Rajský family.

Even after his return from Vienna, Cropacius continued composing verse for occasional pieces of music. This is attested to by the text of an epicedium by the Supreme Burgrave of the Kingdom of Bohemia, Jan Popel the Younger of Lobkovice (died 12 April 1570), titled *Naenia in funere Ioannis Lobkovizii, supremi purgravii Pragensis, ad modulus musicos redacta*. That same June, Cropacius celebrated the arrival of Maximilian II and his wife in Plzeň with a poem. From the 1570s onward, we have no further proof of Cropacius' collaboration with musicians.

Epithalamia for Jan Cropacius' Wedding

In 1561, Kašpar Cropacius printed an occasional collection for the wedding of his brother Jan Cropacius with Anna Rajská of Dubnice in Nuremberg, with the printers Montano and Neuber. It contains two motets composed by Michael Des Buissons (died



A print of Christian Hollander's composition *Nobile virtutum culmen*, written to commemorate the coronation of Maximilian II, setting a text by Kašpar Cropacius



Title page of Kašpar Cropacius' posthumous collection *Poemata*, Nuremberg, 1591

ca 1570), active in the court orchestra of Ferdinand I at the time, setting poems by Cropacius himself and the Pole Stanisław Borek. The only specimen of the epithalamia dedicated to Kašpar's brother Jan survives in the Bavarian State Library in Munich. The whole is composed of five part-books, designated as Discantus, Vagans, Altus, Tenor, and Bassus. The tenor book is furnished with a title page and a full title:

Epithalamia duo in nuptiis doctissimi iuvenis Ioannis Cropacii, et pudicissimae virginis Annae Rayskii a Dubnice Pelsinensium ad modulos Musicos redacta: Authoribus Michaele Bissouns, alias Charle, Musico Caesareo, et Stanislao Borek Polono, Noribergae Apud Ioannem Montanum & Ulricum Neuberum Anno MDLXI (Two Epithalamia for the Wedding of the Most Educated Youth Jan Cropacius and the most Virtuous Virgin Anna Rayská of Dubnice, Set to Music by Michel De Buissons or Charle, Imperial Musician, and the Pole Stanislaw Borek, in Nuremberg by Berg and Ulrich Neuber in the Year 1561)

The initiator and commissioner of the notated print was doubtless Kašpar Cropacius, already an ennobled poet laureate at the time. He was often in Vienna in this period and contracted the composer and singer in the court orchestra Michael Des Buissons to compose the music. Buissons set Cropacius' epithalamion and then another, whose author is signed "Stanislaus Borek Polonus" – we have not been successful in identifying him yet.

Cropacius' older brother Jan studied in Wittenberg and was later active in Plzeň as a teacher. He was ennobled along with his brother. His wife Anna was the daughter of Vincenc Rajský of Dubnice. The Cropacius family was linked to the Rajskýs by other marriages too – Kašpar's sister Helena married Anna's brother, Jan Vincenc, and Kašpar Cropacius himself married Magdaléna of Brodčovice in 1564. She was the widow of Vincenc Rajský of Dubnice, thus making Cropacius the step-father of his sister-in-law.

Epithalamia with Musical Accompaniment

As mentioned above, epithalamia with musical accompaniment were common, but there are few surviving specimens in the Czech environment, most of which come from later periods. For instance, a leading representative of Prague's university, Petr Codicillus, composed a piece for five voices in the early 1570s on the occasion of the wedding of the doctor Adam Lehner of Kouba with Dorotka, daughter of Sixtus of Ottersdorf, and a four-voice piece for the marriage of Kašpar Menšík Prachatický. A setting of an epithalamion by Jiří Molitor was also published in 1586 by the Prague-based printer Jiří Nigrin of Nigropont on the occasion of the marriage of Henricus of Frankenstein to Anna Hungerin. That same year, another Prague printer, Michael Peterle,

printed a five-part composition by the same author on the occasion of the wedding of Jan Václav Popel of Lobkovice.

The Printer Johann Berg, or, Montanus

It is worth mentioning the printer responsible for the epithalamia for Jiří Cropacius. Johann vom Berg, or Montanus (died 1563), a native of Ghent, published – on his own at first, later in collaboration with Ulrich Neuber – a number of Czech works. This work was continued after his death by his widow Katharina, remarried as Gerlach. Montanus' publishing programme was predominantly Lutheran (one of his key authors was Luther's former secretary, Veit Dietrich, and also Luther's first biographer, Johann Mathesius of Jáchymov).

In addition to religious literature, Berg, himself an excellent singer, also successfully printed music. He doubtless had both personal and commercial contacts in Bohemia. He had collaborated since before 1550 with the editor of polyphonic music Caspar Brusch (1518–1559) from Horní Slavkov. Of the Czech prints from Montanus' press, we must mention the publication of the Latin translation of the works of Hus and his Czech Postils, of the musical works, the Brethren songbook of Michael Weiss. Montanus' successors later also published Czech musical anthologies assembled by the Cheb-based teacher Clemens Stephani, or a collection of canons dedicated to Vilém of Rožmberk, and of the non-musical prints, the Latin works of Prokop Lupáč and Matouš Collinus.

Search, Find, Raise, and Multiply!

The pieces created for Jan Cropacius' wedding are printed in white mensural notation with few errors, as was the standard at the Nuremberg printers. The first epithalamium is interesting in that the voice designated as Vagans contains only a short, ten-note motif. The word "canon" is attached to this motif, however, meaning the section is to be repeated. Its use and manner of repetition is suggested by short texts placed above and below the staff: "Quaere & invenies. Crescite & multiplicamini."

We must understand all of this as a humanist game, inviting the singers to try and place this motif into the counterpoint of the remaining voices. *Quaere et invenies* instructs users to "search for and find" a way of using this voice in the piece. *Crescite et multiplicamini* suggests we should try "raising and multiplying", referring to the duration of the individual notes. If the vocalists sight-read this piece, attempts at incorporating the Vagans voice would doubtless cause much merriment among those present, as the instructions are really highly general.

Texts by Kašpar Cropacius without Surviving Musical Settings

We'll also find other poems in Cropacius' estate that have a relationship to music and which cannot be dated precisely. *In systemata Sebastiani Organici* concerns an unspecified organist. The content suggests it might have introduced a published volume of music. Another original text with a relation to music for which we find no comparison in Czech or international Latin humanist poetry is found in the *Poemata* collection. It is structured following four voices, wherein their designation as *Suprema – Acuta – Media – Gravis* arises from the tradition of music-theory literature, represented in Central Europe by the popular guidebook *Muscorum libri quattuor* by Václav Philomates, created and first published in Vienna. Cropacius' text was probably not intended to be set to music, functioning instead as an educational piece of wordplay intended for declamation.

Also remarkable is Cropacius' poetic praise of music. We often find this type of poetry in musical prints and manuscripts. Czech authors of such poetic eulogies include Tomáš Mitis, Clemens Stephani, and Jakub Srnovec of Varvažov. In the case of Cropacius, however, this was no mere praise of music – Cropacius also used elegiac couplets to capture preparations for the celebrations in honour of Emperor Ferdinand I and his son Maximilian, which he took part in himself. Already in its opening, the poem suggests inspiration with the ancient poet Ovid, who similarly brings to mind the Thracian singer Orpheus in his *Epistulae ex Ponto*. The motif of the mythical ancient singers Orpheus and Arion is characteristic for eulogies to music in early modernity. Cropacius venerates the musicians of Ferdinand's and Maximilian's orchestras, comparing them to their ancient predecessors.

In Praise of Music (excerpt)

*When Orpheus walked through the forest with his song,
Even rocks were moved by his sweet singing voice.
Equally so, music with its pleasant sound
May soften a mind harder than a mountain.
With a consonance of tones, Arion charmed the dolphins,
Capturing their voiceless hearts.
Music's luscious sounds touch gods and men
and are just as dear to wild beasts.
Whoever you are, who silently worry and despair,
music will bring sweet comfort to your torments.*

This topic is elaborated on in detail in the publication *Cropaciana. Carmina Caspari Cropacii modulis musicis aptata 1560–1562*, Petr Daněk, Marta Vaculínová (eds.), which also contains editions of all related musical materials and texts.

Constructing the Sound of Devils: Dialectical Interactions between Culture, History, and the Construction of the Czech Vozembouch

The Czech instrument known as the vozembouch, which literally translates as “against-the-ground-beater”, is a unique percussion instrument standing aside somewhat divided from most folk music traditions. In this extended study, American scholar William Connor introduces us to the history and cultural baggage associated with the vozembouch.

