IN HONOREM IVAN POLEDŇÁK
SOCIALIST REALISM AND THE TRADITION OF CZECH NATIONAL MUSIC OR WHO GOES WITH WHOM?

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In this article, it is intended to give a sketch of the genealogy of the discourse on socialist realism in Czech musical culture. It is the usual academic habit to define central concepts at the start of a paper. Unfortunately, it seems to be impossible to give such a definition of socialist realism in advance. A principle formulated by Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht applies here even more appropriately then usual. The only possible definition of a term, according to him, is a history of its usage. This principle seems to be especially helpful in the case of a term which refers not to a neutral cognitive concept, but to a normative concept which played a substantial role in discourses on power, on influence, and not infrequently even on the life and death of those who participated in them.

Czech music seems to have played a rather prominent role in the endeavour for constructing socialist realism among the countries of the Soviet bloc in the early 1950’s. Except in the Soviet Union itself, there was probably much less success in introducing the principles of realist aesthetics in other countries such as Poland or Hungary. Even Eastern Germany with the tradition of Eisler and Dessau did not fit too well into the mould of the Soviet Communist Party resolution on music of 1948, even if on the other hand the doctrine survived longer in Eastern Germany, once it had been established in aesthetic theory. In Czechoslovakia, the doctrine was tacitly abandoned after 1956 with the slow arrival of new music of western provenance, symbolically introduced with the 1959 performance of Berg’s Wozzeck at the National Theatre in Prague. Wozzeck, on the occasion of its 1926 Prague performance had represented a battlefield between the avant-garde and conservatives, leftwing and rightwing fronts, and had been defended even by Zdeněk Nejedlý, the later education and culture minister in the first purely communist government. But it was banned in the early 50’s as a model of decadent formalism in music. And then in 1959 it symbolised the re-establishment of bonds with modern western music, and was followed by the import of Darmstadt aesthetics.

This success of Czech musicians in coping with the difficult tasks of socialist realism in music was recognised internationally by the award of a gold medal to Václav Dobiáš’s cantata “Build up your country, you will strengthen the peace” at the World Congress of the Defenders of Peace at Warsaw in November 1950. This was probably
due to more reasons than merely the traditional adaptability of the Czech national character. I will try to trace some of the lines which lead back from the discourse concerning socialist realism in Czech music to the more liberal past.

Prehistory: Where to Go?

Even if one could probably go much further back into the past of the Czech music, the decisive moment for an understanding of the developments after the Second World War seems to lie just one war earlier, at the end of World War I. The year 1918, the foundation of the independent Czechoslovak Republic, represented a profound break in the cultural development of the country. Until then, Czech music had developed in close contact with that of the rest of Central Europe, especially with German music, and in the context of Austrian culture. Smetana’s relationship to Schumann, Chopin, Liszt, and Wagners, and Dvořák’s to Schubert and Brahms, reflect this fundamental location of Czech musical culture in the course of the 19th century. The development of so-called “Czech national music” was driven further by this ‘dialectics’ between national and cosmopolitan aspects, speaking in slightly dubiously Hegelian terms. The modern generation of the 1890’s even intensified its bonds with ‘Europe’. Especially the relationship to Vienna, among other composers to the Schönberg circle, had assumed various forms between 1900 and 1914, owing to the common heritage of Dvořák and Brahms. This close relationship to Vienna was shared by both Czech musical parties of that time, the ‘Dvořák’ party represented, among others, by the composers Novák and Suk, and the ‘Smetana’ party, headed by the musicologist Zdeněk Nejedly, already mentioned, and composers like Foerster and Ostrčil.

The outbreak of World War I in 1914 changed the situation considerably. Even the Smetana party, which had received Schönberg’s early works warmly before the war, became much cooler towards Viennese music. The change of mood was partly due to growing nationalism, and partly to a lack of understanding of Schönberg’s path to atonality. In 1917, Zemlinsky’s opera Einer florentinische Tragödie was dismissed by Vladimír Helfert as evidence of German decadence.1 The discourse on Czech music in the independent state was soon to arrive.

