

**"Spiritual Streams in Contemporary Arts"
International Conference at the Festival Forfest 2017**

The traditional international conference "Spiritual Streams in Contemporary Art" took place in Kroměříž (June 19-21). It is no coincidence that the favorable topic "Options for International Co-operation" was chosen for this year. Foreign contacts are probably the largest "family silver" of the Forfest festival, including a growing collaboration with many foreign artists. They were often the visitors of the Forfest concerts. For example, the composer Max Stern from Israel, the Professor Daniel Kessner from the California State University and Northridge Uni, Massimiliano Messieri, the composer from San Marino - Conservatory of Music and many other European and foreign artists. The collaboration with those artists has been developing through many years as well as with many European and overseas institutions and regularly selecting by EFFE (Europe for Festivals, Festivals for Europe) for a broader European project "EFFE Label 2017-2018". Forfest was also the longtime member of the European Association of Promoters of New Music (ECPNM) and collaborated with the International Society for Contemporary Music (International Society for Contemporary Music) based in Utrecht, Netherlands.

The focus of this year's colloquium might be characterized by the organizers as follows: "This year's biennial of festival Colloquium, on which accepted the invitation a number of personalities of European musical life, introduces the theme of international cooperation. It can be expected that in the current tense situation in Europe will be opportunities for international cooperation rather decreasing than growing. From the perspective of global society, it is clear why - but we are rather interested about the hidden spiritual shifts, which are accompanying these phenomena in parallel". The participants grasped the theme of this year's colloquium in various ways exploring the historical contexts, looking for the parallels with the situation of art in the recent centuries, or dealing with the contemporary problems, or the future perspectives of art. The colloquium was led by Elena Letňanová (SK). I will try to speak on the contents of the most interesting contributions of this three-day program.

Michal Košut provided us with the basic and comprehensive historical information on "Music of Czech Cantors" as an inspiration for today. He reminded us of their music as composers who managed to keep up with Vienna and other European music centers. The cantors-composers became the builders of the Czech music. Marek Pavka prepared well funded contribution under the title "Kouty nad Desnou", "Slezské Rudoltice and Třebovice" - the lights and shadows of patrons in the Moravian-Silesian borders. His consecrated presentation was about the time of noble and patrons-industrialists who supported a wide range of European artists. At the Silesian Rudoltice Chateau, Count Albert Josef Hoditz supported the artists from all Europe, such as the composer Karel Ditters from Dittersdorf. His castle visited the music lover - the King Bedrich II of Prussia. The writer and patron Maria Stonawska (known under the name of Maria Stona) from the Třebovice Castle who supported talented young musicians in studying the music.

However, the mercenary activities ended with the onset of Communism. The industry was nationalized, the nobles expelled, and the chateaus were expropriated by the state. The international cooperation was broken for many years. The North-Irish artist, Tommy Barr, spoke of his story on "Un Beau Refuge", the troubled history of the Huguenots in the 16th and 17th centuries. King Louis Ludwig XIV. In 1685 the Fontainebleau edict prohibited the Huguenots' religion and this verdict caused a massive wave of emigration into the Protestant countries in Europe, America and South Africa. Tommy Barr's paintings remind us of this history and show the contribution of the emigration in spreading the democratic ideas throughout the world. He exhibited this theme in many European cities, his travelling exhibition were seen in the Irish cities of Lisburn, Cork, Portarlington, Waterford, Dublin, the west coast of La Rochelle, and in Kroměříž.

The Italian composer Massimiliano Messieri turned his contribution also to "History repeats in infinite variations". He chose the biographies of six well-known composers (Monteverdi, Scarlatti, Boccherini, Rossini, Puccini, and Dallapiccola) demonstrating how benefiting was their travelling between different European cultural centers (Venice, Madrid, Lisbon, Vienna, Brussels, etc).

American composer Laurence Sherr surprised by a quite different view of history. His contribution with the title "International Engagement Through Holocaust Remembrance Events", deals with the suffering of millions of Jews during the Second World War. Sherr acquainted the audience with many family and photographs of the period (many of his ancestors did not survive in the Auschwitz imprisonment). It was he who engaged himself in the program which seeks the witnesses to Auschwitz events. He recorded and retained their testimonies and memories for the next generations. Laurence Sherr wrote on this subject a composition under the title "Elegy and Vision", which features the original songs sung in the Auschwitz camp.

