

FROM FOLKLORE TO WORLD MUSIC: CZECH SCENE

Helena Chaloupková

1. Popular music is changing its Euro-American face

Multiculturalism is one of the most significant features of contemporary society. High levels of migration as well as information “migration” throughout the world allows almost daily observation of how various cultures, ideas and ways of living are coming together. This new reality expands the horizons for all kinds of human activities.

Within this process, the face of popular music of the second half of the 20th century gains a new dimension as well. Exotic influences from all parts of the world are infiltrating practically homogeneous Euro-American productions. In comparison to former sporadic and “immature” contacts, the influences of foreign (domestic as well) ethnic traditions are not being limited to partial and isolated elements, but directly create the basement of new phenomena. There are not only developing numbers of fusions, but also completely new music styles.

Popular music as platform of multicultural communication

Approximately since the 80's the covering term for all new “phenomena from anywhere” has been appearing such as “world music”, or “world beat”. This inexact and vague term which seems to have fairly commercial character rather than music, associates popular music with strong ethnic roots coming from all areas of the world. World music is the typical product of globalization, due to its dependence on mass media and modern information technologies. On the other side, world music constitutes a wonderful platform for meeting cultures and for multicultural music communication.

Differences of Czech scene

Under the label “world music” anyone can appear records more or less successfully combining traditional and modern music all over the world as well as in our country. The Czech Republic (formal Czechoslovakia) does not have a long tradition of combining cultural influences. The region has been and still is mainly a monocultural area. However, various influences of the last few decades caused both Czech society and the music scene started to live more interactive and multicultural lives.

In this study we will follow the history of the infiltration of various ethnic music into Czech popular music. We would like to find some basic influences that have changed Czech popular music and give them their names. We will research the pioneers of the Czech multicultural scene, today represented by: Iva Bittová, Zuzana Lapčiková, Věra Bílá, Ida Kellarová, Vlasta Redl, Teagrass, Čechomor, Hradišťan and many others.

2. History of infiltration of ethnic elements

2.1. Two Lines Until 1989: folklore under state surveillance versus casual independent projects

If describing the level of interest of Czech musicians in ethnic traditions it would be useful to divide it into pre- 1989 and post- 1989, a milestone in Czech history. This revolution year when the communistic government abdicated, is considered an important point in political, economical and social life and that's why all the recordings from before this period should be examined as fruits of the monopolistic music industry directly led by the state. Furthermore, the strategy of Czech recording companies Supraphon, Panton and Opus had always been inline with official cultural policy which largely interpreted Czech folklore heritage in the meaning of cultivating and (artificial) conservation.

Unnatural approach to local music

Both advantages and disadvantages of state surveillance had soon appeared: on one hand an intense support brought the enlargement of a base and hundreds of recordings (e.g. by BROLN),¹ and on the other hand with its stereotypes² caused the leveling of regional music's individuality as well as other abuses such as cutting-off of natural, personal fetters, etc. Even an additional special folk music line of the Supraphon label did not guaranteed an objective producer's process (many personal and ideological-based interferences resulted in a lot of tendentious recordings). The recordings we can accept without political background are as follows: a representative digest of the Strážnice festival, folk music and legends from the Hornácko region, quite precious profiles of Hradišťan, Olšava

¹ BROLN = Broadcasting Orchestra of Folk Instruments Brno was a leader of so-called "folklorism" and played an important role in afterwar interpretation of folk music. Folklorism movement means an accent of classical music arrangements and ways of composing and a highlighting of academic ideal in intonation and cultivate performing. In spite of this fact, BROLN hosted a lot of "real" folk performers like Božena Šebetovská, Jožka Severin, Jožka Černý, Lubomír Málek, Vlasta Grycová and others. The orchestra was founded in 1952 and subsequently directed by: Bohdan Warchall, Zdenek Nečesánek, Bohumil Smejkal, Miroslav Lopuček, Radek Zapletal, Jan Kružík, Jindřich Hovorka (so-called primáši).

² More and more sterile and unification of practice, result from mechanical arrangement compressing a development of performer's individuality.

and Cimbálová muzika Jaroslava Čecha bands and others. However, all these named recordings are unavailable and it is almost impossible to find them on the market.

Non-local motives

The recordings of the Kučerovci band that are influenced by exotic ethnic motives could be considered as pioneering on the Czech scene. They offered (elements of) sounds from Indonesia and started to be widely popular in the late 50's. They reached huge commercial success thanks to the "right" combination of underquoting an attractive exotic material and firm music knowledge.³ Many young bands followed suit.