For some time, political independence strengthened isolationism and nationalism in Czech music. And even if the import of French neoclassicism and Alois Hába’s return to the country countered the tendency later in the 1920’s, one cannot avoid the impression that a productive tension and equilibrium between the two tendencies was never regained in the period between the wars. It is rather symptomatic that the most productive Czech composer of that time, Bohuslav Martinu, had left the country as early as 1923.

One can suggest that in this period about 1920, there was coined a part of the vocabulary in the discourse on Czech modern music, which could later be easily integrated and transformed into a socialist realist discourse in Czech music. As

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1 Helfert’s criticism on the Prague premiere. In: Smetana VIII, 1917, 150.
a representative example, one can take the book *O proudech v soudobé hudbě* [On the trends in contemporary music] by Josef Bartoš, published in 1924.² Bartoš (1887–1952) had studied musicology, Czech, and French with Hostinský and Nejedlý, among others, at Prague university, and then with Romain Rolland and Henri Bergson at the Sorbonne in Paris (1909–1910). He was an active member of the Smetana party, taking part in controversies about Dvořák before World War I. In 1914, he published a monograph on Dvořák, heavily criticizing Dvořák because of his alleged conservatism. The book on contemporary music originated in a series of lectures delivered in 1923. The preface to the book includes the following passage:

"I have not attempted to conceal the fact that my lecture appears rather traditional; however, I am sure that an analogous point of view would in essence be taken by any critic, who would be concerned that all the positive aspects of Czech music should be emphasized and that all the pseudo-modern aberrations of fashionable trends should be rejected. And in this, thank God, all Czech critics are at present in agreement."

He sees the post-war situation as a period of a profound revaluation (přehodnocení) of all values and of the advent of the New Man. In many respects, it resembles the passionate proclamations of the New Men from the time around 1948, even if his tone is rather different. He announces a change from positivism to metaphysics, from rationality to feeling and intuition. After paying this tribute to his ‘idealistic’ teacher, he moves to a more “materialistic” position. He attacks pre-war modern music for paying too much attention to form, to structure, and to compositional techniques, to mechanical elements, and he attacks it for neglecting questions of the psychic content of music. He says:

"It represents invention, but not creativity, rigorous research which however fails to recognise the world in artistic terms."

It is true that his concept of ‘psychic content’, which is to be understood by the listener through intuition, still bears ‘idealistic’ overtones; but the enemy has been unmistakably identified. This is what would later be called formalism in music, even if Bartoš does not use the phrase. ‘Scientismus’, ‘scientism’, results in an atomization of musical structures, and in a loss of architecture in musical forms. This is the crucial point of all the debates on modern art, including the sophisticated debates between Lukács and Adorno about organic (realistic) and avant-garde works of art, the structure

² Bartoš, Josef: *O proudech v soudobé hudbě* (Kdyně, 1924).
³ Bartoš, 5.
⁴ Bartoš, 17.
of which is damaged by atomization, dissociation of time. From the 1920’s onward, adherents of the doctrine of realism continually insisted on the concept of the organic work of art.

Even the question of the exclusiveness of the ‘heroic’ avant-garde was raised by Bartoš in a manner quite common in later criticism of formalist art:

“Předválečný umělec ani se nestaral o to, aby hudba jeho mluvila ke všem srdcím, aby byla všelidským jazykem každému lidu rozumělo, tím za většího hrdinu se pokládal. (...) Tento umělec sociálního problému si nepostavil, nechtěl sestupovat k lidem, nýbrž žádal kategoricky, aby lid přišel za ním. Avšak aristokratické jeho stanovisko přímo naráželo na tuop davu, z níž se on naopak radoval. On přímo vyháněl lidí do biografií a do chantanů, neboť aby si byl s davem porozuměl, bylo předem vyloučeno.”

[“The prewar artist did not concern himself as to whether his music spoke to the hearts of all, or whether it was comprehensible in a universal language to all: the less people understood him, the more he proclaimed himself a hero … This artist did not confront the social problem, did not deign to descend to the people, but categorically demanded that the people should come to him. However, his aristocratic standpoint directly clashed with the stupidity of the rabble, though on the other hand this pleased him. He directly banished people into the cinemas and into low music-halls, for the possibility of his achieving an understanding with the rabble was excluded in advance.”]

