

SUMMARY:

Bohemian musicians in Slovenia in the 19th and early 20th centuries

Although Bohemian musicians have contributed very significantly to the development of musical culture in Slovenia, so far their role has been studied only sporadically and rather insufficiently. This monograph is the first study to examine in detail and present their role and activities in Slovenian musical culture of the latter half of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries.

For the activities of Bohemian musicians in Slovenia, the political and cultural situation in Slovenian and Bohemian territory was very important. Despite their shared Slavic origins and certain contacts from the more distant past, it is obvious that these hereditary lands of the Habsburg monarchy were culturally very different.

In the first half of the 19th century, the Slovenians had no cultural institutions of comparable activity and importance to Bohemian institutions. Above all, they lacked a university. Slovenian intellectuals also could not rely on territorial nationalism connected with a patriotically oriented nobility that would serve as the standard bearer for a constitutional order with historical roots leading to national identification and demands for emancipation.

During the initial period of national revival, the important thing for Slovenian culture was a Romantic-nationalistic orientation represented by a limited number of scholars. Their primary demand of the arts was that they serve to support the national revival, and after the easing of political tensions at the beginning of the 1860s they took the initiative in establishing new cultural, educational, financial, gymnastic and, last but not least, musical societies. Ethnic disputes carrying over into struggles over the Slavic or Germanic character of "Slovenian" culture began to gain strength as these societies became more active.

The increased number of Bohemian musicians in Slovenia in the latter half of the 19th century cannot just be ascribed to the "fraternal" sharing of pan-Slavic ideology; their reasons for going to Slovenia are far more diverse and complex. One of the main reasons was that the Bohemian lands, thanks in part to the Prague Conservatoire, were producing so many educated musicians that they had to seek career opportunities abroad. The new musical societies emerging in Slovenian territory in the 1860s and '70s (Dramatic Society, Musical Foundation, Saint Cecilia Society, readers' clubs etc.) naturally attracted Bohemian musicians. This trend was reinforced by the fact that unlike the Bohemians, the Slovenians did not have a conservatoire of their own until the end of the First World War. With the exception of a small number of Slovenian students who got their musical education abroad (mostly in Vienna and Prague) thanks to generous financial support, Slovenia lacked educated domestic musicians during this period.

Bohemian musicians were drawn to Slovenia not only by opportunities for steadier employment as teachers or performers, but also by occasional engagements at these newly created institutions, especially with the Philharmonic Society, the German Provincial Theatre, and later the Slovenian Provincial Theatre and the Slovenian Philharmonic. One also should not overlook the purely personal reasons that led some to decide to settle in Slovenia permanently. It was not only Bohemian musicians who married and established families there. The formal framework of the laws of the Austrian monarchy also play an important part, making it easier for Bohemians to move there and offering them various benefits mainly involving terms of employment and pensions. The similarity of the Czech and Slovenian languages also played a substantial role, because it allowed Czechs to integrate into their new environment relatively quickly.

Musicians from the Bohemian lands (like Bohemians in other fields) brought along to Slovenia their ideas and knowledge from their more economically and culturally advanced Bohemian homeland. Most were received favourably because they were able to acclimate themselves relatively quickly thanks to the linguistic and intellectual similarities of their new environment. Most of them joined in actively with efforts on behalf of the Slovenian nation, but some were also active in the German cultural milieu. The ethnic disputes that began to worsen from the 1860s did not manifest themselves more severely until the end of the 19th century, when the exponents of Slovenian nationalism took a strong stance against the “incursion” of German and also Czech culture into Slovenia. In relation to the Czechs, this mostly involved the resistance of conservative Catholic circles to political liberalism and Masaryk’s pragmatism. In spite of this, Czechs continued to come to Slovenia, often to join with friends and acquaintances and sometimes also for work. These connections attracted Czech intellectuals to Slovenia along with many other settlers who contributed to the advancement of Slovenian society and culture in particular in one of the most important waves of migration within the Austro-Hungarian monarchy.

