

## The Paradox of the Culminating Period of Pavel Křížkovský Work

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In 2010, 190 years will have passed since the birth of a major representative of Moravian music culture of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>1</sup> Father Pavel Křížkovský, whose real first name was Karel, is traditionally regarded by the musical historiographers as the most important representative of choir music before Bedřich Smetana (1824–1884). He is also mentioned in connection with the promotion of the goals and ideals of the Cecilian movement in Moravia (in the Czech Lands called Cyrillism), and, last but not least, his name is linked with Leoš Janáček (1854–1928), who was one of his favourite pupils in the monastic foundation in Brno.

The career of this composer, choir master, regenschori, and organizer of music has been sufficiently treated in literature. There are three monographs on Pavel Křížkovský, by Jindřich Geisler, Karel Eichler and Jan Racek, and innumerable studies and memoirs, which cover his life and work from various aspects.<sup>2</sup> Still there are some unknown areas

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<sup>1</sup> This paper was presented at the 44<sup>th</sup> International musicological colloquium Brno, October 2009.

<sup>2</sup> Monographs: Jindřich Geisler, *Pavel Křížkovský* (Praha 1886), Karel Eichler, *Životopis a skladby P. Křížkovského* [P. Křížkovský's Biography and Compositions] (Brno 1904) and Jan Racek, *Prameny, literatura a ikonografie* [Sources, Literature and Ikonography] (Velehrad: Olomouc 1946). The most important studies for this paper were: Jan Jeřábek, "Všelicos o Pavlu Křížkovském" [All Sort of Things about Pavel Křížkovský], in: *Příloha Našince* [Annex to Našinec] k č. 100, 1. 5. 1921, Vladimír Helfert, "Pavel Křížkovský a Bedřich Smetana" [Pavel Křížkovský and Bedřich Smetana], in: *Morava. Měsíčník pro život sociální, vědecký a umělecký* [Moravia. Monthly Magazine for the Social, Scientific and Artistic Life] (Brno 1926), p. 161–174, Ferdinand Tomek, "Vztahy P. Pavla Křížkovského k olomouckému Žerotinu" [Pavel Křížkovský Relationship to Žerotin in Olomouc], in: *Věstník pěvecký a hudební* [Journal of Singing and Music] 39, 6 (1935), p. 98 etc. Jan Racek, "Slezská hudba a Pavel Křížkovský v dějinách české hudební kultury" [Silesian Music and Pavel Křížkovský in the History of Czech Music Culture], in: *Slezsko, český stát a kultura* [Silesia, Czech Lands and Culture] (Opava 1946), Vladimír Gregor, "Neznámá činnost Pavla Křížkovského v Olomouci" [Unknown Activity of Pavel Křížkovský in Olomouc], in: *Slezský sborník* [Silesian Miscellany] 1950, p. 349–353, Jan Racek, *Pavel Křížkovský, tvůrce českého sborového slohu* [Pavel Křížkovský, Creator of Czech Choir Style] (Opava 1955), Theodora Straková, *Pavel Křížkovský, tvůrce*

in his professional career, in particular from the eleven-year-long Olomouc period, when he reformed the music in the cathedral of the archbishopric. Since this is a subject of my scholarly interest, let me share with you some facts obtained from the study of the personality and the work of Pavel Křížkovský.

The music career of Pavel Křížkovský started in the foundation established by the parish church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary in Opava (1832–1835), where he came from his native village of Holasovice/Kreuzendorf to study the secondary school. This place was closely linked in particular with two Moravian centres: Brno, where in 1848–1885 he held the office of the superior of the Brno convent foundation and choirmaster of the Augustinian church, and the Olomouc cathedral, where in 1872–1883 he conducted music.

He was also intensively engaged in non-church music in these two Moravian cities. In the 1850s in the Brno Reduta hall he conducted a series of cantatas, including e.g. the *Creation* by Joseph Haydn (1852) and Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy's *Antigone* (1854), and for five years (1852–1857), with the support of Count Bokůvka, he was active as a violinist of the string quartet. The quality of these musicians was praised even by the French virtuoso Henry Vieuxtemps. In Brno he co-founded the Männergesangverein (1848) and after the establishment of the Beseda brněnská (1860) he was elected its first choirmaster.