The dialectical interactions that take place between musical instruments and the arenas in which they are built and played have long been the subject of academic discussion. Racy clearly shows that instruments are both adaptive (“organic entities that change in response to different ecological and aesthetic realities [over time]”¹) and idiosyncratic (stable entities that “may be borrowed and accepted as physical and acoustical ‘packages’”²), interacting “dialectically with surrounding physical and cultural realities, and as such, they perpetually negotiate or renegotiate their roles, physical structures, performance modes, sound ideals, and symbolic meanings.”³

One aspect common to both the adaptive and idiosyncratic models is the role of the instrument’s construction. Referring to artisans, Gell argues that creators of works and objects instill their wares with “intentionalities” that are manifestations of expectations and values constructed through the agency the artist exercises during the creative process.⁴ The same can be said of musical instrument builders. Stobart points out that “sometimes highly effective feedback mechanisms exist between [players and makers] where innovations in [musical instrument] construction both enable and respond to

shifting performance possibilities and expectations.”⁵ Makers, through the construction of their instruments, engage material, social, and cultural realms,⁶ realms in which the players, members of their musical community, and the instruments themselves develop and interact.

Musical instruments, then, are also decidedly intertwined dialectically with these realms and “can embody a variety of traits through which they may take on cultural and social importance, such as market value and status, constructing ethnic identity, strong historical associations, and their influence on genre performance preferences or constraints,”⁷ and an instrument’s design, material constituents, and resultant aesthetics merge to act as a catalyst to construct, storage for, and means to develop these relations.

This paper is intended to embrace this notion by presenting research that focuses closely on the construction of a musical instrument in order to unveil aspects of dialectical interactions that may not be as apparent when taking a research approach that highlights other methodologies. For this discussion, I have chosen a case study in which I look at the construction of the Czech *vozembouch* to show that the sensibilities and

intentionalities of the makers and players are paralleled simultaneously in the variation of models and the consistency of construction staples of the instrument, and, furthermore, that these construction traits and their evolution generate, develop, and perpetuate the “Czechness” of the instrument through iconography, timbre, usage, heritage, and cultural associations.

My first encounter with *vozembouchy* (pl.) was in 1996 at a flea market in Berlin’s Tiergarten. I noticed a unique-looking stick zither in a state of disrepair with percussion attached to it and a glaring, semi-comical devil head atop the instrument. I asked the vendor what it was, and he did not seem to know. He merely said he thought it was a curious item and had just received it from another vendor to resell. All he knew about it was that it was older, but of an undetermined age.

I saw two more of these instruments at the same market: the second was completely broken in half, being sold for decorative purposes because of the wooden devil head carved on one end; the third was more intact than the first two, but seemed to be made with more recently acquired materials and was perhaps mass-produced. These subsequent two vendors also did not know the name of the instrument, although one guessed it was called a *Teufelschläger* (devil stick). However, the final vendor was certain it was a Czech instrument.

Years later, after I had moved to the UK and was playing percussion in a Celtic/Medieval group that included two musicians from the Czech Republic, I inquired about it. I described the instrument I had seen in as much as detail as I could remember. Immediately both Czech bandmates recognized it, one of them saying, “That’s an old Czech instrument called a *vozembouch*!”

The Czech word “*vozembouch*” means “to hit against the ground” and is descriptive of the main performance technique applied to the instrument. Generally speaking, contemporary *vozembouchy* are made using a long central stick approximately 3 to 4 feet in length, include a resonator of some sort, usually a small drum or *riq* (drum with jingles), cymbals and/or jingles, bells, and rattles of various sorts, and often a string or set of strings is attached at the bottom and run over the resonating body then connected to a tension-setting device (usually a tuning peg of some sort) near the top. Furthermore, in almost all cases, the instrument bears a wooden head at the top, most often a devil head.

Vozembouch is the primary name used for the instrument in western Bohemian areas as I encountered it during my fourteen months in the Czech Republic, but according to Kunz,⁸ it has several names: *Ozembouch* or *Ozembuch* and

sometimes *Zembuch* in central Moravian areas; and *Bambus*, *Bumbus*, *Boomba*, or *Rimbus* farther east and in Slovakian areas. It also takes on other, similar forms or is simply transplanted to adjacent areas, like the related Polish/Kashubian *Diabelskie skrzypce* and, as mentioned, the German *Teufelschläger* (Devil Stick), *Teufelgeige* (Devil Fiddle), or *Poispil*.

The instrument even appears as far away as North America as a Stump Fiddle or Devil’s Fiddle, mostly in Northern Midwestern states or Southern border states where there are notable contingencies of Western Slavic communities, but they are also occasionally found in parts of the Southern Appalachian Mountains where I grew up, as well. The instrument has been likened to the folk version of a *tromba marina*.⁹

With so many versions and names for the same or similar instruments, what makes the *vozembouch* decidedly Czech to those within its circles of engagement? Many or all of the instruments mentioned above possess the same staple elements of a central stick, jingles, and strings or similar features, such as long springs, and are regularly associated with devils on some level. Yet the *vozembouch*, which is common but not necessarily a “core” folk instrument in the Czech Republic, seems to be distinguished instantly from other incarnations of this instrument by Western Slavs, and furthermore it is recognized specifically as being Czech. Is it a visual association? The sound the instrument makes? The performance contexts in which the *vozembouch* has appeared? Or something entirely different and/or a combination of these associations? By looking more closely at the ways in which the *vozembouch* has been and is being constructed, we may find clues to possible answers and potentially unravel the ways in which these connections have developed, evolved, and been maintained or altered.

What goes into constructing a *vozembouch*, then? Today’s *vozembouchy* comprise such a wide variety of designs and construction techniques that it is difficult to specify any exact traits related to their construction, but perhaps this lack of specific design and building techniques can be taken as a construction trait in its own right. *Vozembouchy* are considered to be folk instruments by many scholars, players, and makers (although not all, with Tyllner arguing that the instrument was used in non-folk contexts primarily until the end of the 19th century¹⁰), in part because *vozembouchy* are not standardized on a major level, nor are they mass-produced. Manufactured models can be purchased, but more commonly, players build their own *vozembouch*.

During my research in the Czech Republic in the fall of 2014 and spring of 2015, I interviewed a number

of players and makers, and when I asked for their opinions on performing with a manufactured vozembouch, all but one interviewee stated that they felt it was “not the Czech way” or that a player could not have the “connection” needed with their vozembouch to play “properly.”¹¹ One performer, Jaroslav Reisig, owns and uses a mass-produced instrument, stating it is sturdier than one he could build himself, and therefore he felt more confident using a factory-built vozembouch when playing gigs that required extended duration of performance time,¹² but he also owned a vozembouch he had built himself, which was his preferred instrument. Less than three months after my interview with him, Reisig sent me a photograph of a vozembouch he had recently made, stating it was “better” and “stronger” (embracing a more streamlined design), and that he intended to use it professionally.¹³

I have found this to be case almost unanimously: players prefer vozembouchy built individually, most often by the player, and almost always specifically for the performer in question. I have encountered a range of players on a broad spectrum of amateur-professional engagement, from occasional performers playing in local impromptu bands or simply playing the vozembouch as a hobby at home or on special occasions, to professional performers who play regularly with corporate-function bands or similar professional groups, performing at weddings, large folk music festivals, or within the tourist industry.

Out of over 100 performances I have witnessed live or on film, not once have I seen a mass-produced vozembouch played (with one exception, where it was slightly altered by the performer). Several interviewees¹⁴ claimed that manufactured models were targeted for sale to tourists. However, traveling through Praha, Brno, Pardubice, Hradec Králové, and other cities and towns as a tourist, I did not encounter vozembouchy as being a readily available commodity, even in standard musical instrument stores. In fact, I have encountered only one company (Kalouda a synové, s.r.o.) who seem to be mass-producing vozembouchy, and I found that they sell their wares primarily online or via music shops as special orders.

Furthermore, Kalouda and Sons have reduced their number of models offered online from five (two small vozembouchy intended for very young players, a small stream-lined model with no extra noisemakers, a mid-sized simple model with one string for players looking for a lighter instrument with fewer features, and a larger, slightly heavier model with the largest amount of jingles, three strings, and larger cymbals) to simply offering the largest vozembouch through most vendors. I have not spoken with the manufacturer, but an explanation for the reduction in models offered



Tata Bojs rock band with a vozembouch on stage

could be related to sales and demand, reflecting the fact that the smaller, less intricate versions were not as popular or profitable.

