

## NOTES FROM THE EDITORS

Jan Blüml – Aleš Opekar

When the Institute for Musicology of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences was founded in Prague in the first half of the 1960s, its scientific focus and conception included, inter alia, the so-called mass genres, in today's words, popular music. Josef Kotek was primarily in charge of research in this area, joined a few years later by Vladimír Karbusický and especially Ivan Poledňák. The interest in popular music was also reflected in the content of the Institute's journal *Hudební věda* [Musicology] from the very beginning of its existence: as early as the first year in 1964, Lubomír Fendrych and Josef Kotek discussed the methodology of research on mass genres,<sup>1</sup> and two years later the same periodical published a remarkable study by Jiří Fukač and Aleš Sumec on jazz from an experimental point of view.<sup>2</sup> In the following years, topics from the field of popular music regularly returned to the pages of *Hudební věda*. The aforementioned Josef Kotek and Ivan Poledňák were frequent contributors, and as early as 1974 they were already considering research on popular music as an autonomous branch in the context of the field's systematics, in an article with a characteristic title (albeit borrowing the terminology of Soviet musicology, which is now unknown): *Teorie a dějiny tzv. bytové hudby jako samostatná muzikologická disciplína* [Theory and History of so-called "Bytovaya Muzyka" as an Autonomous Discipline of Musicology].<sup>3</sup>

Immediately after 1989, Josef Kotek wrote most frequently about popular music for *Hudební věda*, where he formulated his theses for his final book synthesis, *Dějiny české populární hudby a zpěvu* [The History of Czech Popular

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1 *Hudební věda* 1 (1964), No. 4, pp. 608–616.

2 *Jazz a experiment*. *Hudební věda* 3 (1966), No. 1, pp. 105–114.

3 *Hudební věda* 11 (1974), No. 4, pp. 335–355.

Music and Singing] (1994, 1998),<sup>4</sup> in individual studies. The established authors were then complemented by Aleš Opekar, a young researcher at the academic musicological workplace, not only with his reports on the developments in the field of world popular music studies, but also with his articles on Czech rock, which had long been neglected by the normalization cultural policy and science; for example, one can mention Opekar's article from 1993 entitled *K počátkům českého rocku: nad prvním profilovým albem skupiny Olympic* [To the Beginnings of Czech Rock: on the First Profile Album of the Band Olympic].<sup>5</sup> With the departure of Kotek, Opekar, and Poledňák from the Institute for Musicology in 1998, popular music disappeared for the next twenty years from the research plans of the musicological workplace of the Academy of Sciences, as well as from the pages of *Hudební věda*.

The present double issue is the first thematic issue focused on the subject of popular music (in the language of Czech theoreticians “non-artificial music”) in the history of the journal. In this sense, it reflects both the re-inclusion of popular music research into the plan of the musicological department of the Academy of Sciences since 2019, and the increased research activity within university musicological departments, especially the one in Olomouc.

These activities include not only the organization of conferences (discussed in another part of this issue), but especially the implementation of projects. One of them is the project of the Czech Science Foundation (GA ČR) entitled “The Development of Popular Music Investigation in the Czech Lands in the Context of Central European Culture and Politics since 1945”, in which the Department of Musicology of the Institute of Art History of the Czech Academy of Sciences and the Department of Musicology of the Faculty of Arts, Palacký University Olomouc cooperate through Aleš Opekar and Jan Blüml.<sup>6</sup> The essence of the project is to map academic and, to a relevant extent, non-academic research on popular music in the Czech lands in the international context and in the historical stages defined by the years 1948, 1968, and 1989. On the one hand, the project examines the early institutionalization of musicological research on popular music in the Czech lands (and hence in the Central European socialist countries), which preceded similar efforts in Western countries by at least twenty years. On the other hand, it seeks to recognize and describe the social and political mechanisms that determine the emergence of a scientific (sub)discipline and define its social role and significance. In general, the project aims to contribute to the knowledge of the history of Czech musicology.

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4 *Dějiny české populární hudby a zpěvu 1, 2*. Praha: Academia, 1994, 1998.

5 *Hudební věda* 30 (1993), No. 1, pp. 60–69.

6 Other members of the international and interdisciplinary project team are musicologists Peter Wicke, Mariusz Gradowski, Ádám Ignác, ethnomusicologist Lubomír Tyllner, and sociologist Zdeněk Nešpor.

Two studies of the present thematic double issue are directly related to this project. The first one, by Jan Blüml and Ādám Ignacz, examines and compares the history of popular music research in the Czech lands and Hungary between 1918 and 1998, with the aforementioned project aims of placing the subject in a broader Central European context (in a similar way, the Czech lands will be compared with the situation in neighbouring German-speaking countries, Poland, and Slovakia). The second study by Aleř Opekar explores the hitherto little-known legacy of Jiří Fukač in the field of jazz and popular music research. The section on Czech theoretical reflection on popular music is complemented by an article by sociologist and jazz journalist Petr Vidomus, who traces the remarkable career of Emanuel Ugge, the founder of Czech jazz journalism, in light of the musical and cultural-political changes of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The second part of the thematic double issue consists of two case studies, which refer to another ongoing project of the Czech Science Foundation (GA CR) with a significant overlap to the research of popular music entitled “Brave New World: Youth, Music and Class in Czech Post-Socialism”. The project, which is led by Ondřej Daniel, a member of the Institute of World History of the Faculty of Arts, Charles University in Prague, is also co-supervised by the Department of Musicology of the Faculty of Arts, Palacky University Olomouc. The first article by historian Miroslav Michela discusses the commodification of youth music subcultures in Czechoslovakia at the turn of the 1990s; in general, the text reflects the relatively high interest in the phenomenon of music subcultures on the part of historians of contemporary history, their specific approach to the topic based on the analysis of the content of music fanzines and other similar sources. The second text by musicologist Petr řrajer opens the question of popular music in the programmes of the first Czech private radio stations of the 1990s. As a whole, both texts represent the current inclination of Czech scholars towards popular music of the post-communist 1990s, a topic that offers extraordinary potential (similar to that of the 1920s or 1960s), but which has so far been dealt with more by foreign authors<sup>7</sup>.

Especially the articles in the first block on the development of theoretical reflection on popular music in the Czech lands are closely related to each other or complement each other. In this sense, the texts use similar terminology; for example, they avoid the aforementioned term “non-artificial music” (which appears in the texts only as an object of investigation, not as an active means of labelling) and instead use the internationally understandable term “popular music”. The authors’ understanding of this historically and regionally variable category is discussed in more detail in the introduction to the text by Jan Blüml and Ādám Ignacz.

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7 See Michael C. ELAVSKY: *Czech Republic*. In: Lee Marshall (ed.): *The International Recording Industries*. Routledge, 2015.