Soon after his arrival in Olomouc in 1872 he initiated the holding of patriotic musical, declamatory and dancing entertainment as part of the public programmes of the Slav Reading Club (in 1870 renamed Česká Beseda). Last but not least, he had a major share in the foundation of the first Czech music society in Olomouc – Žerotín.

In the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century he became also widely known as a composer. Although he had composed short church compositions already in Opava and similar works even as a student of theology in Brno, in the second half of the 1840s it was in particular secular choir music which brought Křížkovský to the centre of music in Bohemia and Moravia. Through the professor of theology and collector of folk poetry, František Sušil (1804–1868), he discovered the charm of Moravian folk songs. "You must study our national songs, you must enter the spirit of your nation", Sušil said when the composer brought to him for assessment some of his works.<sup>3</sup> At that time Křížkovský began to compose male choirs a cappella for four voices, originally intended for theology students in the seminary. He adopted tunes and texts from Sušil's collection *Moravian National Songs*, published in 1835, 1840, 1860. This was "the foundation and starting point for the realism in Moravian music in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century" as well as "the stylistic basis of Moravian modern music".<sup>4</sup>

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*české kultury z ducha lidového. Katalog brněnské výstavy 1955/1956* [Pavel Křížkovský: The Creator of Czech Folk Culture Spirit. Catalogue of Exhibition in Brno] (Brno 1955/56), Jiří Sehnal, "Chrámová hudba na Moravě od cyrilské reformy do současnosti" [Church Music in Moravia. From Cyrillic Reforms to the Present], *Opus musicum* 4 (2001), p. 4–18, Stanislav Pecháček, "Pavel Křížkovský", in: *Česká sborová tvorba 1800–1950* [Czech Choral Music], p. 159–167.

<sup>3</sup> Karel Eichler, *Životopis a skladby P. Křížkovského* (Brno 1904), p. 6.

<sup>4</sup> Jan Racek. Also Theodora Straková, *Pavel Křížkovský, tvůrce české kultury z ducha lidového. Katalog brněnské výstavy 1955/1956* (Brno 1955/56), p. 4.

Among Křížkovský's most successful choir compositions, which he repeatedly revised, are *Utonulá* [Drowned Maiden], *Odvedeného prosba* [Recruit's Appeal], *Výprask* [Beating], *Zatoč se* [Turn Around], *Zahrada boží* [God's Garden], and *Dar za lásku* [Gift for Love].

His style of composition was based on the simple four-voice harmonization of the melody in the style of the German quartet for male voices (Liedertafel), the tradition of which continued in Czech music in the work of Alois Jelen (1801–1857), František Škroup (1801–1862), Hynek Vojáček (1825–1916), Arnošt Förchgot Tovačovský (1825–1874) and Josef Leopold Zvonař (1824–1865), but soon developed into an independent form, from which the direct line goes to the modern choirs by Bedřich Smetana, Antonín Dvořák, as well as Leoš Janáček, Josef Bohuslav Foerster (1859–1951), Otakar Ostrčil (1879–1935) and Vítězslav Novák (1870–1949). In this connection B. Smetana is often quoted, who after listening to Křížkovský's choir *Drowned Maiden* in 1862 said: "Only when I heard Křížkovský's choir, I came to know what Czech music is."<sup>5</sup> J. B. Foerster, too, had words of praise for this choir: "With tears in my eyes I listened to the Drowned Maiden. Every tone touched my heart. From the very beginning up to the end it is the most precious lyric beauty, Mozartesque purity, music capturing each phrase of the poem up to the most delicate vibration, a music of the heart."<sup>6</sup>

