

## Introduction

In 2014, Náměšť nad Oslavou in the Czech Republic saw the 11th international colloquy on music, from folklore to world music, with the heading *The World Is In Us, We Are In the World*. It is not an exaggeration to say that the event has become a tradition: not only due to its two-day regular extent, but also due to the regular involvement of most of the speakers and a growing number of the (hard)core audience. The colloquy offers space for a discussion on various aspects of ethnic music, traditional music, modern folk music, and world music. Its speakers come from academic backgrounds (ethnologists, ethnomusicologists, musicologists, and aestheticians) and from music media (editors, writers, publicists).

Globalization of culture has been the subject of many reflections in the academic and journalistic worlds, and this includes the colloquy in Náměšť. Globalization leads to a unification of culture, but it also raises concerns with regard to keeping the uniqueness of specific cultures within the globalized world. In spite of the fact that many manifestations of music grew up from the globalized culture, there also is an opposite approach which asks: what are the contributions of specific cultures to the united world? The theme of the 2014 Náměšť colloquy attempted to comment on this question, with a special interest in the contribution of the Czech musical culture to the world. Is there anything of the Czech musical culture which has enriched other cultures? Was it accepted, transformed, forgotten and then revived? Did it live its own unique life far from its place of origin? Which message did it carry in its new environment? The title of the 2014 colloquy provided space for a discussion over any culture, so no other musical culture and its new life elsewhere was excluded for discussion at the colloquy. The attendees were also interested in the situation before globalization: an exchange of cultural influences has existed from time immemorial, with no respect to geographical, religious, social and ethnic borders. Music as such has remained a universal language.

As in the previous years, the first day of the colloquy was reserved for reflections on music traditions. Migration as an important topic in music was touched on by several presentations. Migration to America and Slavonia was discussed, with its reflections in Czech and Slovak folk songs, as well as questions concerning the identity of the contemporary descendants

of migrants. Linked with this was a discussion on the function and transformation of the “old home” music in contemporary culture. A profile of two important Czech musicians of the past (Ernst Vančura and Eduard Nápravník) showed why and how they succeeded in the Czarist Russia; and a presentation about the travelling musicians focused on international circuses and the role Czech musicians had in them in the past.

The second day of the colloquy provided space for music editors and publicists and their findings; many of these men and women are active musicians and festival organizers at the same time. They discussed the position of minority and alternative music genres in the Czech lands from the theoretical and practical points of view. One paper focused on the coming of blues to the Czech lands and its development there; blues was initially misunderstood as jazz music and it took decades before it was appreciated as a separate genre. The importance of the field recordings of Alan Lomax for future folk music as well as for rock and pop music and Czech culture was discussed in another paper. The exporting of Czech alternative music, its possibilities and problems was a hot topic, because another paper was based on a previous pioneering showcase event, which promoted Czech music to international booking agencies. Languages for carrying the song message were discussed in connection with Czech musicians performing abroad: apart from Czech and English all kinds of minority and exotic languages were mentioned as examples, including the nonsense vocables which carry the energy. Two papers allowed for a personal confession, because they dealt with the musical journey of the speaker; they included a period of searching for foreign influences and a return to local roots music.

The colloquy was traditionally held as part of a week-long Folk Holidays festival, and it borrowed guest speakers from the festival for its afternoon discussion sessions. Jitka Šuranská from Moravia, and Michal Elia Kamal (an Israeli singer of Iran origin) with her band Light in Babylon from Istanbul commented on their music and their cultures, and the way to succeed in a musical “global village”.

The collection of papers which you are going to read – whether in paper or on the web – commemorates two beautiful days in Náměšť nad Oslavou in 2014, which were filled with music and an effort to understand its unpredictable ways in the past and now.