Independent experiments

The second line of interest in folk and ethnic music before 1989 – a non state line – had a much more modest form. It included a few independent casual projects created by folk song revival performers, jazzmen and rock performers (of course not supported by the state). The atmosphere of freedom and tendency to experiment were characteristic of this line. Nowadays, we consider this line as an alternative to the "official" line and partly as a demonstration of disagreement with it. The number of musicians, who saved their face and their existence in such a risky conditions and yet found "the right" balance between old traditions and music trends of their time, was very limited. In the area of local music traditions belong, for example, Hana and Petr Ulrychovi, Dagmar Andrtová, Jaroslav Hutka, Iva Bittová, Vlasta Redl and Hradišťan with its leader Jiří Pavlica. Besides these top names we can also cite other musicians who were experimenting at this time – at the end of 60's Aleš Zikmund was trying to compose a dulcimer with rock music in Brno and in České Budějovice there was The Minnesengři band performing repertoire that included American traditional songs and South Bohemian folk songs in a modern folk song revival idiom. Also jazz Junior trio (members: pianist Jan Hammer Jr., percussionist Alan Vitouš and bass-player Miroslav Vitouš) covered Moravian folklore. In 1970 an album by a team of various jazzmen from Prague and Brno with Jaromír Hnilička and Karel Velebný at their head called *Týnom, tánom* was published. This recording offered for the first time Czech and Slovak folk songs with a jazz arrangement. Musicologist Ivan Wasserberger also confirmed its importance when writing about Slovak jazz history and mentioning that Slovak musicians were not interested in folk material at all in that time.⁴

³ Kučerovci (the official name was Skupina Václava Kučery) performed the songs in their original languages. Following titles were hits: *La Paloma*, *Cucurrucucu*, *Rege, rege*, *Ajo mama*. The group should wait for its representative recording until half of the 80's.

⁴ Wasserberger further cited from that time press when writing that, in incongruity of elemental diatonic (folk) tunes and complicated background chords is some specific magic and that Velebný and Hnilička did not limited themselves only for improvisation in chorus, but they showed other rich "jazz variants" of arranging of a folk tune: "Already in the first piece *Pásol Jano tri voly* the tune got special, rhythmically expressive counterpoint, which accompanies it later or interchanges with it." Wasserberger, Igor: *O národných špecifikach a univerzálnosti slovenskej populárnej hudby v reminiscenčnom odstupe*. In: Slovenská hudba, 1997, č. 3–4, s. 259–269.

In 1974 Petr Ulrych, who focused on pop-rock at that time, came up with his scenic piece placed to Slovakian-Ukraine borders *Nikola Šuhaj loupežník*⁵ and the year after songwriter Jaroslav Hutka introduced to his audience the album *Stůj, břízo zelená*⁶ built from folk songs from the famous collection by František Sušil (*Moravské národní písně*, Brno 1835⁷). Writing about the 70's we cannot forget to mention the Bukanyři band from Ostrava, whose adaptation of folk tunes included a regular beat background, the original approach of the Modrý efekt band on its rock recording *Svitanie* from 1977⁸ or the jazz album *V Holomóci městě* (1978) by jazz pianist Emil Viklický who drew from the link between modal conception and Moravian folk songs. In productions of Moravian bands AG Flek and Poutníci few attempts of folk or ethnic elements infiltrating their work can be traced. Of the mentioned authors, only Petr Ulrych kept up his folklore interest and it became the basis for his later composing. Together with his sister Hana (an exceptional singer) he founded a music group Javory, which performs till this day.

Golden age of folk song revival

During the 80's, many of popular music groups started to work up local folklore and use accordion and violin, instruments traditionally connected with local music tradition. Most of them came from the folk song revival trend, which reached the top of its popularity in the 80's. After the initial boom of English and American traditional Czech folk revival performers started to be interested in "their own" heritage.⁹

⁵ A LP of the same name was issued by Panton in 1974 and gained many awards because it brought a mature fusion of folk and rock music. On Ulrych's recording from 1972 *Hej, dámy, děti a páni* we can hear "only" foreshadowing of such a fusion.

⁶ One of the icons of the Czech folk song revival, Jaroslav Hutka, started to arrange and perform Moravian folk songs in the beginning of the 70's. Thanks to him many of Moravian folk songs became again popular. After his recording *Stůj, břízo zelená* which was warmly accepted by the audience, he published LP *Vandrovali hudeci*, which was awarded as a recording of the year 1976.