The lack of mass-produced vozembouchy is accompanied by a lack of uniformity in design. With individual players making their own instruments, vozembouchy designs are as numerous as there are players. The diversity of instrument styles, however, does not lead to a great diversity in the ways these instruments are seen as being Czech. On the contrary, the uniqueness of each vozembouch supports the Czech associations, according to Viktor Slavík, a vozembouch maker and player based in Prague.

Slavík did not elaborate when asked about these associations, but was quick to point out that an “authentic” Czech vozembouch was made by the person intending to play it, and the fact that they made it is exhibited in the ways that a vozembouch is personalised through its design and construction materials. The importance of a player building their own vozembouch was also lauded by Reisig, who was reluctant to be interviewed by me, even with the help of translators, until I mentioned that, in part, I wanted to get advice from him about building my own vozembouchy. The fact that I was planning on building my own instrument seemed to be Slavík’s greatest concern, and Reisig’s attitude towards discussing vozembouchy with me changed from reserved to excited once it was made clear that I was in the process of building my own vozembouchy to play, and not just as part of my research.

The high value that vozembouch players place on the homemade nature of their instrument seems to have a strong impact on the construction of the instrument. Honza Filipis, a Czech folk music specialist based in Nový Bydžov, in the east of Bohemia, suggested that part of this mentality is rooted in historical associations with Czech soldiers making their own vozembouchy



Reisig's mass-produced vozembouch

during the two world wars. Although the Czech portion of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Czechoslovak state established in 1918 were among the most advanced economies in Europe at the time, supplying the resources needed to support, or even actively avoid, wartime activities is demanding and would necessarily be reflected in the ways in which any culture engages material resource management and the subsequent approach to construction of civilian products, especially those deemed less paramount during wartime.¹⁵

Štěpán Honc, a Czech musician and historical musicologist, adds to this discussion that Czech culture highly values innovation and improvising, as well as self-instigated and completed projects, both in relation to vozembouch making and in a broader, general sense.¹⁶ He recalled popular animated children's television programs (*Pat a Mat*, for example) that featured home improvement stories, architectural and construction themes, and a particular morality depicted within these shows that highlighted a sense of accomplishment and achievement being associated with positive and model social standing.

This is not to say, of course, that a positive light shed on completing a task or self-motivated improvement projects are specifically or inherently Czech, but it does point out the value Czech producers of children's television may have placed on such activities and how they are embraced. In turn, then, there are potentially deeper, more tangible associations with designing, building, and completing a project, such as making a vozembouch, that are seen as upholding "good Czech values" and which partially inform the values placed on vozembouch construction and subculture.

Sennett, in his book on craftsmanship, relates that a sense of quality is highly subjective and may be derived from a range of traits as they are perceived by the person evaluating an artisan's work,¹⁷ in this case a vozembouch. For Slavík and Reisig, its homemade nature and the innovations reflecting the fact that the maker is also a player (for example, material choices that are made in order to create a lighter instrument for longer performances), then, would not only represent quality but also how "Czech" the instrument is and therefore how "authentic."

This sense of authenticity can be highlighted as a means by which the construction of a vozembouch becomes Czech. Bigenho defines several types of ways in which concepts of authenticity are constructed,¹⁸ citing among others experiential authenticity (related to personal encounters) and cultural-historical authenticity (encompassing concepts of ethnicity and nationality, as well as associations with specific eras). Slavík and Reisig seem to inform their experiential constructions of authenticity through sensibilities related to vozembouch construction that is in turn derived and supported by culturally and historically informed notions of what it is to be "Czech", instilling or removing from the design of vozembouchy inherent Czech qualities.

Furthermore, authenticity relates directly to concepts of heritage,¹⁹ and Filipis connects self-built vozembouchy using materials at hand directly to this.²⁰ He recalled that during the Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia, constructing one's own vozembouch was one of the ways in which Czech people could embrace their heritage and even protest governmental regulation of arts and humanities without representing a relevant threat to the USSR's communist/socialist sensibilities; therefore folk music and the construction of folk music instruments thrived.

Filipis claims this encouraged Czech people to engage with folk music on a semi-vigorous basis. In part, Filipis says, this engagement followed the release of several albums of music by Jaroslav Krček. Krček (b. 1939) is a Czech composer, arranger, and performer who has released over sixty albums on the Supraphon label, conducting and playing compositions and interpretations of Czech folk melodies and medieval songs with his project *Musica Bohemica*, which he formed in 1975. The LPs contain his arrangements and performances of Czech songs performed on indigenous and period instruments.

In the liner notes to the 1981 release *Vánoční zpěvy z doby husitské* (*Christmas Songs from Hussite Times*), Krček states that he considers his work a new perspective on folk and medieval music, including a major focus on Czech and Western Slavic music from

a range of historical eras. As a result, there is less fully documented information about the source music as would allow for more historically accurate recreation of the material.²¹

His approach to performing and composing historically influenced music, as described by Krček himself, partially parallels his approach to experimental composition (primarily electronic works, but also orchestra and chamber pieces) and focuses on utilising unique timbres.²² His engagement with this body of historically derived works includes the use of instrumentation that evokes the time periods from which the music is informed and often provides these unique sounds. Krček says he feels this merger of old and new musical approaches, which includes building instruments to facilitate the realisation of his pieces, is a distinctly Czech approach.²³

In an interview with *Harmonie Online*'s Marie Kulijevyčová,²⁴ Krček says he was not always able to obtain the instruments he wanted for *Musica Bohemica*. He would use instruments borrowed from museums, if available, but many of these were not performance-ready, often being fragile and in various levels of disrepair. Instead, he commissioned makers to build them or he built them himself, working regularly with wood craftsman and luthier Vladimír Dufek.

Filips feels that Krček gained some of his popularity and appreciation through his home-built instrumentation, suggesting that an increased level of perceived authenticity of his music came from his decision to make and use certain folk instruments deemed to be Czech, such as the *famfrnoch* (another percussion instrument played commonly in Czech folk music) and the *vozembouch*.²⁵

One *vozembouch* construction design manifestation that Krček introduced to Czech culture was the "tabletop *vozembouch*" (also called *semtambouch* by music critic Lubomír Fendrych²⁶ – "o-zem-bouch" means "against-the-ground-striked, whereas "sem-tam-bouch" means "there-and-back-strike"). According to Krček,²⁷ standard sizes of *vozembouch* (meaning instruments intended to be played while standing, therefore approximately one to two meters in height) were too big for certain common performance situations. He proposed that a much smaller model (approximately half a meter in height or less) would suit travellers, and that performances at smaller, impromptu folk music sessions would benefit from having a smaller, highly portable version of the *vozembouch*.

Krček further surmised that these smaller *vozembouchy* would not be played by stamping them on the ground, as a more traditional standing performance technique would dictate,



Jaroslav Krček's tabletop vozembouchy

but rather by stamping on a tabletop or chair, within reach of a seated player. Seated playing of "traditional-sized" *vozembouchy* in less formal or more rigorous performance settings seems to be a common technique, but my research has not shown that Krček's tabletop instruments have gained the same popularity that larger, "standard" *vozembouch* enjoy.

Still, according to Filipis,²⁸ these tabletop *vozembouchy* are recognized as being Czech just the same as "full-sized" designs. Many construction factors align when comparing tabletop *vozembouchy* and full-sized models, so it is not surprising that they are regarded as being the same or similar instruments from the same culture. Although the ergonomically informed placement of battery and strings on tabletop *vozembouchy* are adjusted for their height and expected performance techniques, the staples of the design remain the same, and they still feature the resonators, strings, bells, jingles, cymbals, and even the bottom protection on the stamping end, and wooden heads on the top. Furthermore, it appears that self-built *vozembouchy* have increased the ways in which Krček's musical efforts support his call to embrace folk music as a means to maintain and develop Czech cultural heritage.²⁹

In a manner of speaking, then, Krček bridges folk traditions with classical mentalities and brings forth the use and the self-built nature of folk instruments to a platform valued as being upper class, acceptable to the Soviet government of the time, and propelling the trend of using folk music and folk instruments in a classical context embraced by many Czech composers. Dvořák, Smetana, and Janáček, among others, have had considerable impact on Western



Amateur folk musicians with accordion and vozembouch

concert music, building what has been seen as a legacy of “Czech music,”³⁰ as well as assisting in establishing various class associations and traits within and outside of Czech social circles.³¹