Bohemian musicians in Slovenia in the first half of the 19th century

Bohemian musicians already began arriving in Slovenia in the first half of the 19th century. They found work there as performers (the conductor Kašpar Mašek and the violinist Josef Beneš), teachers (Josef Mikš, Franc Sokol, and Jan Slavík), craftsmen (the organ builder Andrej Ferdinand Malahovski), and composers (František Josef Benedikt Dusík / Franz Dussek). In many ways, their activities were innovative and even pioneering (e.g. Dussek’s symphonies), but they also contributed to the high artistic quality of musical life in Slovenia both on important occasions (Mašek’s operatic productions at the Congress of Laibach in 1821) and at routine musical performances (philharmonic concerts, productions at Ljubljana’s Estates Theatre etc.). We find Bohemians not only in what was then Slovenia’s cultural centre, where they were responsible for, among other things, the early reception of Beethoven’s symphonies and for the education of young composers and performers, but also in the cultural “periphery” outside of Ljubljana, where they served as choirmasters, organists, master organ builders, and music teachers.

The organisational activity of Bohemian musicians in Slovenia from 1848 to 1914

Even in the latter half of the 19th century, the activities of some of the main Slovenian musical institutions could not in practice have done without Bohemian musicians. Their undeniable advantage over their Slovenian colleagues was their better and more univer-

sal education (they were graduates of Prague's conservatoire and of the organ schools in Prague or Brno), and most of them had a wealth of musical experience from working at home or abroad. It is therefore no surprise that they brought along plenty of useful musical knowledge, methods, and techniques, which they applied successfully in establishing and running various musical institutions in Slovenia. They usually came at the recommendation of one of their fellow Bohemians already working in Slovenia. The musical institutions there often turned to Bohemia with requests for advice and for recommendations of expert teachers and performers. For this reason, they maintained ongoing contacts with important Bohemian pedagogues such as the violinist Antonín Bennewitz at the Prague Conservatoire, who in turn recommended their pupils who seemed to them to be the best suited to fill the position in question.

Regardless of ethnic criteria, Bohemian musicians were involved in the activities of nearly all of the musical institutions in Slovenia then in existence, some of which would not even have been established without their efforts. The same also applies to readers' clubs in Ljubljana (Anton Nedvěd), Trieste (Jan Václav Lego), and Maribor (Henrik Korel) and to the Dramatic Society, the Music Foundation, and the Saint Cecelia Society in Ljubljana (Anton Foerster), and the Philharmonic Society (Anton Nedvěd). Bohemian musicians played an equally important role in the reform of Slovenian sacred music inspired by the Cecilian Movement (Anton Foerster in Ljubljana, Peregrin Manich in Maribor) and in the establishment and operation of a professional orchestra, the Slovenian Philharmonic, at the beginning of the 20th century (Václav Talich, Petr Teplý, and Cyril Metoděj Hrazdira).

Composing by Bohemian musicians in Slovenia from 1848 to 1914

Because of the extensive quantity and variable quality of the creative efforts of Bohemian musicians in Slovenia, this chapter focuses on only the most significant composers and the most important works that had a major influence on music composed by Slovenians.

Despite the diversity of their compositional languages, Bohemian composers had one thing in common—the thorough training in composition they had received in their homeland from their great contemporaries such as the composers Bedřich Smetana, Antonín Dvořák, and Leoš Janáček or the music theorists Otakar Hostinský and Guido Adler. Of course, in order to make a living in Slovenia they had to adapt their compositional artistry to the immediate musical demands of the individual societies. As a consequence, they were unable to make as large a contribution in the field of composing as they seemingly would have made in the Bohemian milieu, which was more inclined towards creative efforts. Still, their compositions significantly shaped the content and form of important Slovenian musical journals of the 19th and early 20th centuries: *Cerkveni glasbenik* (The Church Musician) and *Novi akordi* (New Chords).