⁷ Sušil, František: *Moravské národní písně*. Brno 1835. F. Sušil together with other Moravian ethnologist František Bartoš (*Nové národní písně moravské s nápěvy do textu vázanými*, Praha 1892) and Czech writer Karel Jaromír Erben (*Písně národní v Čechách* and *Prostonárodní české písně a říkadla*) edited the biggest and most preserved collections of folk songs of all regions. All the collections are rich source of folk tunes so far and many of musicians found and still are finding huge inspiration there.

⁸ On this art rock album we can find an arrangement of the known folk song *Ej, padá, padá rosenka* originated to the Slovácko region.

⁹ It is quite specific point within the Czech folk song revival. In contrast to other countries, the Czech revival does not mean a renaissance of local, traditional music. The "folklorism movement" (see footnote 1) as well as general supersaturation of folk music in medias (especially in the 50's) caused a kind of (psychological) barrier in Czech musicians's mind. That is why the folk song revival in Czechoslovakia had totally different face and the musicians always preferred performing their own material (mostly with political background) or performing foreign material. Since that time the Czechs used to understand the term "folk" as a songwriter's production, less as the works of folk, countryside people.

In addition to the two most important above mentioned personalities (Hutka, Ulrych) Dagmar Andrtová, Vladimír Merta, Karel Kryl, and later Vlasta Redl and Jaromír Novhava¹⁰ were very close to a folk-like way of expression. Many folk music groups worked with traditional tunes on various kinds of levels as well – from quotation or appropriation to formulating or creating new sensitive arrangements. In addition to the before-mentioned group Minnesengři, Spirituál kvintet, Český skiffle, Heuréka, Kantoři and Fleret belonged in this category as well. At the end of the 80's, Celtic music and music from Latin America was the centre of interest. In the Czech folk rock scene Jan Hrubý, Asonance band,¹¹ Zuzana Navarová and others became well-known and popular.

Gypsy, Caribbean and Indian inspiration

Looking back at the Czech pop scene, the Kučerovci band came up with Latin American and Pacific motives. Gypsy sound and feelings were characteristic of the Gondolánovy siblings.¹² The group was founded in 1968 by brothers Vojtěch (piano), Jiří (percussion), František (guitar), Antonín (bas) and their sister Věra (singer). Together they put out about twenty LP's (the most successful album with their hit *Čekej a neplakej* sold one hundred thousands copies). Their leader, Antonín Gondolán, added new Czech lyrics to old Gypsy tunes, but later he decided to write both the tunes and the lyrics himself in the Gypsy idiom. The group's performances throughout Czechoslovakia and abroad were suddenly interrupted by the death of Vojtěch Gondolán in 1973.

Caribbean rhythms (mainly reggae and samba) were promoted in the 70's by Yo Yo Band led by Richard and Vladimír Tesaříkovi. Among rock groups we could find Babalet focused on reggae. It was established in 1984 by Aleš Drvota, around who a lot of musicians, using Caribbean rhythms and also contemplating about Rastafarianism and applying it to Czech lands, was concentrated. In the pieces written by Laura a její tygři band, Latin American and African elements could be found as well.

¹⁰ Among Slovak performers and authors Zuzana Homolová, focused on Slovak and French folk songs and ballads, was the best.

¹¹ We can name a lot of Czech music ensembles playing Celtic music – České srdce, ZOO, Dobrohošť, Irish Dew, Asonance, Kukulín, Dún An Doras, Majerovy brzdové tabulky, Michal Hromek and others. The Celtic motives firstly appeared during the 70's, but more in a sense of nature philosophy (e.g. songwriter Oldřich Janota). The oldest one ensemble, using Celtic tunes is Asonance, founded in 1976 and performing folk music and dances of The British Isles (jig, reel, hornpipe, air etc.). During the 80's some pop and rock bands "have discovered" Celtic tunes (e.g. České srdce, ZOO), parallelly with a Celtic wave abroad. The year 1991 means important point due to holding concerts of Alan Stivell in the Czech Republic as well as a renaissance of the Celtic moments in Czech national history. Musicologist Aleš Opekar writes about it in an article *Etnická hudba – základ pop music 21. století*. In: Trištvrté revue, 2000, č. 3, s. 16–17.

¹² Gypsy sound was produced also by Josef Fečo and Roma Štar. Both groups belong among pioneers of rompop (= Czech name for fusion of pop and Gypsy music). Today's top performer of rompop is Věra Bílá, exceptional singer and songwriter, which represents our country on world music stages around the world. Among her best successful albums belong *Rompop* (1995) and *Queen of Romany* (1999).