Krček suggests indirectly that some of his incentive for arranging and performing Czech folk music-based material was to retain the Czech musical traditions in the face of Soviet occupation and oppression.³² The USSR encouraged the Czech people to create works that were for and about the Czech people (and the Soviet government), but this activity was heavily regulated and it was also encouraged to make creative efforts that perpetuated “forward motion” culturally and socially speaking.³³

Krček made Czech folk-song arrangements that contained elements of Western classical music to appeal to the Soviet sense of the upper or educated class while simultaneously appealing to Czech classical music enthusiasts and retaining as much Czech folk/medieval song material as possible. Thus, Krček encouraged his listeners to rethink definitions of what Czech music encompassed and the validity of folk music as an art form, as well as inviting them to re-embrace it, supporting the preservation of Czech cultural heritage in the face of difficult times. Filipis claims that part of re-embracing Czech music and cultural heritage manifested as an increase in performing folk music and building folk instruments, such as vozembouchy.³⁴

The high status associated with Czech classical music composition extends to the making of classical orchestral and concert band instruments. Czech musical instrument manufacturers, such as Bohemia Pianos (pianos and harpsichords) and Amati (brass wind-instrument makers), pride themselves on being part of what they call a “rich tradition” and “a high music culture.”³⁵ Czech-built classical instruments are framed as a high-ranking export commodity, an upper-class vocation focusing on elaborate ornamentation and performance quality, and a prime candidate for financial investments by stockholders.

The instruments to which this publication refers range from higher-cost orchestra instruments to instruments that may be played in a folk setting, such as banjos or accordions, but the tone of the discussions describing the manufacture of these instruments is decidedly one of extensive education, high technology, and “world-class trade”, removing the notion of musical instrument construction from what one might consider homemade, “low-tech,” or improvised model designs (which may be perceived as associated with vozembouch-making).

This governmental construction of values placed on classical musical instrument-making would suggest a duality of opposing attitudes that may simultaneously exert influence over vozembouch-making. On the one hand, a sensibility of separation between upper class and “common people” is established, and therefore a separation between classical music and folk music, which can easily rally folk musicians and the makers of folk musical instruments to actively seek new avenues of construction and materials in an almost rebellious fashion, leading to a divergence from consistency and machine-or artisan-tooled craftsmanship.

On the other hand, great pride is placed on participation in what is referred to as a long-standing Czech tradition, that of the making of musical instruments, and thus the very act of building a vozembouch becomes an act of embracing Czech culture. This notion is extended by suggesting that innovation, durability, and timbral/visual aesthetics strengthen the connection to Czech heritage associations, each of which can be embraced through construction decisions and design. Slavík supported both aspects of this argument, stating that he felt it was the duty of vozembouch players to embrace the Czech tradition of making instruments, but that vozembouch players should not be constrained by the attitudes of classical music enthusiasts, players, or instrument makers, which he deemed elitist.³⁶

Part of what Slavík noted as the difference between vozembouch-making and classical musical instrument-building were perceptions of validity with regard to timbre and the visual aesthetics of instruments.³⁷ These are both aspects of vozembouchy that are entangled in a series of connections, making them one of the primary networks of dialectical interaction between the instrument and Czech culture.

When describing my research on vozembouchy to Brno-based Neo-Medievalist bagpipe/lute player Richard Závada, I asked him if he was familiar with the instrument. He replied without hesitation, saying, “Oh yes! The old percussion instrument with a devil head on it!” As I discuss below, not

all vozembouchy have devil heads, or any heads at all, but contemporary vozembouchy often have a wooden head carved in the shape of a devil that sits above a crossbeam that acts as the nut for string or strings (if the model has any), supporting cymbals or jingles. In each of my interviews with vozembouch players/makers, I asked why there was a devil head on the instrument, and, unanimously, I was given a similar response – that vozembouchy make the “sound of the devil.”

A nickname Krátká occasionally uses for the vozembouch is “čertí housle,”³⁸ meaning the Devil’s Violin, which coincides with the idea that vozembouchy have an association with devils. However, this notion is not unique to Czech culture. Deciphering what makes the connection with devils primarily Czech for certain observers is complicated, and blends general historical associations and specific Czech conceptualizations. It is useful, therefore, to discuss both and to highlight dialectical interactions that pertain to both Czech and general European engagements.

Honza Filips imparted that vozembouchy were once used in pagan rituals related to protection from devils.³⁹ This idea is modernised and not entirely accurate, but illustrates the Czech association between the instrument and the conceptualisation. Information on vozembouchy prior to their incorporation in musical contexts is limited.

Based on Lewis’s descriptions of the use of percussive sounds in relation to pagan beliefs and rituals in which “rattles [and] jingles are used to warn intrusive entities to withdraw,”⁴⁰ “percussion is associated with and connects to Earth energies [and symbolically] Hell and its devils,”⁴¹ and that “spell casting is enhanced with percussion instruments,”⁴² it would be logical to imagine the vozembouch’s predecessors as devices enhancing pagan rituals to protect people or villages from “negative energy” or “dark forces” and, intended to either drive away these forces or mask the practitioners so they would be seen as fellow entities and therefore ignored, much like the Samhain rituals that have developed into today’s Halloween costumes. Vozembouch-like noisemakers could then have provided “the vibration of sound (...) used in natural magic to summon spirits, dispel negativity, and to cleanse, purify, and heal.”⁴³

Lewis further elaborates that “demons and devils are Christian- (or other organised religion) based constructions that have no place in Pagan/Wiccan rituals or belief systems, but that Poltergeists and similar disruptive spirits do exist in Pagan/Wiccan discourses, and it is these ‘Knocking Spirits’ (literal translation of the German term poltergeist) that gives rise to stamping, jingling, and percussive sounds being associated with devils and demons,



A picture of an early vozembouch, circa 1600

as Christianity (and others) mapped their terms onto the existing Pagan concepts in Medieval times.”⁴⁴

In fact, for Czech culture, the introduction of Christian concepts of devils can be tied directly to the *Chronica Slavorum* (Chronicle of the Slavs), written by the German monk Helmold of Bosau in approximately 1172.⁴⁵ Helmold described Chernobog, the Slavic Black God of Winter, attributing characteristics to him including horns, wings, black skin, and the head of a disfigured half-man, half-goat covered in black curly hair.⁴⁶ Wendish and Polabian (a West Slavic culture and language in present-day Germany) concepts of evil were more forcibly replaced in the 12th century by Helmold and other German clergy who were invited to Bohemia by Vladislaus II to enrich university studies and library holdings as part of a politically driven movement to strengthen Czech heritage and thus gain public support.⁴⁷

Röhrich explains that devils, as commonly described today, “appear first during the late Middle Ages. At this time, the outer visual characteristics of the devil appear. The devil is the epitome of ugliness, with horns, hook nose, a limp and a stench. In the 15th century, a devil with a horse’s foot appears for the first time. Earlier, he had clawed feet, such as those found in birds of prey.”⁴⁸ Features such as these do, in part, match many of the devils depicted on vozembouchy made by 20th- and 21st-century Czech builders/players, but how and when did these visual characteristics become commonplace in vozembouch construction? Slavic folklore and religious studies specialist Walt Richmond says that although Slavic ritual items, such as wands or musical instruments used in pagan rituals, would have had depictions of supernatural

beings on them in the form of carvings, he also states that the motif of the devil would be a late mutation of these depictions, not appearing until as late as the 19th or even 20th century.⁴⁹

The earliest example of a vozembouch, according to Tyllner, is a surviving artefact housed at the National Museum in Prague and built in the mid-1500s.⁵⁰ A woodcut from the same period has been reproduced in the publication *Knížka o houslích (A Book About the Violin)* by Míčka.⁵¹ Given the information above, it would not be out of place to find a carved devil's head atop these instruments, but neither vozembouch have such an adornment. In fact, as Richmond predicted, it is not until after World War I that devil heads begin to appear on vozembouchy (see the discussion below), but that does not mean that the instrument was not associated with the concept of devils. Tracing the evolution of vozembouch performance settings makes this clear.