This critique results in a programme of turning to real life, depicted by means of “typisation”, which is rather close to the programme of socialist realism in the 1930’s:

“Nás nezajímá už něco, co by bylo mimo život, nýbrž chceme svou uměleckou visi zaklíniti pevně do souhrnu všeho, co teče mimo nás nenápadně, klidně, aniž to na sebe okatě upozorňovalo. Nehledáme typično, bez něhož není žádného umění, v něčem, co by se dalo jakkoli kvalifikovati »interessantním« ve vnějším slova smyslu. Snahy o umění proletářské, pro naší hudbu tak typické, jsou toho nejpádnějším důkazem.”

[“We are not now interested in something that is outside life, but we wish to fix our artistic vision firmly on the totality of everything that passes us unnoticed, quietly, apparently without drawing attention to itself. We do not seek the “typical”, without which no art exists, in anything which could be described in any way as “interesting” in the external sense of the word. The strivings for proletarian art, so typical for Czech music, are the most striking evidence of this.”]

And several pages later we encounter a formulation of the function of music which resembles a cultural revolution:

“Není proto možno, aby dnešní snažení hudební bylo hledáno v technických výbojích, (…), nýbrž (...) v duchově přeměně člověka z člověka předválečného v člověka poválečného, v člověka prostého, v člověka neexklusivního, neisolovaného a sociabilního.”

[“For this reason it is impossible to orientate current musical endeavours towards technical innovation, but towards the spiritual transformation of Man, from prewar man to postwar man, to unaffected, openhearted, non-exclusive, sociable, collectivist man.”]

5 Bartoš, 17–18.
6 Bartoš, 23.
7 Bartoš, 24.
From this perspective Bartoš gives a rather negative picture of contemporary German and French music, as directed by both superficiality and hedonism. On the Czech scene, Janáček, Suk and Novák are considered second rate as compared with the only true heir of Smetana, Josef Bohuslav Foerster. In the end, Smetana is declared to be the true teacher for the coming generations:

“Studium jeho díla pomáhá nám řešiti nejkomplikovanější otázky hudebně teoretické a estetické: pojem národnosti i pojem uměleckého internacionalismu, pojem individuality umělecké i umělecké kolektivity.”

[“The study of his works helps us to solve the most complicated theoretical and aesthetic questions in music: the concept of nationalism as well as the concept of internationalism, the concepts of artistic individuality and also collectivism.”]

In this picture, Smetana’s role bears some of the characteristics imparted later to the Classics of Marxism, being the source of the answers to any question that life itself might raise.

Even if there was probably less unity in the viewpoints of Czech musicians and music critics than Bartoš suggested, his vocabulary demonstrates that many important elements of socialist realist discourse were already in the air by the middle of the 1920’s, despite the simultaneous development of the avant-garde in the Czechoslovakia of the happy 1920’s.

1929–1947: The People (will/would) go with Composers

By the end of the 1920’s, the lovely carefree days of foolish manifestos and scandals were gone in Czechoslovakia. The taking of power by the Stalinists in the Czechoslovak Communist Party in 1929, the economic depression and the advance of Hitler in neighbouring Germany began to change the atmosphere among leftist liberal intellectuals. In 1929, the organisation Levá fronta [Left Front] was founded to unite Marxist intellectuals. In 1932, a section for proletarian music was established within the organisation, in which composers like Erwin Schulhoff and Alois Hába played a prominent role. Erwin Schulhoff may serve as a model representative for the whole development in the 1930’s.9

He was born in Prague in 1894 as the eldest son of a German Jewish merchant. He studied the piano and composition at the conservatories in Prague, Leipzig and Cologne. After a period of military service in Italy during the First World War, he lived in Dresden from 1919 to 1923. He became a member of the Dresden DADA group, other members of which were Otto Dix and Theodor Däubler. He became a friend of the head of the Berlin DADA group, George Gross. He was in touch with Alban Berg, frequently played Schönberg’s piano pieces, and as a composer, was interested in both atonal music and jazz. In 1923 he returned to Prague and identified himself more with

8 Bartoš, 78.
the Czech than the German scene of the city. Like many of the avant-garde artists of the 1920’s, he was politically orientated towards the left, convinced that avant-garde art was intrinsically related to what they believed to be social progress from decadent capitalism to the more human socialism.