In his secular work and in organization of music Pavel Křížkovský gradually met the period ideal of a "national composer". For instance *Humoristické listy* edited in Prague by Jan Neruda called him in 1878 the forefather of Czech music. Many choral societies in Bohemia and Moravia, whose honorary member he was, proclaimed Křížkovský the founder of Czech music. When he thanked them for this honour he usually added to his signature the phrase "brother Slav".<sup>7</sup>

The critical acclaim of Křížkovský in Bohemia and Moravia culminated in the early 1860s. One of the climaxes in his career was the year 1862, when he conducted an 800-people-strong choir during the performance of the *Drowned Maiden* at the May song festival in Prague and one year later, when at Velehrad he conducted 52 merged choral societies before an audience of 50,000 during the celebration of the 1000<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival of Saint Cyril and Methodius in Greater Moravia. On this occasion was for the first time performed in churches his pilgrimage hymn *Ejhle, oltář Hospodinův září* [Behold, the Lord's Altar Shines] with the text by Jan Soukop.

The composer's important position in the era of the constitution of Czech national music can be demonstrated by the numerous commissions he received in the 1860s and 1870s. For example, there was a public appeal to compose a Czech cantata for the

<sup>5</sup> Karel Eichler, *Životopis a skladby P. Křížkovského* (Brno 1904), p. 34.

<sup>6</sup> Theodora Straková, *Pavel Křížkovský, tvůrce české kultury z ducha lidového. Katalog brněnské výstavy 1955/1956* (Brno 1955/56), p. 19.

<sup>7</sup> It is clear from the collection of 39 letters written by Pavel Křížkovský, prevented in Zemský archiv Opava, pobočka Olomouc, fond Družina literární a umělecká v Olomouci [Provincial Archive in Opava, Olomouc branch, fund Suite literary and artistic in Olomouc] (1850) 1913–1954 (1972), inv. č. [inventory no.] 13, 1850–1884, karton [box] 4.

500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Charles IV (1878), a celebratory hymn to the Czech nation, and an oratorio about St Procopius. None of these projects was materialized, however. There are several reasons for that, a major reason being the fact that Pavel Křížkovský fell into disfavour with his clerical superiors. The first incident took place as early as 1863. The success achieved by the composer in the celebrations of the Slav missionaries at Velehrad was probably the “last drop” for the church authorities watching with displeasure his secular and patriotic activities.

Archbishop Schaffgotsch next made Křížkovský abandon his public activities in music. This was fatefully reflected in Křížkovský's composing. Over the next few years he composed only two new choirs, though on a spiritual theme (*The Shepherd and the Pilgrims*, 1866, *God's Garden*, 1867). Then the “Muse of secular music” became silent and Pavel Křížkovský completely turned to church music.

He started as choirmaster of the Augustinian church at the convent in Staré Brno in 1848. In the 1850 and 1860s he performed there, with orchestral accompaniment, the spiritual works of Ludwig van Beethoven, Franz Joseph and Michael Haydn, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Luigi Cherubini, Johann Nepomuk Hummel, Robert Führer and Johann Georg Albrechtsberger. He was a successful choirmaster, which is shown by the praise he received, even from papal authority.

A special and somewhat unexpected turning point in the music career of Křížkovský was the year 1869. The Augustinian monk joined the ranks of the most radical supporters of European cecilianism and together with Ferdinand Lehner (1837–1914) and Josef Förster (1833–1907) he began to lead the movement which in the Czech lands was known as cyrillism. Within three years he reformed liturgical music in Staré Brno, then in 1872 at the invitation of Cardinal Archbishop Bedřich Fürstenberg he passed to St Wenceslas Cathedral in Olomouc.