It is not documented exactly when vozembouchy began being incorporated into musical settings, but Tyllner outlines vozembouch performance as commencing somewhere prior to 1500, when the instruments were used to create “hollow bass tones” intended to accompany melodic instruments.⁵² A performance technique used in addition to stamping the instrument on the ground, and with greater prevalence, was bowing the cat-gut string that was a consistent design feature for vozembouchy in the 16th and 17th centuries.⁵³ Kunz's *Encyclopedia of Czech, Moravian, and Slovakian Folk Music Instruments* lists primarily lutes and woodwinds as ensemble instruments that used vozembouchy for drones and pedal tones as well as rhythmic enhancements.⁵⁴ Typically, ensembles would perform music that possessed an element of humour and often accompanied puppet shows by traveling puppeteers.⁵⁵

Petra Hubálková tells us that puppet performances during the Middle Ages up to the Enlightenment period typically consisted of comedies that included popular folk-tale characters.⁵⁶ Röhrich points out that, in general and in German folk culture, “this devil in (...) folk tradition is not completely untheological; however, he is considered antiquated and belonging to medieval theology, and [has] passed into the folk tradition. In folklore, the devil is one of the most important and most popular figures. He appears in all the various kinds of folk tradition, in legends, folk beliefs, tales, Christian legends, jokes, anecdotes, folk plays, proverbs and sayings, and in folk customs.”⁵⁷

This can certainly be considered the case within Czech folk culture as well, and notably with the comical personality traits retained and highlighted. Not long after the German

introduction of the concept of the Christian devil, “(in the 15th and 16th centuries) the devil became a popular figure of pranks.”⁵⁸ Perhaps this developed through what Lewis describes as poltergeists (or negative entities or forces in pre-Christian concepts) being considered “playful spirits,”⁵⁹ a concept that is congruent with the Slavic concept of čerti (devils), which may have developed into character traits for devils in Czech *pohádky* (folk tales).

Czech *pohádky* regularly include the antics of devils,⁶⁰ and they are often represented in seasonal cultural, religious, or social events and jovial celebrations, such as the *Masopust* (Carnivale), *průvod Svatého Mikuláše* (Saint Nicholas parades), and *Pálení čarodějnic* (*Walpurgisnacht* – it is primarily the burning of witches that is depicted at this celebration, but Death – *Smrt* – and devils also regularly appear).⁶¹

Hana Tillmanová, a Czech dance historian and performer of historically informed dance and music, recounts that vozembouchy “[are] ideal to play wherever there is a need to attract attention and where people want to be entertained. [One] can expect [to hear vozembouchy] most in folk music, at events such as feasts, carnivals, Easter processions, and in informal settings – family celebrations or federal ones [meaning nationally embraced events], in conjunction with accordion, violin, brass, or guitar, and of course singing. [Vozembouchy would not be heard at] funerals and celebrations of national holidays, but I can imagine [a vozembouch being played] on the stage of the National Theatre—[for example] in [a production of] *The Bartered Bride* in the procession of musicians and actors.”⁶² According to this assessment, vozembouchy take on the nature of čerti as being playful, jovial, and mischievous, and are associated with gregarious and boisterous activities, which, in turn, partially informs the intentionalities behind their design.

In an effort to explain that devils, specifically Czech čerti, are not necessarily evil, as a more fundamentalist Christian view would describe, Ondřej Honc escorted me to the Muzeum čertů in Uštěk. The museum includes a gallery of devil-related artworks, a tour of a series of underground rooms with exhibits and performances about čerti intended for very young audiences, and a shop selling čert-related merchandise. The theme and demeanor of the establishment is definitely humorous and deemed suitable for all ages.

Honc asked the hostess and part-curator how the museum came to be, and her answer was that fellow curator, artist, and vozembouch maker Jaroslav Stejný felt the need to ensure that children knew that čerti were not bad, just often misunderstood or ignorant, and not something to



*The vozembouch in the lobby
of the Muzeum čertů*

be afraid of. The representations of vozembouchy in the museum are extensive, with many paintings, sculptures, puppets, and mechanical automatons depicting čerti playing vozembouchy (somewhat ironic given the history of the instrument), as well as a large vozembouch made by Stejný that greets visitors in the lobby.

So how does the playful nature of the devils with which vozembouchy are intertwined dialectically engage the construction of the instrument? Perhaps the performance settings can offer some answers. Referring back to Tillmanová's comment that vozembouchy are used to simultaneously enhance exhibitionism and bring an air of joviality to celebratory or informal music performances suggests that spectacle is an important element of vozembouch performance. In terms of the visual and timbral aspects to which construction and design can contribute, ornamentation and outstanding sounds may become highly desirable. The inclusion of noisemakers in vozembouch design can be seen as both valuing attention-gathering sounds and dictating the sonic qualities of vozembouchy in parades, festivals, and folk music performances.

Visual characteristics of a vozembouch may then be valued in similar ways, highlighting designs and features that would be considered festive or even outlandish. Embracing this sensibility can be attained through overall instrument design and through the details of embellishments and material choices within the design. Contemporary models of vozembouchy seem to engage festiveness through functional (playable elements) and non-functional (visual only) instrument dressings and what I call "diablomorphism", or the manifestation of characteristics of concepts of devils. Before I define diablomorphism further and outline its possible connections with the construction-culture-history network in which

vozembouchy exist, I will review other historical periods of vozembouch performance style, settings, and construction.

From its use in pagan rituals (most likely by a precursor to the instrument documented in the 1500s), the vozembouch eventually became a musical instrument, potentially after about 900 AD, after Rostislav, the leader of an early nation-state known as Great Moravia, invited the Greek Christian church to send the monks Cyril and Methodius to attempt to convert his people to Christianity. As Christianity became more established, two styles of practice emerged: Latin-rite sects that embraced a more strictly Greek version of Christianity, and Slavic-rite sects that merged Greek Christianity with local pagan practices, shifting the emphasis from sacred to secular in regards to some pagan practices.⁶³

Tyllner also suggests that the appearance of vozembouchy in a musical context may have come after the introduction of the concept of music in a Western compositional context took root.⁶⁴ Tyllner and Tillmanová agree that the first ensembles were probably trios of traveling minstrels accompanying puppet shows or street performers.⁶⁵ Vozembouchy at that time were most likely stamped on the ground, based on the assumption that the name was similar or the same and knowing that there were jingles/rattles attached to the instrument, but we also know that the vozembouch in the earlier Middle Ages was primarily a bowed instrument, providing a pedal tone.⁶⁶

Not enough is known about the performance techniques used beyond the fact that it created a low, probably loud sound. No one can say if the instrument was melodic in terms of playing various notes during a performance, whether the pitch was changed with fingertips without a fingerboard (like a Chinese *erhu*), with the back of the fingernail (like a Mongolian *morin khuur*), or with a slide or movable nut (like a Brazilian *berimbau*).

The general consensus from Tyllner, Kunz, and Kurfürst is that the vozembouch was more akin to a *tromba marina* and used as a single-note drone monochord, re-tuning as necessary to fit the scales of different songs.⁶⁷ What is known is that a larger horsehair bow was used, and that the resonator was made from an animal bladder, which often also served as the bridge for the string. Tyllner and Kurfürst both describe the sound as being loud and "hollow".⁶⁸ There is no way of determining if this description is correct and, furthermore, if the bowed-string timbre represented the sound of the devil at the time, but, given the associations outlined by musicologist Todd Sullivan and a discussion on the anthropology website EsoterX,

bowed string instruments have been connected to devils (Christian and pagan) since AD 200, and documentation of European associations between devils and bowed string instruments appear sporadically from the 8th century and more regularly from the 1500s.⁶⁹

Still, sonic associations cannot be drawn from textual references, but it is fair to say that the associations of devils followed the instrument from the ritual context to the performance context, including the timbral qualities and, as a result, the construction design.

The timbres and associations that developed alongside concepts of devils are also, necessarily, part of a larger network of social and cultural interactions. Röhrich states that “legends and folk tales are or contain cultural-historical incidents that reflect the mentalities, beliefs, social and cultural contexts in which they were told originally.”⁷⁰ This would most likely extend to the folk-tale-based puppet shows accompanied by vozembouch ensembles, generating a new series of connections that would include new or additional political and moral value commentary.

Tyllner and ethnomusicologist Matěj Kratochvíl describe protest performances called “cat serenades,” which entailed an ensemble (typically, if not always, including a vozembouch) playing loudly under the window of a political figure or prominent citizen, depicting them as being immoral or corrupt, in fact often likening them to a devil or perhaps even as being possessed by one (metaphorically speaking).⁷¹ While there is no direct evidence that cat serenades contributed to the development of vozembouch construction, it is known that the cat serenade ensembles grew out of the traveling minstrels and puppet performances (in the 1500s to 1600s) and altered their instrumentation to purposefully increase the volume and “harshness” of the timbres being incorporated, adding accordions, brass, guitars, hurdy-gurdies, and additional percussive noisemakers (from approximately the 1600s to the 1700s).⁷²

During this 300-year period, vozembouchy went from being bowed with a horsehair bow, which was potentially more gentle, to being bowed with a wooden stick with saw-toothed notches carved along its shaft, which, when dragged across the strings, made what possibly would be a louder, more audible sound.