When following history of ethnic-based inspiration in Czech popular music, the huge inspiration from Asia is noteworthy. The Asian inspiration, however, often does not remain merely on a musical level. In most cases, there runs concurrently a deep interest in Eastern philosophies, religions or various spiritual aspects.

The first wave of popularity involved Indian impulses. At the end of the 60's sitar player Aleš Wotruba appeared among Prague's songwriters influenced by the beat generation and hippies. Jan Burian, from the Saze band, enthused about the sitar, the instrument of Indian classical music, but the first person, who really mastered the sitar, was Emil Pospíšil. This exceptional accompanist cooperated with Vladimír Merta, Oldřich Janota, Karel Plíhal and Vlasta Marek. The latter did a duet with E. Pospíšil, when his experimental ensemble Amalgám (est.1976), which irradiate on Prague's Jazz Days 1978, broke up.¹³

2.2. "Ethno boom" after 1989

The general approach to local folk music by Czech musicians, and to certain extent by audience as well, rapidly changed at the end of 20th century. The "New generation" had arrived, a generation without the twisted relationship to the folk heritage of the communist culture, a generation which displayed a "healthy" interest in (sometimes forgotten) local traditions and openly absorbed traditions coming from abroad as well. Within this generation intensive negative attitudes toward academia and aesthetic canonization of folklore can be observed, while simultaneously showing a tendency to elevate individual creativity and spontaneity.¹⁴ We should not be surprised – the liberal music background, general freedom for authors and performers and the fact that the Czechs could absorb all styles of popular music, at last without censorship, finally brought its fruits.

Freedom and Chaos

After 1989 many of record companies started to promote folk music in a variety of qualities – from ambitious and sophisticated projects through mainstream arrangement to very commercial and indulging vulgar tastes (e.g. recordings issued by Carmen). Many recordings sold hundreds of thousands, but that lasted only for a few years. This period is viewed only as a reaction to general dissatisfaction and market under pressure from earlier years.

¹³ Currently, V. Marek is one of the most important personalities of Czech new age music. He is interested in theory of music and musical therapeutics and he published e.g. *Tajné dějiny hudby* (2000) and *Hudba jinak* (2002). The activity of his band Amalgám which tends to eye beyond European music borders could be considered as a visionary. Amalgám had his follower named Relaxace (with members Jiří Mazánek, Vlastimil Matoušek, Karel Babuljak).

¹⁴ With such expressions Zuzana Lapčíková (an eminent figure of the 90's) describes her relationship to folk music. In: *Rock a Pop*, 1999, č. 11.

In a suddenly overcrowded, and for the first time, international market, only some record companies survived, mainly middle-sized ones with editing plan that included folk music only in forms of various samplers/compilations (e.g. Edit, Multisonic). They published titles like *The Best of Moravia*, *Bohemia*, *100 Most Beautiful Songs from...* etc. After this unrestrained stage, some companies started to focus more on conception, on quality thematic base – for example *Gnosis Brno* and *Styltón*. We can also find folk music as a marginal part of titles issued by companies interested in other genres, but in some ways with folk music connected to it (*Lotos* or *Indies*). The big companies finally decided to contribute to this market as well. They understood that it belonged to a present standard and furthermore, they could make use of very rich (formal state) archives. Unfortunately their production was, and continues to be, quite irregular and unsystematic.¹⁵

Another group of recordings that we must include is a group of self-edited projects. Many performers (attracted to the sudden possibility of owning a business) tried to become entrepreneurs, build their own recording studio, production services and publish the recordings by themselves. Such “self-made CD’s” are in the hundreds between 1992 and 2000. In Moravia alone, hundreds of folk music and world music titles were published, of course at very low number of copies.¹⁶

Some Names and Projects of Czech World Music Scene

Of all of the above named companies, the following are most important for the purpose of this topic: *Gnosis*, *Indies* (both situated in Brno), *Lotos* (Prague), *Styltón*, *Pisnička* and Brno’s branch of *Český rozhlas* (public broadcasting company).