Until the early 1930’s, Schulhoff did not harbour doubts about the avant-garde ideology of exclusive autonomous art. Even in 1932, he wrote in a letter to the Czech writer Karel Josef Beneš, the librettist of his opera Die Flammen:

“[Wir] jedenfalls brauchen innere Zufriedenheit, aber sobald wir fragen ob man mit uns zufrieden ist, haben wir keinen Anspruch darauf zu den Ehrlichschaffenden gezählt zu werden.”

[We definitely need inner satisfaction, but as soon as we ask whether others are content with us, we have no right to regard ourselves as honest creative artists.]

This came precisely at the threshold of a new period in his life. In 1932, the discourse on socialist realism started in Soviet Russia, accompanied by the transformation of a variety of Russian artistic organisations into the unified model of Unions of writers or composers. In 1934, the famous definition of socialist realism was established and approved by a vote at the first meeting of the Union of Soviet writers: “From the artist, socialist realism requires the true, historically concrete depiction of reality in its revolutionary development.” Schulhoff visited Russia in 1933 and was deeply impressed. His change of attitude was reinforced by the development of his professional career in Czechoslovakia. Since 1934, he lost the opportunity to play in Germany, which had been his favourite land for concert tours. The cuts in the budget of Czech Radio, another important source of finance for him, forced him to leave the capital for the provincial industrial town of Ostrava, where he took the post of pianist in the local branch of Czech Radio in 1935. This was paralleled by a change in his view on his own artistic activities and by a stylistic shift in his musical language. In another letter to Beneš, dating from 1936, he wrote:

“Vidím svůj předběžné život jako sen a vlastně nevím k čemu jsem tehda vytvořil svoji díla. Vidím příklad u svých kamarádů, kteří tvoří dále a stálé bez veškeré zodpovědnosti, a to toujours la même chose, seulement une l’art pour l’art pour les sélectes et la caste snobistique. Dříve jsem k tomu ovšem sám patřil, ale dnes již nemohu tak dá.”

[Nowadays, I see my former life as a dream and I no longer know why I created my works. I can see the example of my friends, who still produce without any responsibility, toujours la même chose, seulement un l’art pour l’art pour les sélectes et la caste snobistique! Earlier, I myself belonged to that, but nowadays, I cannot proceed any further in this way.]


After the invasion by the German troops in 1939, Schulhoff attempted to save himself and his family by adopting Soviet citizenship. He finally succeeded, but the visa necessary for leaving the country came only a few days before Germany attacked the Soviet Union on the 22 June 1941. Rather than to Russia, he was sent as a Soviet citizen to a Bavarian prisoners-of-war camp, where he died in 1942. In 1940, he wrote his 6th symphony, called “Symphony of Freedom”, which was performed after the war in Prague and later regarded as a paradigmatic document of the struggle between formalism and socialist realism in Schulhoff’s music, which started in 1932 by an atonal setting of the Communist Manifesto.

Schulhoff saw his position as one between two different worlds. In his diary, he wrote in March 1941:

“Die eine welt ist noch nicht reif und die andere welt ist vollkommen überaltert. Die noch nicht reife welt kann meine musik erst dann absorbieren, wenn sie in ihr jugendstadium kommen wird und die überalterte welt zu verjüngen vermag. Es kann möglich sein, dass dies noch eine zeitlang dauern wird, doch ist nicht daran zu zweifeln, dass es zu dieser verjüngung kommen muss.”

[One world is not mature, yet the other is completely superannuated. The immature world will be able to accept my music when it reaches a state of youthfulness, and when it is able to rejuvenate the old world. This may last some time, but I am sure that rejuvenation will come.]

A similar position was shared by many Czech avant-garde composers of that time. Their understanding of socialist realism or of socialist art did not yet incorporate anti-modernist sentiments. Their basic position was still capable of being called, in the terminology of the London Underground: “Mind the Gap!”, not “Close the Gap!”.