The history of vozembouchy seems to have been less well documented during the Enlightenment, however. This paper is drawn from the first steps of investigation on this project, and I hope scholars can uncover much more information on the vozembouch in the future. What can be said,

according to Röhrich, is that in German culture, “the Enlightenment rendered devils less ‘demonic’ and rationalism overtook the concept of a devil as a being, likening Hellishness to becoming more of a state which embodies bleak and horrible happenings.”⁷³

While both German and Czech communities experienced similar difficulties, in particular over the past 120 years, a different attitude has been more prevalent within Czech circles, one in which the concept of devils has further embraced the lightheartedness of *čertovské pohádky*, perhaps as a response to German concepts or an alternative reaction to hardship, in addition to the extension of joviality already cultivated within the conceptualisation of Czech devils. Tangible descriptions of concepts are difficult to define; however, there is still usefulness in outlining the notion that a difference exists. Through acknowledging this difference, it is possible to discuss development of the associations with devils that are specifically Czech and have come to be linked with vozembouchy, which has, as we have seen, affected the design and material constituents of the instruments.

Furthermore, vozembouch design was influenced by industrialisation. As broad a generalisation as this may seem, its effects on vozembouch construction are clear. Tyllner and Kunz describe gut strings being replaced by iron or copper wire in the early 18th century, and bladder resonators being exchanged for tin cans⁷⁴ – both products of factory output.

Construction of vozembouchy seems to have stabilised until the onset of World War I, when the pool of construction resources and location of construction changed significantly. Czech soldiers in the field would make various instruments to play in ensembles.⁷⁵ Such musical endeavours served to boost morale and maintain cultural traditions that supported nationalism and political causes, and therefore were common when feasible and regularly encouraged by superiors. It is during this time period that the visual documentation of vozembouchy begins to be substantial and photographic evidence of designs and material constituents can be assessed.

The self-built nature of vozembouchy made in these settings is to be expected. Beyond the standard materials and noisemakers that would be used in a civilian model, materials for soldiers’ instruments would be drawn from a new set of resources. According to Honza Filips,⁷⁶ cymbals were crafted from door hinges, metal plates, hub caps, and hammered from sheets of tin; (presumably broken) gears and small engine parts became bells and jingles; resonators were no longer just empty

tin cans that once contained perishables, but also petrol cans and halved mortar shells grew to be commonplace in vozembouch construction.

Although I wasn't able to find specific photographic evidence of this in pictures of Czech troops deployed in WWI, there was significant evidence within photographs of German troops from the same time period (as well as a wide variety of other instruments built by different European military personnel), depicting similar instruments using construction materials of the same description to suggest Czech soldiers followed a similar course when building vozembouchy in the field. (For instance, many clear examples can be found in the Cigarbox Guitar World War I photo archive of instruments built on tour.⁷⁷

The impact of necessity on material choices for construction exceeds the obvious substitutions as well, feeding into the status surrounding home-built instruments and, indirectly, continuing to adhere to the concepts of devils. Filip⁷⁸ talks of Czech soldiers likening German troops to devils and says that he heard of vozembouch players who (jokingly?) made noise with their self-made instruments to ward off enemy forces. The mentality and subsequent actions described here, then, fit the traits of general and Czech-specific associations between vozembouchy and Czech concepts of devils.

Still, carved wooden devil heads did not appear on vozembouchy until after World War I. Richmond suggests that although Christian characteristics attributed to devils would have begun to appear regularly in the 1300s within folk tales and certain forms of entertainment,⁷⁹ resistance to conforming to Christian-enforced changes to traditions would have inhibited the inclusion of devil heads as a living part of folk culture until much later,⁸⁰ when outside conflict would encourage nationalism and strengthen imagined communities. Potentially the devil heads that appeared on similar instruments in other cultures did so at a similar time, and took on the characteristics of the localised concepts of devils in which the incorporation occurred.

This diablomorphism (defined above) simultaneously encompasses a larger scale, reflecting the influence of centuries of religious teachings and practice, as well as degrees of political and social commentary, and a more focused engagement of localised, culturally informed characteristics that semiotically engage identity, heritage, and nostalgia.

Diablomorphism within Czech vozembouch construction spans this range. The dialectical interactions that form a network of Czech culture and concepts of devils have, in turn, developed a coexisting series of dialectical interactions that engage the construction of vozembouchy via

diablomorphism. It is the network within a network of diablomorphism (the broader, more widely shared network combined with the largely locally informed network) that renders the vozembouch as being recognisably Czech to the body of observers who possess a working knowledge of these dialectical interactions and developments (regardless of the level of consciousness they possess in regards to the networks). Czech-specific diablomorphism is inseparable from, and has developed alongside, Czech-specific timbral and visual design traits. For example, the incorporation of dried seeds or beans in vozembouch resonators in Moravian- or Southern Bohemian-style instruments,⁸¹ and devil heads that exhibit *čertovské pohádky* characteristics, then, are not merely diablomorphism, but Czech diablomorphism.

Furthermore, the self-built, unique designs common to vozembouchy can be related to diablomorphism in more abstract concepts. Lewis, when referring to modern-day pagan practices, says creativity is greatly encouraged among Wiccan/Pagan practitioners as a means to connect one's inner self with the spirit world.⁸² Specifically, playing music and building ritual objects are cited as being among the best ways to engage in creativity.⁸³ Richmond says that in pre-Christian Slavic pagan cultures, talismans would have been made to facilitate this link between creativity and spirituality, and that "there is no doubt that [vozembouchy] were originally talismans that generated noise (through jingles, drums, strings, or other devices) to ward off evil spirits" prior to their use in a musical context.⁸⁴ This would link directly to the building of vozembouchy and their use in performance.

Instilling a vozembouch with traits that emulate devils requires a preconception of a devil's characteristics. Given that devils are "supernatural" and cannot be physically studied or referenced, makers of vozembouchy must rely on their individual perceptions of devils to produce their artistic renditions of them. This is not to exclude the argument that a maker's technical ability, accessibility to equipment and materials, artisan training, and economic considerations play a role in the manifestation of a finished product from its conception,⁸⁵ but these crafting factors do not negate the reliance on personal notions of a devil's traits, beyond what would be encountered in depicting a more tangible subject. The unique designs of vozembouchy and the homemade aspects surrounding the construction of the majority of instruments would, then, extend the dialectical interactions between construction and Czech culture.

According to Filip, because folk music was one of the less-regulated ways in which cultural heritage could be embraced following World War II, when Czechoslovakia was under the wing of the Soviet Union, there was a sort of revival of folk music that

gradually built up until the 1970s, especially after Charter 77 was written,⁸⁶ and then more strongly as Krček more publicly promoted the embrace of folk culture, equating it to “high culture” and placing it at a similar level of importance to classical music and university-level education.

I propose that it was during this period that the first devil heads began to appear consistently on vozembouchy. Research is still being conducted, but to date I have uncovered no model of vozembouch with any semblance of a devil head prior to the 1990s. Reisig remembered his grandfather building a vozembouch with a devil head when he was a child, placing that construction around 1960, and Reisig built his first vozembouch (with a head) in 1977. He claims that at the time he began to play on his first self-built vozembouch, he did not know of other vozembouch players, and only began to see others enter the folk music scene in his area (Liberec, in the north of Bohemia) in approximately 1990.⁸⁷ Photographs of vozembouchy after Soviet forces left the Czech Republic almost all display wooden heads.

Today it seems that heads on vozembouchy are not only common but also preferred, and are seen as a traditional approach to construction. The values placed on folk music, vozembouchy, and their construction have evolved to alter the concepts of the ways in which they engage Czech culture and society. Folk music revivals can instigate these changes.

Livingston and Boyes describe the rise of interest in folk music culture outside of a folk setting as being typically brought about through engagement by upper-middle class enthusiasts.⁸⁸ While the resurgence of Czech folk music and instruments was not a thriving trend to rekindle or an “all but forgotten” tradition, the model Livingston uses to discuss folk music revivalism is applicable. Economic support for building vozembouchy is less likely to have taken place on a level that would contribute to an increase of instruments or the ways in which they are built, but indirect engagement with other thriving entities may have had an impact. As folk music became more acceptable and well-known to an audience who also strongly embraced classical music, for example, the values placed on classical music (and orchestral instruments) would reconfigure the values of folk music (and folk instruments).

