

Introduction

The ninth international music colloquy in Náměšť nad Oslavou, which has been organized as one of the projects of the annual Folk Holiday Festival, is known as a unique forum for a discussion related to folk music, modern folk music, ethnic and world music. Both the regular and the new members of the colloquy share the wide interest in music „from folklore to world music“. Nevertheless, each year they approach the field from a point of view which is derived from the main theme of the festival. In 2012 they explored **music and barriers**.

Discussing music and barriers may look contradictory at first sight. Music itself makes no barriers; it is the other way round: it builds paths and bridges which cross inner and outer distances, as well as distances in time and space, between people and within them. Barriers often reflected the given social rules, and so many music expressions had a restricted range of users. Traditional music culture strictly followed the male and female principles of music manifestations, whether in connection to ceremonies and customs, or everyday use. The restrictions were caused by the musical life of ethnic and religious societies, and by their social and gender conventions. Over the years, barriers also grew from the stereotypes in thinking, which determined what was or was not acceptable: such barriers touched the whole spectre of music culture. As a result, overcoming the barriers often resulted in a new musical value; preservation of the barriers perhaps contributed to the survival of culture issues which would have otherwise vanished. To overcome personal or social barriers in relation to music was a challenge for all who did not take music as a mere decoration. Even creators and composers of music had to overcome obstacles and barriers, when their music did not follow an aesthetic canon of the period.

The theme of music and barriers is multileveled. Its exploration during the Náměšť colloquy helped reveal its causes and development, as well as shed light on less known issues of music culture. Each of the authors decided to comment on a different barrier (such as religious, ethnic, gender, racial, political, cultural, and social); some papers summarized the findings, some revealed the causes of the emergence and development of musical issues and related cultural barriers.

Scholars in the field of ethnomusicology, ethnology and musicology spoke about the barriers and limits in public singing of folk songs, about aesthetic criteria and censorship in the printed editions of traditional folk songs in the Czech lands, and about problems of a nationally oriented priest and folk song collector Jindřich Šimon Baar. Leoš Janáček and his co-workers had to overcome and cope with many social, religious, technological and psychological limits and barriers during their phonographic field recordings of folk songs in Slovakia and Moravia (1909–1912), as a detailed analysis showed. One scholar discussed the position of female performers in traditional folk music in Slovakia; contemporary controversial issues of authenticity and stylization of Slovak folk ensembles on stage were the subject of another paper. The colloquy attendees also learned about language, political and confessional barriers hidden behind the production of the operatic ceremony *Phasma Dionysiacum* in Prague in 1617; as well as about the bans and limits of music in the contemporary Islamic world.

Music writers, editors and promoters commented on prejudices which modern Czech folk music has to face, and closely related to this, on the prevailing conservatism of the Czech open-air festivals audience, and on the barriers which new and pioneering projects face on the stage. The ups and downs of a unique DobroFest were reported, with an insight into the recent history of the resophonic guitar. The race issues in music were the subject of two papers; one focused on the south of the USA in the first half of the 20th century, another on the more contemporary South African scene.

The present volume brings the majority of papers from the colloquy, but it cannot offer the audio and visual presentations which accompanied them, and the afternoon discussions with international artists. Nevertheless, we hope that readers will appreciate the exploration of music through its barriers, and the suggestions how to explain them and how to understand them, how to refuse them and mainly, how to overcome such barriers.