Composers like Hába, his pupil Karel Reiner and even more hard-line communists such as Josef Stanislav and Nejedlý’s son, Vít Nejedlý, were at that time not ready fully to relinquish their avant-garde musical language. Their central idea was one of leadership as service to the people. In autumn 1945, Reiner summed it up in this way:

“NebodtquotŠr”?Ät pokrokový hudební skladatel viděl, že jen za vlády svobodného lidu může dále vzkvétat a rozvíjet se hudba, a lid zase poznal, že jen avantgardní umělec dovede vyjádřit nejintenznější jeho myšlenky a touhy a že jenom jemu může svěřit vedení na cestě za uměleckými ideály lidského ducha.”

[“For the progressive composer saw that music could flourish and develop further only under the rule of the free people, and the people on the other hand recognized that only the avant-garde artist was able to express their most intimate ideas and aspirations, and that only to him could they entrust the leadership on the path to the artistic ideals of humanity.”]

But he puts his priorities in a different way than official aesthetics did only 3 years later:

“Avantgardní hudba musí být tónovým zhmotněním řádu současného života jedince, národa, lidské společnosti a celého světa, musí být obrazem rozvoje lidského ducha, jenž stále znovu přetváří svět a bojuje za konečné vítězství pravdy, krásy a dobra.

13 Bek, Josef, 117.
Tento život přítomnosti a jeho vývojové tendence do budoucnosti se musí odrážet především v samot-
ých výrazových prostředcích hudby. Mimo to prozrazuje pokrokový umělec svůj poměr k společnosti,
k světu a ke všem problémům současného života volbou themat a obsahem své hudby.15

["Avant-garde music must be a sonorous realization of the order of contemporary life of the individual,
of the nation, of human society and of the whole world, must be a representation of the development of
the human soul, which ever anew transforms the world and struggles for the final victory of truth, beauty
and goodness.

This present life and its tendency towards future development must be reflected especially in the
expressive elements of music. Besides this, the progressive artist reveals his attitude to society, to the
world and to all the problems of contemporary life in his choice of themes and in the content of his
music."]

The strategy was clear: to get the people on their side. The necessary tactics: mass
songs, some “lighter” music, cultivated “Gebrauchsmusik”, into which the composers
smuggled some modern elements in the hope of seducing the people one day to the
quarter-tone music of their hearts. This programme of the great “Mass Seduction”
was adopted by many Czech composers in the mid 1930’s. It should be seen in the
broader cultural and political context of the 1930’s. On the one hand, it represents part
of the policy of a broad people’s front against fascism. On the other, it is part of
a movement for the musical education of the broad masses. This musical education
movement in Central Europe was stimulated by the disillusion resulting from the
introduction of radio broadcasting. Reading the music journals from the late 1920’s,
one can easily see the growing disappointment of musicians with radio. According to
all the evidence supplied by letters sent to the broadcasters and early sociological
polls, instead of being pleased by the cheap new access to the high culture values, the
majority of audiences asked for more light music, operetta, dance and brass-band
music. The centre of the discussion about broadcasting policies, the sociology of
music, new music education strategies and Gebrauchsmusik was the German journal
Melos, carefully read in Czechoslovakia and reviewed by the Czech music journals of
that time. One of the most important figures in the development of the music
education programme was Leo Kestenberg, born in 1884 in today’s Slovakia, who took
an important post in the Prussian Ministry of Education, run by the social democrats
until 1933. Between 1933 and 1938, he lived in Prague as an émigré. He was co-founder
of a Society for music education established in 1934 by Nejedlý, Talich, Helfert and
others in Czechoslovakia. In 1936, the first International congress for music education
took place in Prague.