Ondřej Honc argues that the adornment of heads on classical instruments, such as angel/cherub heads on viola da gamba, for example, were initially a reflection of the ways in which the sounds those instruments made were associated with their audience, specifically upper-class listeners. He likens the introduction of devil heads on vozembouchy

to this, not only in terms of sounds, as discussed above, but also in terms of class association, with vozembouch makers recognizing a difference in audience class, but still emulating the parallel classical music mentalities.⁸⁹

Livingston says that the interest in folk music from new groups of enthusiasts, specifically those outside a folk culture setting, would engage with folk music (and thus instrument-building) in an attempt to perpetuate or propel the scene, introducing new outlets for folk music to be heard, expanding the possibilities for a folk music industry, and affording the emergence of additional performance settings and folk music-related businesses. After the Soviet withdrawal, the development of tourism⁹⁰ directly engaged folk music and led to the appearance of buskers performing on vozembouchy, wider publicity for existing folk music festivals at which vozembouchy are played, and the mass production of vozembouchy. Livingston also refers to the ways in which folk music evolves through enthusiasts’ attempts to maintain a revival’s activity. She outlines that traditionalism is more strongly embraced at the onset of a revival (be it historically accurate or reconstructed), but later, when the revival has settled into stability within a culture, innovations take place to revive interest in the folk music scene.⁹¹ In relation to vozembouch construction, I propose that a spectrum of current folk music performance styles and settings facilitates the innovation Livingston suggests, bringing forth another layer of dialectical interactions that engage design and material choices.

Contemporary settings for vozembouch players range from performances that may be considered more traditional to styles and settings far removed from tradition. In addition, vozembouchy have appeared in non-musical contexts, in part because of their iconic construction. Folk music is still quite alive and vigorously embraced in the Czech Republic. Folk festivals take place almost every month, primarily during the spring and summer, but the Czech Folklore Society lists 386 festivals and local groups that host events throughout the year.

These festivals pride themselves on presenting modern versions of historically informed music and dance, which often includes a vozembouch built to reflect the current concept of an authentic traditional instrument, with tassels and colourful dressings to accompany the tambourine resonator, cymbals, wire strings, and wooden heads. Function bands who perform at celebrations where traditionalism is highly appreciated and expected will include a vozembouch in their instrumentation; for example, wedding bands or groups playing at town-wide events, at least while performing outdoors, will employ an ensemble of accordion, saxophone, or trumpet, a lower-tuned drum such as a marching



Former President Václav Klaus with a vozembouch

Viktor Slavík and his vozembouch featuring Pat from *Pat a Mat*
Jaroslav Reisig's newest vozembouch, featuring the head of a vodník

snare, an altered floor tom from a drum kit, or a davul/tapan bass drum, and a vozembouch to accompany vocals by the entire group. Even indoors, when the bands change instrumentation to a rock band line-up, a vozembouch may still remain in the performance to bridge the modern and the traditional. Buskers seeking to evoke a sense of exoticism for passing tourists will often use a vozembouch to introduce a visual and sonic element (often a comical one) with which potential patrons may not be familiar.

Vozembouchy played in these settings primarily embrace what is currently considered to be a more traditional construction, but still with tolerance and appreciation for innovative alterations and uniqueness of design. The heads on vozembouchy today still tend to portray devils, but, as Slavík pointed out, “any head will do, as long as [your vozembouch] has one!”⁹²

Judging from recent photographs, devils are not the only *pohádky* characters to be depicted. *Vodník* (a water goblin), *Smrt* (the personification of Death), *čarodějnice* (witches), and *šáskové* (jesters) heads have joined the *čerti*. Popular culture has also made an impact on the choice of vozembouch heads. One of Reisig's vozembouchy has the head of a character from a cartoon, and Slavík's singular working vozembouch has the head of Pat from *Pat a Mat*, the claymation series written for children that features stories of construction projects. Rock bands that do not perform at traditional folk music-based functions have also been known to incorporate a vozembouch. Tata Bojs, a Prague-based band, enhance their alternative pop-rock music with a vozembouch and, although used humorously, I was shown a video of a Czech black metal band who had a person dressed in a devil costume playing a vozembouch

made out of a shovel on stage with them.⁹³ Even non-musical public figures embrace vozembouchy to exhibit connections to Czech culture. Politicians attempting to appeal to potential voters who highly value nationalism or traditionalism have used photographs of themselves holding (not playing) a vozembouch for publicity.

One nationally acclaimed visual artist and filmmaker, Tereza Janečková, has been outspoken about embracing the vozembouch as a Czech icon. In a television interview on Czech Television, she made a call to other artists and the general population to use vozembouchy in various contexts to increase awareness of its usages and cultural and historical importance.

One of Janečková's contributions to this movement was a series of short films that showed her “playing” a vozembouch, heavily edited to create a new version of the soundtrack and visual aspect of the performance reminiscent of techno-electronic dance music.⁹⁴ Regardless of the fast-moving visuals and non-traditional music, the video retains the clear imagery of Janečková's focal point—the vozembouch and its connection to Czech culture. She achieves this through timbral and visual aesthetics that are intertwined with the construction of the vozembouch, launching her campaign by acknowledging and inviting participation in the dialectical interactions with the instrument partially outlined in this paper.

The vozembouch is a fascinating and clear example of how an instrument's construction engages various aspects of cultural and social environments. Through the uniqueness of the designs, the values placed on self-built instruments, and the recreation and reinvention of ways to make and use the “sound of devils,” the vozembouch is “performing,” so to speak, an entanglement of aesthetics, meaning, and

catalysts of interjections via the agency of makers, players, and other members of the community of which the instrument is a part.

This project is by no means complete, and further investigation is planned for the immediate and distant future. Therefore, new findings may reveal further points of discussion and/or conclusions to help unravel the complex ties between instrument design, material choices, and construction methods, and the web of networks to which these are connected. The work to date, however, is a valuable beginning, and exhibits the usefulness of embracing this research model.

The methodology is also not unique to this Czech vozembouch project. This approach can lead to a deeper understanding of cultural and social engagement in other similar studies, not only focusing on a musical instrument's construction, but also expanding to several material culture topics and beyond, and can afford the researcher the ability to frame or reframe the focus of a study, and to follow the connections between topics and subjects as they emerge, allowing for highly useful information to be brought forward. It is my hope that this paper has shown the usefulness of this methodology and that it will encourage other researchers to utilise the discussions and the suggestions for study outlined within to yield additional exciting, informative, and significant contributions to the study of dialectical interactions and musical instrument research.

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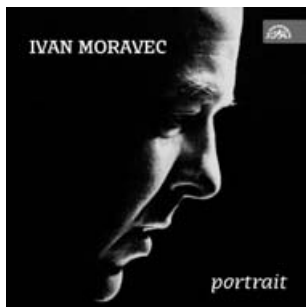
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NOTES

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- 30) As well as being the focal point of extensive musicology research and discussions; for examples of this, see M. Ota, "Why is the 'Spirit' of Folk Music So Important? On the Historical Background of Béla Bartók's Views of Folk Music," *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 37(1) (2006), pp. 33–46; and H. Hollander, "The Music of Leoš Janáček—Its Origin in Folklore," *The Musical Quarterly* 41(2) (1955), pp. 171–176.
- 31) For a detailed discussion of class and status in relation to classical music and musical instruments, see R. C. Kraus, *Pianos and Politics: Middle-Class Ambitions and the Struggle over Western Music* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 308.
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- 35) Taken from a promotional pamphlet published by the Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Czech Republic; see F. Němeček, "Czech Musical Instruments," *Supplement of Czech Business and Trade* (1–2) (2006), pp. 28.
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- 57) Röhrich, "German Devil Tales and Devil Legends," pp. 25.
- 58) Ibid., pp. 27.
- 59) Lewis, *Witchcraft Today*, 191.
- 60) For examples, see *Zapomenutý čert* (Drda. 1985: pp. 60–82), *O statečné princezně* (Lada. 1983: pp. 5–24), or Jan Teufel's collection *Čertovské pohádky* (Prague: Nakladatelství Vilém Šmidt, 1993).
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- 65) Tylner, *Lidová kultura*, pp. 700, and Tillmanová, email interview with the author (2015).
- 66) Tylner, *Lidová kultura*, pp. 701; and P. Kurfürst, "Co je to vozembouch?" *Melodie* (1977), 278.
- 67) Tylner, *Lidová kultura*, pp. 701.
- 68) Tylner, *Lidová kultura*, 700, and Kurfürst, 279.
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- 82) Lewis, *Witchcraft Today*, pp. 419.
- 83) Ibid., pp. 419.
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- 85) See Sennett, *The Craftsman*; and Keller and Keller, 2008.
- 86) Filipis, interview with the author (2014); and H. G. Skilling, "Charter 77 and the Musical Underground," *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 22(1) (1980), pp. 1–14.
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- 88) See T. E. Livingston, "Music Revivals: Towards a General Theory," *Ethnomusicology* 43(1) (Winter 1999), pp. 66–85; and G. Boyes, *The Imagined Village: Culture, Ideology & the English Folk Revival* (No Masters Co-Operative; 2010).
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Ivan Moravec – Portrait