In the spirit of the stimuli coming mainly from Germany, with the experience gained in Brno, and according to his own inner beliefs, Křížkovský gradually removed all original repertoire from the cathedral choir. He completely abandoned performances of spiritual works by Mozart, Cherubini and Haydn and pushed through into liturgy the Gregorian chant and the works of classical Renaissance polyphony by Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, Orlando di Lasso, Thomas Luis de Vittoria, Gregorio Allegri and Jacob Handl-Gallus. From contemporary pro-reformist composers in Olomouc, there were performed works by German composers Franz Xaver Witt, Karl Greith, Eduard Stehle and H. Oberhoffer, and their Czech colleagues J. Förster and F. Skuherský. The varied musical instruments used so far were replaced by the organ and the trombones. The scores were obtained from German periodicals *Fliegende Blätter* and *Musica sacra*, the Czech *Cyril* (1874–1878 called *Cecilie*), and from the German edition *Divina Musica*. It should be added that Pavel Křížkovský composed a great deal of music for the Olomouc choir. From the Olomouc Cathedral the reform spread to the archdiocese of Olomouc and all over Moravia.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> More about this topic: Eva Vičarová, “Der Wenzelsdom in Olmütz – erzbischöfliches Gotteshaus und Zentrum der cyrillischen Reform”, in: *Acta Universitatis Palackianae Olomucensis: Musicologica Olomucensia X* (Olomouc 2009), p. 191–218.

The complexity of musical and ecclesiastical influences is shown by the fact that soon after his arrival in Olomouc, Pavel Křížkovský found himself once more in a controversy with his ecclesiastical superiors, which after several months, in 1873, resulted in his return to Brno. The main cause probably was the unwillingness of the clergy to give up the pomp and glamour of the figural music used previously. This can be seen from the opinion of the prelate and scholastic Arthur Königsbrunn, who pleaded with the new Kapellmeister to keep performing the intradas: "But I beg you, dear Father Křížkovský, to preserve at least the intradas. I am so fond of it that if it was possible I would fire the canons during it."<sup>9</sup>

In July 1873, however, Křížkovský returned to the Olomouc Cathedral in order to finish the work he had started. He described his return as "a return to exile".<sup>10</sup> However, his position became consolidated there – he was appointed the choir director – and within several years he became very fond of Olomouc; in his correspondence he more than once admitted that he had been held there in higher esteem than in Brno.

Since Křížkovský in Olomouc did not give up completely his organizing ventures in the secular sphere, the disputes with the church hierarchy continued; this was confirmed by the administrative director of the Žerotín society, Ferdinand Tomek. As if the Brno history was repeated. At the beginning of 1874, Křížkovský began to head the local Česká Beseda society in order to give programmes of music there. Soon he had to give up this activity. This happened when as the only clergyman at the Cathedral who refused to leave the society after the church regulations were broken during the Advent. Pavel Křížkovský struggled with his superiors all his life. This is also revealed in several of his letters in which he e.g. speaks of "persecution and insults" (1867), "some obstacles", and "obstinate enemies" (1973).<sup>11</sup> Nothing more can be learnt from the correspondence or other sources. Both Křížkovský and his biographers and authors of commemorative articles – among them were Jindřich Geisler, Karel Eichler, but also Josef Jeřábek, etc. – as clergymen probably did not want to reveal any information that might publicly discredit the Church. So their texts contain mainly allusions and general formulations.

From historical sources it is further known that Pavel Křížkovský, although described by his contemporaries as well as by the historians as a fairly shy, lonely and exceedingly modest person, had a very progressive spirit and pushed through his opinions systematically, with persistence and even in a stubborn way. For instance, in spite of the continuous pressure from his superiors he never gave up secular music. He could not resist new impulses coming in 1880, after the foundation of the Žerotín society. The male choir with professional ambition aroused in him a new appetite for secular music, and this resulted his composing two choirs – *Vesna* [Spring] and *Jest jaro* [Spring has come]. Křížkovský began to appear in the public again. He took part in all rehearsals and public performances of the society, which often put his work on its programme. The choir *Drowned*

<sup>9</sup> Jiří Sehnal, "Chrámová hudba na Moravě od cyrilské reformy do současnosti" *Opus musicum* 4 (2001), p. 7.

<sup>10</sup> Karel Eichler, *Životopis a skladby P. Křížkovského* (Brno 1904), p. 40.

<sup>11</sup> Karel Eichler, *Životopis a skladby P. Křížkovského* (Brno 1904), p. 40.