Lotos was established in 1992 and at present it specializes in both Czech and foreign classical music, jazz and ethno music.¹⁷ *Lotos* tries to interconnect various cultures. For example in 1997 it produced and published concert recording of Czech Gypsy singers *Ida Kellarová* and *Věra Bílá* together with six world famous singers (*Stella Chiweshe* from Zimbabwe, trio *Božura* from Bulgaria, *Nasrin Pourhosseini* from Iran, *Equidad Bares* from Spain). The live CD of this remarkable concert was entitled *Koncert etnických hvězd* and now belongs among the treasures of not only of *Lotos*’s editions, but also among the entire Czech world music scene. Projects by *Jiří Pavlica* and *Hradišťan* dulcimer ensemble are also noteworthy: performing with Japan multi-instrumentalist *Yas-Kaz* recorded on the CD *Svítání*, the albums *Mys dobré naděje* and *Ozvěny Afriky* (2001) with *Hradišťan* and South African multi-instrumentalist, singer and dancer *Dizu Plaatjies* as well as the series

¹⁵ Včelaran: *Ballad of Veruna* (Bonton, 1991), Jarmila Šuláková: *A vy páni muziganti* (Supraphon, 1993), *Strážnice Folklore Festival* (Supraphon, 1994), Varmužova cimbálová muzika: *Písničky z domu* (Supraphon, 1994), Cimbálová muzika Danaj: *Ve Strážnici muzikanti hráli* (Multisonic, 1998), and others.

¹⁶ It is quite impressive number for such a small region, but we cannot attach importance to it, because it speaks more about author’s overpressure than about an adequate response.

¹⁷ It collaborates with prestigious ensembles like *Česká filharmonie*, *Wihanovo kvarteto*, *Libor Pešek*, *Jiří Bělohlávek*, *Zuzana Růžičková*, *Shizuka Ishikawa*, *Magdalena Kožená*, *Jiří Barta*, *Jiří Stivín*, *Emil Viklický*, *Hradišťan*, *Jiří Pavlica*, *Ida Kellarová*, *Zuzana Lapčíková* aj.

of four CD's *Sešli se...*¹⁸ A live recording of a TV show (broadcasting by Studio Ostrava) with the same name took place in which numerous performers tested the possibilities of common, improvised jam sessions. Citing from the sleeve-note: "Both musicians from various genres and ideas as well as audience are proving the borders of tolerance, the joy of shared performing, teamwork and listening to others can be useful and exciting."¹⁹ In Autumn 2003 Lotos offered an international festival of ethno music, Etnofest, with its motto in mind: "Making collective music without regards to race and languages brings unforgettable experiences." Furthermore the catalogue of Lotos offers admirable recordings by Zuzana Lapčiková (*Prší déšť, Moravské písně milostné*) and Ida Kelarová (*Staré cikánské písně, Na koštěti do nebe, Gypsy Songs, Ida Kelarová a hosté, Můj domov je, kde jsem já, Dadoro*). These two original personalities of the Czech world music scene also recorded an album together issued as *Zrcadlení* (pianist Emil Viklický, violinist Petr Růžička, bass player František Uhlíř, percussionist Laco Tropp, ensemble Včelaran and other guests play as an accompaniment on this live recording).

G-Music: big offer from small company

Another company that focused on world, ethno and folk music is Gnosis Brno.²⁰ Jiří Plocek, at once its owner, chief and producer, is the leader of the music group Teagrass. Their catalogue lines include traditional folk music, world music, new acoustic music and classical music. Gnosis was founded in 1993 as one of the first conceptional independent recording companies specializing in top acoustic Czech music. "The backbone" of their catalogue focuses on superior traditional folk music from Moravia, both historical and contemporary. Thanks to involving the best local performers, they pick up fundamental characteristics of the music from each ethnic region in Moravia. The recordings are made even better by the inclusion of excellent documentation.²¹ Besides an effort to present the current stage of folk music they endeavor to old forms of folklore – for example, an album and book with the oldest recordings of Moravian and Slovakian folk singers called

¹⁸ Hradišťan is one of the oldest and best-known Moravian folk ensembles (est.1950 in Uherské Hradiště). Jiří Pavlica, who has been leading it since 1978, started to transform its repertoire. At present, besides remarkable folk music and dance production Hradišťan offers own compositions and various fusions with popular music, jazz (*Prší déšť*, 1994), folk rock (*AG Flek a Hradišťan*, 1994), poetry (*O slunovratu*, 1999) and above mentioned crosscultural projects. Pavlica doesn't pause in experimenting with folk (roots) music and most of his (mature) projects have been successfully accepted by audience both at home and abroad.

¹⁹ Urbánková, Nad'a: CD *Sešli se II*. 2000.

