

Macek, Petr; Poledňák, Ivan

In memoriam on the seventieth birthday of Jiří Fukač

Sborník prací Filozofické fakulty brněnské univerzity. H, Řada hudebněvědná.
2003-2005, vol. 52-54, iss. H38-40, pp. [7]-13

ISBN 80-210-3965-5

ISSN 1212-0391

Stable URL (handle): <https://hdl.handle.net/11222.digilib/112033>

Access Date: 28. 11. 2024

Version: 20220831

Terms of use: Digital Library of the Faculty of Arts, Masaryk University provides access to digitized documents strictly for personal use, unless otherwise specified.

PETR MACEK, BRNO – IVAN POLEDŇÁK, PRAGUE / OLOMOUC

IN MEMORIAM ON THE SEVENTIETH BIRTHDAY OF JIŘÍ FUKAČ

Prof. PhDr. Jiří Fukač, CSc. (15. 1. 1936 – 22. 11. 2002) was undoubtedly one of the most important and in many ways key figures in Czech musicology in the late 20th century and the turn of the 21st. It is clear that his influence will continue to be felt through his legacy: his research, educational, and organizational work, and the impact he made on the minds of those who met him. And although Fukač was not just a Brno or Moravian phenomenon, his memory is naturally most treasured by those connected with the Brno musicology scene, namely, the Helfert school. In fact, this article (most other aspects of Fukač's legacy will be examined in more detail by other articles in this volume) is written by two of its members. Thus, with deliberate symbolism, two different generations of musicology join hands: one of the authors was a student and colleague of Fukač, the other a classmate and a long-time friend, as well as a colleague. One is at present a successor of Fukač at the Brno institute, the other director of the musicology department in Olomouc.

Jiří Fukač was born in Znojmo, a town on the Czech Republic's border with Austria; this positively affected his future development in many ways. Fukač's father Josef (1905–1987) was a professional typographer. His mother Anděla (1907–1981) came from a family that had lived in Vienna until 1919; she took care of the household. His family's Vienna background, and his education at a German-speaking school in Znojmo, equipped the young student with excellent language skills. The family lived for music and the arts: his father was an amateur enthusiast on a number of musical instruments; he also painted, and loved literature. His mother played the piano and taught it from time to time; in fact, the whole extended family exhibited musical talent. Jiří Fukač graduated from the 1st eleven-year school in Znojmo in 1954 – the catastrophic transformation of traditional gymnasias into the new "Soviet"-style schools fortunately had no ill effect on him. By then he had gotten solid private study of music theory, and had composed a number of minor works. He studied the piano, performed successfully in public, including with orchestra. He gained experience conducting both orchestra and choir.

Thus the Department of Musicology of the Faculty of Arts at Masaryk University in Brno received a well-prepared, musically-developed, sophisticated, and extraordinarily hard-working young person, whose rapid progress drew the attention of his teachers: mainly musicologists Jan Racek and Bohumír Štědroň, but also theorist and composer Zdeněk Blažek, ethnographer Karel Vetterl, and art theorist Oleg Sus, to name a few. On the piano Fukač honed his skills with conservatory professor Vilém Vaňura. In these student years Fukač took an interest in the entire range of issues in musicology, but took special interest in musical historiography, as reflected in his thesis paper *Křížovnický hudební inventář I–II* (also given as *Inventář pražských křížovníků*) [Musical Archives of Prague's Knights of the Cross I–II] for which he earned the title of graduated historian in 1959, and PhDr. in 1967. During his university years Fukač made two important decisions. One of them was his life-long marriage in 1958 to his classmate Jitka, née Kupčíková (PhDr., music writer, editor, then librarian and archivist, and again editor at Czechoslovak Radio in Brno). The other decision was to join the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (1956), which was not at all unusual considering the time and place. This did nothing to help Fukač's prospects; on the contrary, because of his involvement with the events and atmosphere of the so-called Prague Spring, he was expelled from the Party in 1970 during the era of "normalization" that followed. His career came to a halt, and he was deprived of the chance to teach or publish. Things began to get better only after the gradual decline of the regime in the 1980's, and its collapse in November 1989.

