

# From Folklore to World Music: On Memory

## Introduction

Themes related to the topic of memory are diverse. Memory can be approached from the perspective of various branches of science, from collective and individual points of view, and from the points of view of psychology, culture, and society. Memory is connected not only to what is said, but also to how it is delivered: which forms, means, and skills are used. Culture memory is also connected to its processes, inspirations, and use. Opening an imaginary gate to the world of memory, you can see an unlimited number of possibilities, which allow memory's manifestations to be revealed both in the past and present, in everyday life as well as on unique occasions, and in various social layers and environments.

It was the possibility of a broad consideration of the topics related to memory which inspired the organizers of the 15th anniversary colloquy on music. For 33 years, the town of Náměšť and Oslavou has hosted a festival of folk music; a two-day colloquy on folk and ethnic music, modern folk music and world music is a more recent addition to the event. In 2018, the colloquy took place on July 31 and August 1. Almost twenty participants from several European countries and Canada discussed the topic of **music and memory** from different points of view. Following the initial idea of the colloquy, the event provided space both for academics and for journalists and musicians and singers, who shared, explained or defended their ideas.

The first day of the colloquy saw presentations on traditional folk music and music tradition in general. The presenters spoke about the vanishing of traditions and efforts to revive and maintain them, about individuals and institutions that are credited for keeping cultural heritage, as well as about manipulation of culture memory in totalitarian societies and elsewhere. Other topics dealt with music and the transformation of historical memory in time,

the memory of immigrants and their descendants, on music and bodily memory, and about memory related to individual tunes (such as the tonality of songs and overtone flutes used in the Carpathian mountain region), and memory and song lyrics (in “broken token” songs in English).

The second day of the colloquy was reserved for contemporary roots music topics and related areas. The opening presentation raised a psychological issue: why and how we remember some songs for our entire life. The scope of topics continued to be broad; it included a presentation focused on fake musical instruments and their collectors, a paper on poetry set to music as ‘memory’ of the good old days, an overview of modern Czech history reflected in pop music lyrics, and an attempt to recreate the itinerary of a musical tour of Pete Seeger which happened 54 years ago in a totalitarian Czechoslovakia. A special guest at the end of the colloquy usually comes from among the artists who perform on the main stage of the festival. This time, the colloquy attendees had a chance to speak with Juan Antonio Torres of the Spanish group *Vigüela*, which represented the region of Castilla – La Mancha and its traditional music and vocals.

As in the previous years, the present volume does not include all presentations: it is impossible to capture all images and sounds which accompanied the live presentations, as well as discussions which often continued outside the presentation hall and into the festival grounds. After 15 years of meeting and working together, the editors of the present volume and the colloquy organizers and attendees have agreed that coming to Náměšť feels like homecoming. The colloquy and its idea to reach and gather professionals from different fields of music, from academics to active musicians and music editors, still remains a unique and necessary effort.