Of no less importance was the contribution of Bohemian musicians towards the development of individual musical genres in Slovenia, from choruses and Anton Foerster's compositional universalism, which manifested itself most importantly in the opera *Gorenjski slavček* (The Nightingale of Upper Carniola), to chamber and symphonic works (Emerich Beran), piano music (Karel Hoffmeister), and songs (Josef Procházka). At the same time, thanks to the quality of their training and their own creative ability, they could adapt themselves with ease to the complacent, utilitarian conception of Slovenian musical culture in the period up to the beginning of the First World War while as composers

resisting the temptation of triviality that is so typical of music that is mostly about ethnic colour.

At the beginning of the 20th century, with certain representatives of the newer generation of Slovenian composers who had graduated from leading European musical institutions abroad, there was an apparent distancing from the procedures of the Bohemian musicians working in Slovenia. For example, Anton Foerster was repeatedly and unjustly labelled as a reactionary on ideological grounds because of his sympathy for the ideals of the Cecilian Movement. Most of the Bohemian composers had actively joined in supporting the Slovenian National Revival, but in order to make a living, they were compelled to work with “pro-German” musical institutions (the Saint Cecilia Society, the Philharmonic Society, or the German Provincial Theatre).

On various ceremonial occasions, Bohemian musicians pragmatically supplied Slovenian societies and performers with their *ad hoc* compositions. The music they produced for such purposes was therefore primarily dependent upon immediate practical needs, and it was often quite remote from their own creative efforts. In comparison with the works of their Slovenian colleagues, however, their compositions exhibited a solid theoretical foundation and undeniable compositional skill. This advantage enabled them not only to promote new compositional trends and to surpass by far the works being written in Slovenia at the time in the individual fields of secular and sacred music, but also to help with the gradual professionalisation of Slovenia’s musical life and to show Slovenian composers new ways to realise their creative potential.

Performing by Bohemian musicians in Slovenia from 1848 to 1914

Also in the area of performing, Bohemian musicians were influencing musical events constantly and in large numbers in all of Slovenia’s most important musical institutions. Already by the 1860s they were significantly helping with the creation of the choir of the Philharmonic Society and of the Ljubljana readers’ club, in the 1870s they were serving as choirmasters and occasional musical performers at concerts of the Ljubljana Musical Foundation and of the Philharmonic Society, and from the 1880s and ’90s as conductors, instrumentalists, and singers, they were exerting a major influence over dramatic musical performances at all of Slovenia’s most important operatic institutions (the Estates Theatre, the Dramatic Society, and the Slovenian and the German Provincial Theatre). In the early 20th century they took part in the establishment and management of the orchestra of the Slovenian Philharmonic, just as they had earlier handled the management and operations of numerous military bands. In the area of choral performing, the contribution of Bohemian musicians was—with the exception of the 1860s—much more modest, and this was because it was choral music that had the strongest tradition in Slovenia. Bohemians made far more headway as top conductors and instrumentalists in the fields of incidental, symphonic, and chamber music, i.e. in those areas of Slovenian music where the domestic artists were felt to be the most deficient. It was Václav Talich along with other Bohemian conductors after 1908 who were fundamentally responsible for the development and successes of the new Slovenian Philharmonic. No less responsible for the advancement of musical performing in Slovenia were Talich’s compatriots in charge of other musical institutions: Jan Václav Lego as the choirmaster of the readers’ club in Trieste (1860-1862), Josef Michl as the choirmaster of the men’s choir and the mixed choir of the Vocal and Musical Society in Gorizia (1902-1912), Emerich Beran as the direc-

tor of the choir of the National Slovenian Readers' Club in Maribor (1898-1906), Petr Teplý as the conductor of the military band of the 97th infantry regiment in Trieste (1909-1912), and Hilarion Beníšek as the first conductor of the Slovenian Provincial Theatre in Ljubljana (1894-1910).