Sherr is trying to organize educational talks with American students on which this composition will always be heard and then one of the witnesses will speak.

Young people needs to hear the testimony about the suffering of thousands of prisoners so that it will be never repeated anymore. About the composition of Laurence Sherr *Elegy and Vision* talked in detail Rebecca and Friedrich Edelmann in their lecture: "Music as One of the Most International of All Arts". The composition was originally written for solo violoncello, later for cello and bassoon. Rebecca and Friedrich Edelmann played the composition with a great success in the Picture Gallery of the Archbishop's Castle in Kroměříž.

The systematic cooperation of Moravian artists with the abroad countries was reported by Jan Rajlich in his contribution: "The Game With Letters And Drawings". The author informed us about the activities of the Brno Art Association Q (founded in 1968) and the Brno Biennial Association (founded in 1991), their foreign exhibitions and other artistic activities. The Brno Biennial Association has also been linked with the International Biennale of Graphic Design. In the second part, the author presented some own graphics and posters (video recording) and revealed his working method: his posters were usually based on the drawings and hand-written texts. The texts were generally loosely related to the contents of the posters or the graphics as a whole, the coincidental playing-layout of the texts. His texts were created by the so-called automaton writing. They could be considered as specific texts, even automatic poetry.

The contribution of Elena and Romain Petiots "Artistic Collaborations: An Interpreter's View" characterized the various contemporary problems of musicians. Considering the young age of the both musicians, it was surprising that they were relatively critical about the globalization, the Internet and social networking. In our country, we do not realize these connections but in France they are ahead of us and have a great experience with the Internet but not satisfying experience. That's why their contribution was very interesting, and sometimes prophething. "Recently, with the development of the Internet, we see that the prevailing importance was given to various ubiquitous images but not to music ". So for musicians – it is a paradoxical - "paintings" or "performances" are more important than the music itself. [...] For the professional musicians, the Internet and social networks are at the same time a great asset and the curse as well. We often forget that the Internet is a reflection of our being but quite distorted for manipulation by people who have different goals and interests. [...] The Internet is both a tool for the democratization of music and the expansion of musical horizons and also the killer of our own opinions. We know that unanimity or worldwide unanimous opinions are seldom synonymous with the development of art.

This year's Forfest festival commemorated the anniversary of Josef Adamík's birthday (1947). The concerts included the performance of his several significant compositions. Coincidentally, the colloquium brought some very interesting contributions on this prematurely deceased composer. First of all, Josef Adamík was presented in a paper of the student from the Masaryk University in Brno, Tereza Kudelová, titled "Josef Adamík - a Short Biography And an Overview of the Work". She started from her bachelor's work on this composer. His friends remembered him as a cheerful, well-tempered and joking man. It was incomprehensible that his life ended with suicide. The fate of every human being is to some extent surrounded by mystery. Adamík's compositions, his correspondence, and audio recordings from his premieres, the entire estate, are now in the possession of Eva Dlabajová, the composer's sister.

Another interesting contribution about Josef Adamík was brought by Jaroslav Šťastný: "Josef Adamík – student's years". The lecture was complemented by the so called "listening concert" which featured a recording from the premiere of the famous Adamík's "Wind Brain Quintet" with children's toys. Jaroslav Šťastný became acquainted with the circumstances of the creation of this composition (originated in 1971). We are convinced that this avant-garde music is rightly referred to as a landmark in the musical creation of that time. The recollections of Josef Adamík were completed by the violinist Zdenka Vaculovičová in her paper "Josef Adamík - An Outline of Life and Creation Through Correspondence". Zdenka and Václav Vaculovic were life-long friends of Joseph Adamík. Their mutual correspondence lasted for many decades. From these letters, we have learned about many difficulties that accompanied Adamík's life for at least the last 15 years. From this point, we understand more his painful and premature departure.

It was necessary to select only some contributions concerning the topic of international cooperation of artists, representing the main motto of this year's colloquium. In any case, this meeting was a specific conference with international participation, where the ideas of European and world importance were heard. All the contributions (also from the previous years) might be seen at www.forfest.cz, also in the printed version, which will be released in autumn 2017.

Translated by PhDr. Elena Letňanová