*Maiden* remained longest in the Žerotín repertoire. This intensive need for participation in public music activities is supported by an often repeated little story, connected with his visit to the recital of the violinist František Ondříček in Olomouc on 1 October 1882. At the subsequent dinner he made the following appeal to the world-renowned violinist: “Ondříček, let me have your violin so that me too can show them something.”<sup>12</sup>

The paradox is that Křížkovský’s progressive views led in composition, because of the acceptance of the Cyrillian reform, to unequivocal regression. In the 1870s he composed several works in the reformist spirit, such as the *Laurentian Litany*, *Requiem*, *Te Deum*, and parts of the mass propria, which in those days met with acclaim among the cyrillicists, were published, and were adopted by many choirs but with the passage of time fell into oblivion and to this day have remained lifeless. Why was it so?

The reason is in his retreat from the music language he adopted in the early 1860s. In an effort at making declamation comprehensible and in order to achieve purity in quasi-Renaissance polyphony, the composer’s style returned to Classicism in music. Unlike the secular choirs in which he ingeniously applied the technique of variation, made the content of the text clear, and did not hesitate using bold harmony (chromatics, modulation, diminished sevenths-chords), Křížkovský’s church compositions completely resign dissonance, and modulation is allowed only up to the nearest key. The composer arrived at non-scale tones only through second dominants, the secondary sevenths-chords or passing tones.

It is possible to ask whether Křížkovský restrained the language of composition unhesitatingly and had an inner belief in his church compositions. Some of his contemporaries say that after his acceptance of the reform he completely forgot about his earlier secular compositions or denied his authorship. Could his proverbial self-criticism, his inclination to not believing in himself and underrating himself be the reason why he signed his compositions with a cipher, used a pseudonym, kept the identity of the composer secret, or even burnt his work? Was he subject to some pressure? Or should we believe that he had himself discarded all his pre-reform work?

The reverse is true. I dare to say that despite all his efforts in the field of church music, Pavel Křížkovský cared more for secular music. He composed music for the church out of duty and for practical purposes but secular choir music was the carrier of his ambition as composer. Evidence for this is found in the fact that in the early 1880s he returned to secular choir music and for instance in 1882 published his choir *The Shepherd and the Pilgrims* at his own cost.

The reception of Pavel Křížkovský by listeners supports this hypothesis. After the First World War his church compositions completely disappeared from the repertoire of choirs, though they may be awaiting their renaissance, but choirs with folk motives have been a permanent part of the repertoires to this day, e.g. of the Moravian Teachers’ Choir,

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<sup>12</sup> Ferdinand Tomek, “Vztahy P. Pavla Křížkovského k olomouckému Žerotínu”, in: *Věstník pěvecký a hudební* 39, 6 (1935) p. 88–89.

Choir Nešvera or the Academic Choir Moravan. Pavel Křížkovský, who called himself a “song-writer” and “average musician”, would definitely be pleased by that.<sup>13</sup>

## **Paradox der Gipfelperiode im Schaffenswerk von Pavel Křížkovský**

### **Zusammenfassung**

Im Jahre 2010 erinnern wir uns des tschechischen Komponisten Pavel Křížkovský, des Chormeisters, Regenschors und Musikveranstalters, der vor 190 Jahren geboren wurde. Pater Křížkovský wird in der einheimischen musikalischen Historiografie traditionell als der bedeutendste Repräsentant des tschechischen Chorschaffenswerkes aus der Zeit vor Smetana angesehen. Man bewundert auch sein begeistertes Engagement bei der Durchsetzung der Ideale der Cecil-Reformbewegung in Mähren und nicht zuletzt wird auch die Beziehung zu seinem Schüler Leoš Janáček oft erwähnt.