²⁰ www.mujweb.cz/www/gnosis_brno

²¹ 1995: *Hornácký hudec Martin Hrbáč*, 1996: *František Okénka: Preleteu vtáča* (archive and present recordings from Hornácko), 1997: *Varmužova cimbálová muzika: Na Kyjovsku*, 1998: *Muzika Jožky Kubíka: Dalekonosné husle* (with Český rozhlas Brno, archive recordings originated to 1953–1972, Hornácko), 2000: *Cimbálová muzika Jaroslava Čecha: Muzicírování ve stodole* (reedition of Supraphon's LP from 1986) and *Cimbálová muzika Soláň, Zdeněk Kašpar a hosté: Valaské písničky*, 2002: reedition MG from 1992 *Primášské legendy*, 2003: *Vlasta Grycová, Grycova rodinná muzika a ženský sbor ze Strání*.

Nejstarší nahrávky moravského a slovenského lidového zpěvu 1909–1912. This album is quite a rarity because it used rare recordings drawn up by Leoš Janáček on a phonograph, and also offers a superior critical and picture appendix. In 2002, Gnosis published a double CD sampler, *Proměny v čase*, which presents old and contemporary traditional Moravian music (with detailed booklet included). Gnosis became a very prestigious company and received awards both at home and abroad.²² The effort to interconnect new musical styles and traditional music can be also seen within the catalogue lines World Music and New Acoustic Music that included recordings of Teagrass, Dalibor Štrunc, Sváťa Kotas, Luboš Novotný, Stano Palúch with Michal Vavro as well as others.

Teagrass from Brno usually found inspiration in the folk music of Southeast Europe, for example *Cestou na východ* and *Wide is the Danube*. The latter is the worthwhile fruit of co-operation by Hungarian singer and ethnographer Irén Lovász. It presents songs from Moravia to Moldavia. The old tunes taken from Lovász's repertoire gained a rich instrumentation including klezmer, folk, jazz and Middle Age classical music.²³ In Gnosis's catalogue there is a solo project of Czech top dulcimer player Dalibor Štrunc called *Prameny* which draws upon classical music as well as folk music, mainly Moravian and Irish.

Reflection of the Czech scene

Books and songbooks top up Gnosis's activities: for example the songbook of Ulrychovi siblings *Hana a Petr Ulrychovi: Písňe 1964–1999*, a map of Moravian ethnic regions, and *Sešlost u Nečasů* (a collection dedicated to outstanding broadcasting editor, musician and folklorist Jaromír Nečas). Jiří Plocek is a founder of music festival *Hudba v pohybu*. For its second year a same-named brochure come out with a complete discography of Moravian music published in the 90's and characterizations of some folk instruments.²⁴ Unfortunately, Gnosis has had financial problems in recent years and at present there are no new projects. Jiří Plocek, as a producer working for Český rozhlas Brno,²⁵ was involved in two interesting titles: CD *Zpívá Dušan Holý* (folk music area) and CD *Malý koncert*

²² For example: Classic award and Yellow Submarine in 1998, Project of the year 1999 (Czech Ethnology Society). Few of Gnosis's titles were positively reviewed in prestigious international music journals like British *Folk Roots*, *CD Classic*, American *Dirty Linen* and *Gramophone Magazine*.

²³ This CD was also issued on German label CCn'C Records.

²⁴ Jiří Plocek, together with editors Zbyňek Žůrek and Vladan Jílek (Pisnička), founded Folklorum, a non-profit society taking care of Czech folk culture and its promotion (www.folklorweb.cz). J. Plocek has same named radio show on Český rozhlas 2 Praha.

²⁵ Český rozhlas, especially studio in Brno, has one of the largest archives of folk recordings. From time to time it comes up with publishing some of their recordings (e.g. in 2002 a portrait of remarkable folk singer, band leader and folklorist from Moravian-Slovak borders Lubomír Málek *Hrajte mně, husličky*). Other folk recordings usually appear on labels: Pisnička (e.g. *Gajdovali gajdoši... z Moravy a Slezska*, 1998), Styltón (from Lašsko, Valašsko, Hanácké Slovácko regions), W Music (Valachian band Fleret and Jarmila Šuláková are top figures here), LM Music (Valašsko and Uher-skobrodsko regions), Tonstudio (Hornácko, Hradišské Dolnácko, Strážnické Dolnácko regions). The recordings which are produced by performers themselves or by the town/village, where they live, are not exceptions.

pro ovci (a classical music project from current Czech composer Miloš Štědroň). From his published activities, his guidebook to folk and world music in the Carpathian upland called *Hudba středovýchodní Evropy* (Torst 2003) it should be mentioned, as well as his special text to a huge international project *The Rough Guide To World Music* (United Kingdom 1994).²⁶

