

## **From Folklore to World Music: On and Off Stage**

### **Introduction**

The Folk Music Holiday festival in Náměšť nad Oslavou, Czech Republic, is the only one of the similar events in the country which includes an international music colloquy in its programme. It lasts for two days, and festival attendees can enter it for free and enjoy numerous presentations by music professionals, such as musicologists, ethnologists, ethno choreologists, music writers and editors, as well as musicians. Since its beginnings in the early 2000s, the colloquy has focused intentionally on traditional folk music, modern folk music, ethnic music, and world music. In 2015, the 12th colloquy within the From Folklore to World Music frame was held on the topic On and off stage.

In the call for papers, the colloquy organized selected academics and professionals to explore music with traditional and folk roots in connection with its presentation on stage, or in its free, spontaneous environment off stage. In doing so, the colloquy provided possibilities to explore and comment on the artistic level of traditional folk music, modern folk music and world music in its on stage existence, as well as the music's commercial and media links to music industry, promotion and feedback. At the same time, there was a possibility to observe the more or less unexplored off stage music world and its specialized audience, psychology and sociology. The colloquy organizers encouraged a discussion on the on and off stage music functions, their similarities, contradictions, and compatibility, as well as the perceptions of their bearers, performers, listeners, and critics. The final scope of the colloquy included topics both from contemporary music culture and from traditional music culture (which, through its various revivals, has been subject to increasing pressure to be presented out of its original environment).

On a regular basis, the first day of the colloquy is devoted to research within traditional music culture. Ethnologists, ethnomusicologists, and ethno choreologists presented the results of their long-term field research of tradition bearers (singers, dancers, musicians, and folk instrument makers), as well as outstanding creative folk artists which have influenced the presentation of folk music and dance in the Czech Republic and in Slovakia. Special attention was given to the effort of the more than century-long duration of the folklore movement, which has attempted to safeguard, preserve, and develop folklore traditions. Within the Czech and Slovak contexts, the movement is also linked to national and political period ambitions by various subjects, which have determined the on stage presentation of traditional culture very much. The colloquy speakers commented on the transformation of function, time

and place of folklore manifestations presented on stage, on their reception and the motivation of their contemporary bearers, on the reconstruction of folk dances, on the revival of making and presenting traditional musical instruments, and on the digitalization of song and dance cultural heritage, and its modern forms of public presentations.

The regional focus of the colloquy extended on the second day, with presentations by music writers, editors, and musicians. Starting with American music, one speaker commented on the effort of the early blues promoters to present on stage a touch of the authentic blues environment, which from today's point of view can sometimes be seen as forced or unintentionally humorous. Another speaker stressed the personal input of American blues promoters, collectors and organizers, which resulted in blues recordings, books on blues history, and even in the popularity of blues in Europe, and consequently helped the blues survive its humble origin and the competition of pop music. Political and ideological consequences within US and Latin American music were discussed as well, with examples of musicians who were followed by the secret police, or were even made to leave their country. Music from Brazil, Portugal, and West Africa contributed to the rise and development of music in Cape Verde. Its history, contemporary music-making and festival presentations were discussed. Speaking about the Czech lands, several colloquy attendees focused on modern folk music, tramping music, and bluegrass music, which are quite popular in the country. From several points of view, on stage, off stage and back stage, the speakers spoke about music contests, bluegrass music jams, tramping music get-togethers, and personal musical development.

There is one unique part of music colloquies in Náměšť nad Oslavou, which is enabled by the colloquy's strong tie to the Folk Music Holiday festival. Each year, a music star of the festival joins the colloquy for an afternoon discussion. In 2015, this was Sarah Savoy, singer and accordionist from Louisiana. She spoke about Cajun music, which she plays with her trio and the Hell-Raising Hayride band, about Cajun Mardi Grass in Louisiana, about typical dances and food of her home region, and about her parents Marc and Ann Savoy, who are considered outstanding representatives and promoters of traditional Cajun music.

The volume of *From Folklore to World Music: On and Off Stage* reflects in written form the presentations of the twelfth music colloquy in Náměšť nad Oslavou (July 28-29, 2015). The event originated as a rare platform for sharing ideas, meeting and discussion of academics, music writers, editors, and laymen interested in music. We hope that the readers will enjoy the volume as much as the colloquy attendees.