The origins of these choirmasters and conductors were also reflected in the ethnic profiles of the ensembles they led. For example, because of a lack of enough Slovenian musicians, Beníšek often hired his fellow countrymen. Bohemian musicians were represented in the largest numbers in Ljubljana and Maribor, followed by Gorizia and Trieste. In Primorska (the Slovenian Littoral), Styria, and the remaining areas of Slovenia, we do not encounter Bohemian performers as often. When deciding to accept engagements there whether for longer or shorter periods, the Bohemians mostly were not guided by ideological or even nationalistic motives—they were working in both Slovenian- and German-oriented institutions.

Bohemian musicians not only took part in the formation of individual Slovenian performing ensembles, but also gradually improved the ensembles' artistic quality through their activities. In certain areas such as symphonic, chamber, and incidental music, they took nearly all of the positions as performers. It was not until the interwar period that the generation of Slovenian musicians who had been educated abroad was capable of partial replacement the Bohemian performers. In this sense, one may regard Bohemian musical performers as having been predominant in Slovenia in the latter half of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries.

The pedagogical activity of Bohemian musicians in Slovenia from 1848 to 1914

Besides performing, musicians from the Bohemian lands were most responsible for the development of Slovenian music education. They were working in the largest numbers at the music school of Ljubljana's Musical Foundation, where they were brought mainly by Jan Václav Lego. Among the most important teachers were the pianists Julius Ohm-Januschowsky, Karel Hoffmeister, and Josef Procházka and the conductor Václav Talich; the latter three eventually became professors at the Prague Conservatoire. Gustav Moravec and Hans Gerstner taught at the music school of Ljubljana's Philharmonic Society.

The Bohemian school of violin playing exerted decisive influence over violin pedagogy in Slovenia, and Anton Foerster's contribution was no less important for the training of local organists. Under his leadership, the organ school of the Cecilian Society in Ljubljana became the central pedagogical institution for sacred music in Slovenia. Gustav Moravec and Hans Gerstner were of similar importance to the music school of the Philharmonic Society, as was Vojtěch Hybášek for the newly established St. Stanislav Institute in Ljubljana.

There were other Bohemian music teachers working outside of Ljubljana, mostly at the schools of the Musical Foundation: Petr Teplý in Trieste, Josef Michl and Lovrenc Kubišta in Gorizia, Wilhelm Seifert and Václav Engerer in Celje, Filip Praga in Ptuj, Václav Doršner and Zikmund Polášek in Kranj, Josef Poula, Jaroslav Heyda, Otokar Zuska, Eduard Bílek, Anton Kučera, and Anton Špaček in Novo Mesto, and Henrik Korel and Emerich Beran in Maribor. Beran reorganised musical instruction at the Maribor State Men's Teachers' Institute, where Slavko Osterc, the most important Slovenian composer of the interwar period, was among those who received their basic music education there. He studied at the institute from 1910 to 1914.

The theoretical and journalism activity of Bohemian musicians in Slovenia from 1848 to 1914

In comparison with other areas of activity, Bohemian musicians in Slovenia were least productive in the fields of music theory and music journalism, mainly because of the language barrier. Nonetheless, their contributions played a part in the laying of a solid foundation for the further development of music theory and music journalism in Slovenia.

In connection with their work as teachers, Bohemian musicians created several textbooks that made a significant contribution to the development of music education in Slovenia and shaped Slovenian musical terminology. Among the most important were Nedvěď's manuals *Kratki nauk o glasbi* (A Brief Instruction in Music, 1867) and *Početni nauk v petju za ljudske šole* (Beginning Instruction in Singing for Public Schools, 1894), and Foerster's *Teoretično-praktična pevska šola* (The Theoretical and Practical School of Singing, 1874), *Nauk o harmoniji in generalbasu...* (Instruction in Harmony and Thoroughbass..., 1881) and *Teoretično-praktična klavirska šola* (The Theoretical and Practical Piano School, 1886-1889). The list of musical terms that Foerster published in 1867 in his textbook *Kratek navod za poduk v petji* (A Brief Manual for Teaching of Singing) is the very first attempt to create Slovenian musical terminology.