Ivan Moravec – piano,
Czech Chamber Orchestra,
Czech Philharmonic, Orchestra
of the Wiener Musikverein,
Dallas Symphony Orchestra,
conductors: Josef Vlach, Václav
Neumann, Martin Turnovský,
Eduardo Mata, Karel Ančerl.
Text: CZ, EN, GE, FR. Recorded:
1962–2002. Published: 2020.
11 CD + 1 DVD, TT: 17:16:31. 1 CD
Supraphon SU4290-2

On the occasion of the 90th anniversary of the birth of **Ivan Moravec** (1930–2015), Supraphon has put out a grand collection of the pianist's recordings. These eleven CDs and one DVD present dozens of remarkable recordings made by the artist between 1962 and 2002 for various record companies and at various opportunities. They are often licenced to international labels, and in several cases, this is the first occasion on which these recordings have been made available on CD.

The pieces are arranged by composer: the first CD contains three piano concerti by Mozart, another two discs feature Beethoven's sonatas and concerti. Three volumes are devoted to the works of Chopin, followed by two discs of Schumann and Brahms. The ninth volume offers four of Claude Debussy's piano cycles, disc number ten contains a selection of Debussy's *Preludes* and pieces by César Franck and Maurice Ravel. The final CD focuses on piano works by Czech composers: Smetana, Janáček, and Martinů.

With one exception, all the recordings on this collection present fantastic

interpretations, confirming what we have all known for a long time: that Ivan Moravec was among the most significant pianists in the world in the second half of the 20th and beginning of the 21st centuries. Selecting the best of this rich and diverse offering (the collection contains a hundred and seventy three tracks in total) is practically impossible.

Particularly attractive for me are the legendary recordings made by Moravec between 1962 and 1970 for the American label Connoisseur Society, which made him famous around the world. Here in Czechoslovakia, however, these vinyls were utterly unavailable and unknown under communist rule. The Supraphon collection presents a truly representative selection from the Connoisseur Society productions. The oldest recording – César Franck's *Prelude, Chorale and Fugue* – was made in 1962. Of Beethoven's oeuvre, we are presented with the fourth piano concerto (1963, **Orchestra of the Wiener Musikverein**, conducted by **Martin Turnovský**) and six sonatas: no. 27 in E minor, op. 90 (1964), the *Pathétique* (1964), the *Mondscheinsonata* (1964), the *Appassionata* (1968), *Les Adieux* (1969), and the *Pastoral* (1970). Chopin is represented by the complete *Ballads* (1963, 1965), five mazurkas (1967), and the *Barcarolle* (1967), Ravel by the *Sonatine* (1967), and Debussy by his *Children's Corner* (1964), *Claire de Lune* from the *Suite Bergamasque* (1964), the *Pour le piano* suite (1967), and a selection from the *Preludes* (1965, 1967). Although these are all recordings made half a century ago, time has done nothing to diminish their efficaciousness. Even on these early recordings, the first he ever made, Moravec exhibited all that for which we continue admiring him today: excellent technique; a resounding, rounded yet

brilliant tone; an inimitably songful legato; a perfectly pulsating sense of rhythm; inspired work with time; a soulful expression; nobility; and, above it all, a fascinating creative imagination.

If I were to list further recordings that made the greatest impression on me, it will have to be somewhat at random and with the knowledge that even those I leave out are remarkable. Moravec's rendition of Chopin's *Scherzos* (Dorian Recordings, 1991) is so gripping that I place it, along with the same composer's *Ballads*, among the very best recordings of these works I have ever heard. Schumann's *Kinderszenen* (Nonesuch Records, 1984) enchant and move us with their simple charm. I can think of no other description of Brahms' *Three Intermezzi* op. 117 than "poems in sound". And I cannot fail to point out Mozart's piano concerto no. 14 in E flat major, K 449 (**Czech Chamber Orchestra**, conductor **Josef Vlach**, Supraphon, 1975), whose second movement is simply out of this world, or Chopin's *Polonaise-Fantaisie* (Vox Cum Laude, 1984), which brings the firmly pulsating polonaise rhythm together with poetic, songlike passages. Also unforgettable is the live recording of Schumann's piano concerto with the **Dallas Symphony Orchestra** and conductor **Eduardo Mata** (Dorian Recordings, 1993).

Czech composers form a chapter unto themselves in this collection. Ivan Moravec performs the music of Janáček – the *Sonata*, *In the Mists*, and a selection from the collection *On an Overgrown Path* (Nonesuch Records, 1983) – with much that is unique to him. So much so that we would struggle to compare it to anyone else. The emotional charge (more chaste than heightened)

goes hand in hand with a surprisingly clear sectioning of the musical text. Furthermore, the second movement of Janáček's *Sonata* is an excellent example of the intelligent and inspired ways in which the pianist makes use of silence. Martinů is represented by three numbers from the *Etudes and Polkas* cycle (Supraphon, 2001), and in performing his music, Moravec strikes the listener as an exceptionally humorous and witty companion (the second and third pieces are erroneously switched in the track list, but that is a forgivable error in the context of such an extensive project). Of Smetana's piano works, we hear exclusively dance pieces: a selection from the *Czech Dances* (*Polka no. 2* from the first volume, *Hulán*, *Obkročák*, and *Furiant* from the second), the *Poetic Polka no. 2*, and, in conclusion, *A Memory of Plzeň* (Supraphon, 1986). Moravec performs Smetana with just as much invention and excellence as Chopin, and so we can only let out a small sigh that the pianist did not perform more of Smetana's work.

The "bonus" DVD (with its impressive running time of over a hundred and sixty minutes) opens with an excellent film documentary by Jan Mudra from 2002. It introduces viewers to Ivan Moravec as we all knew him: as a unique pianist, an excellent teacher, and especially as an immensely kind-hearted, friendly, and humble human being. Whether Ivan Moravec is discussing the piano, his performances, his relationship to music, his career as a teacher, or anything else, his remarks are so wise and timeless, they would make a good book of quotations. Mudra's film also includes interviews with many of Moravec's friends and (former) students. Their words make it clear that everyone admired Moravec, but also, more importantly, that they all had much genuine love for him. This documentary feature is then followed by five unique,

as-yet-unpublished concert recordings from the archives of Czech Television made between 1967 and 1973: first two solo performances from 1967, in which Moravec presents two pieces by Beethoven (the *Variations in C minor* WoO 80 and the *Appassionata*), followed by three piano concerti. In all these, Moravec is accompanied by the Czech Philharmonic. Prokofiev's first concerto is conducted by **Karel Ančerl** (1967), Mozart's twenty-fifth concerto in C major by **Josef Vlach** (1973), and Ravel's *Piano Concerto in G major* by **Václav Neumann** (1983). These are, once again, magnificent recordings. One listening will certainly not be enough.

The video recording also affords us the opportunity to observe Ivan Moravec as he plays. His movements are very subtle, and his self-control on the piano seems to border the ascetic. When seated at his instrument, Moravec always focused on the music with such intensity there was no space left for anything else – especially not for the ostentatious gestures we know from other famous artists. The four-language booklet provides detailed information on all the recordings, an introduction by the project's producer, Matouš Vlčinský, a memorial text by the pianist Murray Perahia, and an extensive interview which Ivan Moravec gave to *PIANO* News magazine in 2002. Fans of Ivan Moravec will certainly be gladdened to see a link to the pianist's website, www.ivanmoravec.com, though this is not yet available quite yet. Regarding extent and quality, this is a project practically without competition in the Czech Republic. There is therefore no doubt in my mind that this collection of recordings by Ivan Moravec will become a gem in the Supraphon catalogue.

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