The activist attitude of the avant-garde of the 1930’s to the broader audience was
embedded in this context. Even in 1947, the later hard-liner and former pupil of Alois
Hába in the quarter-tone department of the Prague conservatory, Josef Stanislav,
related in the journal Rytinus with some naivity and much pride an idyllic story about
his co-operation with the working class:

"V letech 1934–1936 pořádal Svaz dělnického divadelního ochotnictva (DDOČ) hudební kursy pro své
členy. Z potřeby názorné poučit zvídatavé zájemce z proletářských účastníků kursu o hudbě, sestrojil jsem

15 Reiner, 8.
s jejich pomocí řadu pomůcek, které se pak osvědčily i při jiných příležitostech. První z nich byl tónometr, který podle mých výkresů bezvadně sestrojil nástrojařský dělník F. Štekl. Sloužil mě především k vysvětlení a popularisaci Hábovy čtvrttónové hudby. Tvoření lidové fronty proti fašismu působilo, že se utužovalo přátelství pokrokových umělců s revolučním dělnictvem. Dělníci se počali zajímat o uměleckou činnost svých přátel z kruhů inteligence."

["In the years 1934–6 the Union of Proletarian Theatrical Amateurs arranged music courses for its members. From the need to produce teaching aids for those thirsting for knowledge from the proletarian participants in the music courses, I manufactured, with their help, a series of little devices, which proved of great use even on other occasions. The most important of these was the “tonometer”, impeccably constructed according to my specifications by the toolmaker F. Štekl. It served especially in the explication and the popularisation of Hába’s quarter-tone music. The creation of the Popular Front against Fascism resulted in the strengthening of the friendship between progressive artists and revolutionary workers. The workers began to take an interest in the artistic activities of their friends from the circles of the intelligentsia.”]

Jan Hanuš, another Czech composer and a member of the modernist association Přítomnost, made a solemn promise in the first number of the renewed journal Rytmus published after the end of the war in October 1945:

“My prapor pokroku nikdy nezradíme [he means the progress in the music – M. B.]. Chceme stále dál a stále nové, ale chceme, aby lid šel s námi. Nestojíme o lacinou popularitu, nechceme nadbíhat a službičkovat, chceme lidu sloužit a chceme jej získat pro nejvyšší úkoly umění. Úkoly, před které budeme na této cestě postaveni, splníme.”

[“We will never betray the flag of progress [i. e. in music]. We continually desire more, and we continually desire the new, but our desire is that the people go with us. We do not stand for cheap popularity, we do not wish to pay court or to grovel, we wish to serve the people and we wish to win them for the highest aims of art. We shall fulfil the aims for which we are placed on this path.”]

1948–1956: The Composers go with the People

Finally, the people did not go with the composers, but the composers went with the people; at least, this is the sense of the motto of the plenary meeting of the Union of Czech and Slovak Composers in April 1950: “The Composers go with the people”. The story is quite well known. Early in 1948, the famous resolution on music of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party was issued. The communist party took power in Czechoslovakia in February of the same year and the doctrine of socialist realism was introduced in its full, developed form. In May, the Second International Meeting of Composers and Music Critics took place in Prague, a meeting which entered music history by virtue of the criticism of it by Adorno under the title Gegängelte Musik.

The speech of the general secretary of the Union, delivered at the Union’s ‘working’ meeting in April 1950, gives an illuminating example of the new phase of the discourse on socialist realism. The task of the day seemed to be criticism and self-criticism:

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17 Hanuš, Jan: Jakou hudbu dnes potřebujeme? In: Rytmus 10, 1945, 1, 9.
“Musíme si na této plenární otevřeně a poctivě říci, na koho a na co z minulosti chceme a budeme navazovat, musíme si říci, jak jsme to dosud dělali či nedělali, jak to budeme dělat. Musíme bez nejmenší známky osobního zaújetí říci, co pokládáme za dobré a co za špatné, jakých vlivů se máme vyvarovat a proč se jich musíme varovat, musíme si dokonce říci, jakým vlivům je třeba v zájmu rozkvětu nové hudby zabránit a dokázat jejich škodlivost na dosavadním vývoji české a slovenské hudby. Musíme – tak jak se to už často stalo při diskusích v klubu – poctivě a upřímně provádět kritiku skladby, kritiku tvorby, kritiku pracovních výsledků – ne proto, abychom zsemíchlovali a popravovali osoby, nýbrž proto, abychom si otevřenou kritikou navzájem pomáhali. Kritiku dnes nechápejme jako věc prestiže či dokonce věc osobního vyřizování účtu a zákrokuho napadání nepohodlných protivníků – nám dnes záleží na každém talentu, na každém umělcí, i na tom, ktery třeba z různých důvodů dosud nepřehlédl. Kritiku je třeba navzájem si pomáhat, protože – jen všechni společně můžeme rozšířit obrovské úkoly, které stojí před námi.”18