Indies – a rich variety of ethno- and folk-based projects

Still other recording companies have been publishing world, ethno and folk music on the margins. These albums need to be mentioned as they complete the picture of the Czech scene. From time to time on the label Indies Records a CD inspired by ethnic motives both Czech and exotic comes out, for example *Došli sme k vám* (folk choirs from the Hornácko region, 1996), *Zpívání z Hornácka* (1998) or an album by two big Czech experimentalists Iva Bittová and Vladimír Václavěk *Bílé inferno* (1997). Václavěk comes very close to world music on *Domácí lékař* (Václavěk-Ostřanský-Jelínková) and *Písne nepísne*, Bittová on *Čikori* (2001).²⁷ From later productions the following titles are interesting: Tomáš Kočko & Orchestr (*Do kamene tesané aneb Ondráš, Do tanca!*), ensemble Muziga (*O lásce*), who quite elegantly link-up old and modern folk music, Jan Hrubý (*Cesty, Mezidobí*), a well experienced violinist and admirer of Celtic music, local star of ethno music Ida Kelarová with her band Romano Rat (*Staré slzy*) and a live recording of Teagrass's concert (*Večerek*, 2002), which presents 10 years of their carrier which was influenced by folk elements from various corners of Central and Eastern Europe. Zuzana Navarová, an icon of Czech songwriters and a former leader of Nerez and KOA bands, largely focused on Cuban music, collaborates i.a. with an American guitarist of Columbian origin Iván Gutiérrez on albums *Skleněná vrba* and *Zelené album*. An attractive fusion of Renaissance lute music, folk and jazz with adaptations of traditional music from England, Ireland, Moravia and Bohemia could be found on Michal Hromek's CD (*Consort Music*). Indies records also offers original songwriter and guitarist Dagmar Andrtová (2 CD *Moji milí* and *Voliéra* with Radim Hladík) and album-sampler *Čarohraní*, with subtitle *Z kořenů moravského folkloru* (2003) featuring 13 current bands drawn from Moravian folklore, composing their own songs or interpreting folk songs in their own arrangement. Next to experienced names Hradišťan, Iva Bittová, Teagrass, Tomáš Kočko we can also hear beginners Maraca, Docuku, and Benedikta²⁸).

²⁶ Plocek, Jiří: *Czech and Slovak Republics: East Meets West*. In: *The Rough Guide To World Music*, Volume I., p. 49–57. United Kingdom: Rough Guide, 1999 (2nd edition).

²⁷ Iva Bittová is an exceptional personality of the whole Czech music scene, thanks to her talent, width of music scope and her performing originality. This author, singer and violinist always express very independently and uses rich variety of inspirations (taken from classical music, minimalism, jazz, rock, Moravian and Gypsy folk music etc.). Thanks to her deep roots to domestic traditions and transforming them into present music styles she could be considered as an experimental world music figure. However, her works have so synthetic character that they put out any sorting. As for her other albums, we recommend: *Svatby*, *Pustit musíš*, *Ples upírů*, *Divná slečinka*, *Polykačka nožů*.

²⁸ Of all the above mentioned groups mainly Benedikta is worth to be detailed. It is formed by sisters Váňovy (Michaela – violinist, Petra – singer), Jan Kresta – guitar, Jarda Janek – basguitar and

Venkov – Domestic tradition in folk rock arrangements

Top Czech world music names Petr Ulrych, Vlasta Redl and Čechomor band record for Venkow, which recently has become a part of Universal Music. The former named author published here the CD's *Malé zrnko pisku* (1999) and *Koločava* (2002) with a grand synthesis of Eastern Slavonic folk elements, klezmer and folk rock; Redl presented a solo CD *Na výletě* (1990) and with AG Flek *Dohrála hudba* (1999) that was full of modern folk-songs influenced by Eastern Moravian traditional music. The co-operation Českomoravská hudební společnost (Čechomor) – Venkow brought albums *Mezi horami*, *Čechomor*, *Proměny*, *Tour* and others which all demonstrate a high level of folk-rock-pop fusion.

Summary

World music as a typical product of a multicultural society does not have a strong position in the Czech Republic, is a result of complicated and long (mainly politically influenced) process. Ethnic fusions seem to be in their infantile stage there – performances, festivals etc. as well as their appearance in the press are more casual than systematic. It is more about enthusiasm of a few fans than about a business based on strategic plans.

The process of infiltration of both local and exotic ethnic elements into Czech popular music has been slow and quite complicated on account of specific pressure from the socialistic governments. Besides the “official” folk music scene (heavily influenced by state surveillance) and again the “official” pop music scene (rejecting “western, non-socialistic” music), there was at least some sporadic contacts with Latin American, Indian, Caribbean, African, Gypsy music as well as a few interesting projects mainly inspired by Moravian folk music.