Die reiche künstlerische Tätigkeit von Pavel Křížkovský erlebte eine ausgiebige Würdigung in der Fachliteratur. Dieser Beitrag beschäftigt sich mit dem Widerspruch zwischen der Progressivität der musikalischen Sprache von Křížkovský, die er in profanen Chorwerken in den fünfziger und sechziger Jahren des 19. Jahrhunderts verwendete, und der Regression seiner Kompositionssprache nach seiner Hinwendung zur Cecil-Reform in den siebziger Jahren. Man stellt sich die Frage, ob der Komponist von seinem kirchlichen musikalischen Schaffen innerlich überzeugt war und ob er seine vorherige Kompositionssprache bedenkenlos in Zaum zu halten pflegte.

Nach der Überprüfung von vielen Erwähnungen und Hinweisen in der Literatur, in den Erinnerungen von Zeitgenossen und auch in der Korrespondenz des Komponisten, kommt die Autorin zu dem Schluss, dass dem Seelsorger Pavel Křížkovský seine profanen Werke und Tätigkeiten mehr bedeuteten. Während er die Musik für die Kirche aus Pflicht und auf Grund von praktischen Bedürfnissen schrieb, sind die profanen Chorwerke als Träger seiner schöpferischen Ambitionen, komponiert auf der Basis von Volksmotiven, zu betrachten. Die Rezeption der Zuhörer bestätigt diese Dichotomie eindeutig: Křížkovskýs kirchliche Kompositionen sind nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg aus dem Repertoire der Kirchen-Ensembles verschwunden und möglicherweise warten sie erst auf ihre Renaissance. Im Gegensatz dazu sind die Chorwerke wie *Utonulá* [Die Ertrunkene], *Odvedeného prosba* [Rekruten-Bitte] oder *Dar za lásku* [Geschenk für die Liebe] bis heute Bestandteil des Repertoires von vielen tschechischen Chorkörpern.

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<sup>13</sup> Karel Eichler, *Životopis a skladby P. Křížkovského* (Brno 1904), p. 94.

## Paradox vrcholného období tvorby Pavla Křížkovského

### Shrnutí

V roce 2010 si připomínáme 190 let od narození Pavla Křížkovského, českého skladatele, sbormistra, regenschoriho a hudebního organizátora. Páter Křížkovský bývá domácí hudební historiografií tradičně považován za nejvýznamnějšího představitele české sborové tvorby předsmetanovské. Vyzdvihována je i jeho zanícená angažovanost v prosazování ideálů ceciliánského reformního hnutí na Moravě a v neposlední řadě jsou často připomínány vztahy s jeho žákem, Leošem Janáčkem.

Bohatá umělecká činnost Pavla Křížkovského se v literatuře dočkala dostatečného zhodnocení. Tento příspěvek se zabývá rozporem mezi progresivitou Křížkovského hudebního jazyka uplatňovaného ve světské sborové tvorbě padesátých a šedesátých let 19. století a regresí jeho kompoziční řeči po příklonu k cyrilské reformě v letech sedmdesátých. Klade otázku, jestli skladatel byl o své církevní hudební tvorbě vnitřně přesvědčen a zda krotil svůj předchozí kompoziční jazyk bez rozpaků.

Po prozkoumání mnoha zmínek a odkazů v literatuře, ve vzpomínkách vrstevníků i ve skladatelově korespondenci dospívá autorka k závěru, že knězi Pavlu Křížkovskému více záleželo na jeho světské tvorbě a profánní činnosti. Zatímco hudbu pro chrám psal z povinnosti a praktické potřeby, nositeli jeho tvůrčí ambice byly světské sbory zkomponované na lidové motivy. Posluchačská recepce tuto dichotomii jednoznačně potvrzuje: Křížkovského církevní skladby vymizely po první světové válce z repertoáru chrámových těles a na svou renesanci možná teprve čekají. Naopak sbory jako *Utonulá*, *Odvedeného prosba* či *Dar za lásku* jsou dodnes součástí repertoáru mnoha českých sborových těles.

### Keywords

Pavel Křížkovský (1820–1885); 19<sup>th</sup> century music; choir music; Olomouc; St. Wenceslas cathedral; Cecilianism; Cyrillism.