In a land in which almost all younger composers had undergone some training in formalistic quarter-tone music with Alois Hába, a repentant sinner became the favoured role to play. The dialectical move from an avant-garde to a classical heritage was completed, and a new revaluation of all values was begun:

“Nebudeme tedy myslit na osoby jako jednoznačné vzory dobré či špatné hudby, nýbrž na dílo, které ten či onen umělec za sebou až dosud zanechal. Protože si chceme konkrétně ukázat, jak se jeví formalistické a kosmopolitické tendence v tvorbě československých skladatelů.”

“Máme-li se pokusit ukázat na tvorbě z doby první republiky do jakých slepých uliček zašla hudba, můžeme sínout do nepřeberného množství skladb, které aspirovaly na úspěch v budoucnosti – jako jakési hudba prý pokrokové budoucnosti – a která nám ku podivu dnes říkají méně, než v době svého vzniku – ba neříkají nám prostě vůbec nic.”19

“… On the cultural front, … the situation could not be as clear [as in the political sphere]; many progressively minded artists surrendered to the fashions of the bourgeois West, many of them were dazzled by the iridescent fountains of Paris and the cold arrogance of Berlin. Others again – even if they were politically scared by the idea of socialism, as the governing bourgeoisie presented it to them in a perverted form – managed to preserve the continuity of the national tradition of music and to create works whose validity was not compromised.

Some in this artistic leftist deviation finally lost their contact totally with the people. Their pseudo-progressiveness is today revealed to us in the full light of day as reactionary.”

19 Barvík, 26.
This dialectics of socialist construction in the period of the intensified class struggle holds that a conservative anticomunist composer is far better than an avant-garde party member. The slogan was: learn from the classics, which meant mostly, learn from Smetana. During the meeting, several new pieces by Czech composers were performed and discussed. By far the most successful of these was a cantata, “Build up your country, you will strengthen the peace”, by Dobiáš. One of the prominent Soviet guests at the meeting, the composer Aram Chačaturjan, expressed his judgment in the discussion:

“I very much liked Dobiáš’s cantata. I liked its clarity, its expressiveness, its optimistic orientation – and perhaps I am wrong – but it seemed to me that in this cantata there is a certain continuity with the traditions of Czechoslovak music. (Applause) This last point seems unusually important to me, because those who maintain that national music could be constructed in isolation from the classics are mistaken.”

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**Zusammenfassung**

In dem Artikel wird ein Versuch unternommen, die Vorgeschichte des sozialisti-
ischen Realismus in der tschechischen Musikkultur zu skizzieren. Obwohl man oft den sozialistischen Realismus als einen Import aus Russland ansieht, man kann in dem Diskurs über die moderne tschechische Musik seit 1918 mehrere Faden identifizieren, die die spätere Rezeption der sowjetischen Doktrin erleichterten. Kurz nach der Entstehung der selbständigen Tschechoslowakischen Republik kann man in diesem Diskurs eine Welle des Isolationismus beobachten, in der Smetanas Werke (wie später um 1950) zu einem Paradigma der tschechischen Musik erhoben wurden und die zeitgenössische deutsche oder französische Musik als ein Dekadenzsymptom verurteilt wurde (Josef Bartoš). In den 30er Jahren wurde dann die neu formulierte Doktrin des sozialistischen Realismus schrittweise von den linksorientierten tschechischen Kompo-

21 Projev A. Chačaturjana [Speech of A. Chačaturjan at the meeting of the Union of Czechoslovak Composers]. In: Hudební rozhledy II, 1950, 8–9, 218.
Jahr 1950 fand jedoch eine Sitzung des Komponistenverbandes statt – unter dem Motto: „Die Komponisten gehen mit dem Volk“.

SOCIALISTICKÝ REALISMUS A TRADICE ČESKÉ NÁRODNÍ HUDBY
ANEB KDO JDE S KÝM?

Résumé


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