The infiltration of ethnic elements into the Czech scene is not just a result of specific politic conditions. Admittedly, not until recent decade has Czech society been familiarizing itself with a rich multicultural life, a life that has been existing for more than 20 years in Western Europe. The situation after 1989 is considered as a fundamental and positive reversal of the history of intercultural communication in the Czech Republic. Opening the Czech borders either in economical or cultural meanings, caused crumbling of actual barriers, liberalization of both the market and thinking of people as well. At this moment, the situation in Bohemia and Moravia is much better with a huge influx of foreign ethnic tradition and at the same time a (re)discovering of domestic traditions (specifically, a complicated relationship to folk heritage that has its roots in the movement of so-called folklorism). A deep-rooted tradition to get to know and appreciate others from one's

Patrik Benek – percussion and it recorded CD *Sejdeme se v Dolly*. Benedicta very creatively features the folksongs from Eastern Europe. Ukraine, Polish, Russian and Moravian songs have in their arrangement exact rock sound, sometimes the elements of jazz and blues appear. It also co-operates on some theatre projects in Opava and Ostrava.

perspective has been largely attacked as intercultural communication slowly infiltrates the whole society.

Presently, the quite conservative popular music scene offers world music projects, but only on the periphery. Few performers of folk based fusions remain on the edge of mass audience interest or business, and that could be said about top figures as well. Only a few of recordings have international distribution and only a few of musicians perform abroad. Among these exceptions are Hradišťan, Vlasta Redl, Ad libitum Moravia (Viklický, Pavlica, Lapčíková) and Čechomor, who several times took part in the world music festival in Germany, Rudolstadt. Viklický together with Lapčíková and Pavlica performed in Japan, Mexico and the USA. Teagrass and Věra Bílá and Ida Kellarová co-operate with foreign producers and they are regular guests of international meetings. Currently, Iva Bittová is the most successful “exported” figure of not only the Czech world music scene, but also, at the same time, of ethno music and the so-called alternative scene.

VON DER VOLKSMUSIK ZU DER WORLD-MUSIC: DIE TSCHJECHISCHE SZENE

Zusammenfassung

Die Infiltration von ethnischen Elementen in die tschechische Unterhaltungsmusik des 20. Jahrhunderts lief nur langsam und ziemlich kompliziert durch. Im Prinzip bildeten sich zwei Linien heraus – die offizielle (durch den Staat unterstützte, etwa frigid) und die alternative (anspruchlose, aber manchmal lebensfähige). Aufmerksamkeit zogen v. a. karibische, indische, afrikanische und Roma-Elemente. Die Beziehung der Schöpfer von der tschechischen Unterhaltungsmusik zu lokalen Traditionen beeinflusste sehr (negativ) die sog. Folklorismus-Bewegung. Die gesamte Geschlossenheit und Isolation der tschechischen Gesellschaft (als ein Teil des sozialistischen Lagers) störten erst dank dem politischen Umsturz im Jahre 1989 demokratische Prozesse. Die Grenzenöffnung bedeutete eine grosse Verbreitung von interkulturellen kommunikativen Möglichkeiten. Die heutige bescheidene Szene der tschechischen World-Musik repräsentieren Namen wie Iva Bittová, Zuzana Lapčíková, Věra Bílá, Ida Kellarová, Vlasta Redl, Čechomor, Hradišťan und andere.

OD FOLKLORU K WORLD MUSIC: ČESKÁ SCÉNA

Shrnutí

Infiltrace etnických prvků do české populární hudby 20. století probíhalo pozvolna a značně komplikovaně. V zásadě se vytvořily dvě linie – oficiální (státem podporovaná, poněkud frigidní) a alternativní (skromná, avšak mnohdy životaschopnější). Pozornost přitahovaly zejména karibské, indické, africké a romské prvky. Vztah tvůrců populární hudby k lokálním tradicím významně (negativně) poznamenalo tzv. hnutí folklorismu. Celková uzavřenost a izolovanost české společnosti (coby součást socialistického tábora) narušily teprve demokratické procesy nastolené politickým převratem v roce 1989. Otevření hranic znamenalo značné rozšíření možností interkulturní komunikace. Dnešní skromnou scénu české world music reprezentují jména jako Iva Bittová, Zuzana Lapčíková, Věra Bílá, Ida Kellarová, Vlasta Redl, Teagrass, Čechomor, Hradišťan a jiní.