Anton Nedvěď, Anton Foerster, Julius Ohm-Januschowsky, Karel Hoffmeister, and Josef Michl were especially active as critics and reviewers of concert life in Slovenia. The work of Bohemian musicians in publishing and criticism was not limited to articles for the Slovenian press. Several articles were sent to the editorial staffs of Czech music journals with the goal of reporting on musical events in Slovenia. Closely related to journalism was their editorial work: in 1878 Anton Foerster was behind the establishment of the first Slovenian music journal *Cerkveni glasbenik* (The Church Musician), and for another 31 years he served as the editor of its musical supplements.

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Because of the amount of migration, it is difficult to identify the areas of Slovenia where Bohemian musicians were predominant in the latter half of the 19th and the early 20th centuries, but without a doubt the largest numbers were in Carniola. In Ljubljana, as its centre, Bohemians were active constantly from the establishment of the readers' club until the dissolution of the Philharmonic Society in practically all of Ljubljana's important musical institutions. We find somewhat fewer of them in the border region around Trieste, in Slovenian Carinthia, and in Lower Styria, and this can be attributed to the greater influence of the more culturally advanced neighbouring areas. In the Slovene Littoral (Primorska) and the area around Gorizia, the number of Bohemian musicians actually declined in the latter half of the 19th century compared with the first half.

Overall during the period in question, there were approximately 80 Bohemian musicians in long-term employment in Slovenia (from a few years to a few decades), and more than 300 were there for shorter periods of time, but unlike the former group, they were not yet leaving a more visible imprint on Slovenian musical life. Tracing their activities is one of the major debts of Slovenian and Czech musicology.

A continuing problem is the ideological tendency to assign Bohemian musicians to either the Slovenian or the German camp based on the institutions they were working for although these nationalistically motivated labels did not correspond to reality. The Bohemian musicians who worked in Slovenia for a longer period usually naturalised there and assimilated with the local population. They did not differentiate themselves as being

Czechs, Germans, or Slovenians, and their motivations were primarily practical. Their concerns were earning a living in the field to which they were called and working for the benefit of musical culture as a whole. It is they who are the most responsible for the professionalisation of musical life in Slovenia, because they played a major role in the establishment and operation of the most important musical institutions there.

From the idea of musical culture being conditioned by nationality, generalised evaluations have emerged with the result that some of the compositions by these musicians have been labelled as "Slovenian". Just because some of their music truly emphasises "national" themes does not mean that they were nationalistically oriented in their works or otherwise. Bohemian musicians usually worked with musical institutions regardless of their linguistic or ethnic affiliation, which is now exaggerated after the fact. For example, the readers' clubs, which have been assigned the role of the first strongly ethnically oriented musical institutions in Slovenia, usually held their events with the assistance of the "German" Philharmonic Society. During the entire period in question, the Philharmonic Society, like the German Provincial Theatre, maintained the status of an official institution giving concerts also attended by music-loving Slovenian patriots. Similarly, adherents to the pro-German camp attended the musical events of the readers' clubs and even took part actively in them. It was only when the Slovenian side began competing more strongly with what were called German institutions that previously more or less insubstantial ethnic disputes festered under ideological pressure from both sides, and the originally non-confrontational coexistence of individual musical institutions transformed itself into a rivalry that led to the polarisation of Slovenia's musical life.

In this connection, the question arises as to whether, given the dominant role of Bohemian musicians in Slovenia during this period, there ought to be a change to the predominant "confrontational" conception of Slovenian music history, which is based on the search for and emphasis on differences between the Slovenian and German musical environment, in favour of a more inclusive conception that would include Bohemian musicians as part of Slovenian culture to a far greater extent and more naturally.

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, Bohemian musicians had a major influence over all areas of musical culture in Slovenia. They were more numerous than musicians from other countries, and their results were the most successful. Their task in Slovenia's musical life was so dominant that the activities of certain musical institutions would have been greatly hindered without them, if not entirely impossible, and they were so predominant that they basically determined the orientation of musical life in Slovenia.