While still a student, Fukač, under Štědroň's supervision, worked as author and organizer of the *Československý hudební slovník osob a institucí I–II* [Czechoslovak Dictionary of Music Personalities and Institutions I–II] (1963; 1965). Here he gained experience for his own later work in music lexicography. He wrote for the Brno editions of newspapers *Mladá fronta* and *Rovnost*, and the journals *Hudební rozhledy* and *Slovenská hudba*. His first university job, after serving twenty-two months of compulsory military service, was as editor of the university magazine *U* (1961). Soon he became an assistant at the department of musicology, and a fellow in 1964. During "normalization" he was listed there as a specialist employee; he held this job until his rehabilitation after 1989. He – belatedly, due to forces beyond his control – earned the title of associate professor in 1992 with his work *K metaznakovým a intersémiotickým aspektům hudby* [On the Meta-sign and Inter-semiotic Aspects of Music]. A year earlier he had earned the title CSc. with his thesis *Studie z hudební sémiotiky a teorie komunikace* [The Studies from the Semiotics of Music and Communication Theory]; he was named professor in 1994. During his first years as assistant Fukač through the university press published his *O studiu hudební vědy* [On the Study of Musicology] (1965), which long remained the only handbook of its type in Brno and far beyond. In 1963–1967 Fukač worked at the Brno branch of the Union of Czechoslovak Composers, which led to a noteworthy product of that era, Fukač's major contribution on the origins of the music monthly *Opus musicum*, of which he was the first editor-in-chief in 1969–1970.

The main focus of Fukač's efforts over the long term was to continue the activities of the Brno school of lexicography founded by Gracian Černušák, Vladimír Helfert, Bohumír Štědroň, and other collaborators from Brno and beyond. The project of a new, encyclopaedic dictionary would end up taking a quarter century, for reasons of capacity within the department, as well as reasons both ideological and financial. Eventually, thanks mainly to Fukač's efforts as an author, editor, and organizer; and *sit venia verbo* as a diplomat in attracting new colleagues, financial support, etc., the work was published as *Slovník české hudební kultury* [Dictionary of Czech Musical Culture] (Prague 1997, editors Jiří Fukač and Jiří Vysloužil, executive editor Petr Macek, 1036 pages in large format and two-column typeset). Although criticisms could be and were made, the book is undoubtedly a fundamental work in Czech musical lexicography, in both extent and quality. It is a springboard to further research on a wide range of subjects, as well as an invaluable reservoir of information for the professional (and student!) audience and the broader public. The logical continuation of this work of Brno lexicography is the *Český hudební slovník osob a institucí* [Czech Dictionary of Music Personalities and Institutions], an internet project that Fukač had time only to begin.

If it were not for the limitations Fukač faced during the era of normalization, his bibliography would look somewhat different; but it is admirable in any case. His other major works include *Hudba a její pojmoslovní systém. Otázky stratifikace a taxonomie hudby* [Music and its Terminological System: Questions of Stratification and Taxonomy in Music] (with Ivan Poledňák, Prague 1981); *Pojmoslovie hudobnej komunikácie* [Terminology of Musical Communication] (Nitra 1983, four later printings – again in Slovak, in Czech, in Slovenian, and in German); *Mýtus a skutečnost hudby. Traktát o dobrodružství a oklikách poznání* [Myth and Reality of Music: A Tract on Adventure and the Circuitous Path to Knowledge] (Prague 1989); *Hudobná pedagogika* [Music Pedagogy] (with Jozef Vereš, Nitra 1988 and 1989), with a later edition in cooperation with Vereš and Stanislav Tesař, published as *Hudební pedagogika. Koncepce a aplikace hudebně výchovných idejí v minulosti a přítomnosti* [Music Pedagogy: Concepts and Applications of Ideas in Music Teaching, Past and Present] (Brno 2000); *Úvod do studia hudební vědy* [Introduction to the Study of Musicology] (with Poledňák, Olomouc 1995 and 2001); *Hudební estetika jako konkretizace obecné estetiky a muzikologická disciplína* [Aesthetics of Music as a Concretization of General Aesthetics and the Discipline of Musicology] (Brno 1998); and *Hudba a média. Rukověť muzikologa* [Music and the Media: a Musicologist's Manual] (with team of co-authors, Brno 1998).

Obviously, much of Fukač's work was intended as introductory material for students, but in its form and character it far exceeded that category. We have found it necessary in this introductory article on Fukač to briefly review his book titles; but to provide a similar overview (let alone a scholarly commentary) of Fukač's other published work would be impossible here, and useless in view of the detailed bibliography provided later. We must remember, however, that it

constitutes an extensive, thoughtfully provocative, and fundamental collection of important contributions to the work of larger teams (Hudební věda I–II–III [Musicology I–II–III], *Základy hudební sémiotiky I–II–III* [Fundamentals of Musical Semiotics I–II–III]), and several hundred studies, papers, and articles in various collections both within and outside the faculty, and in professional journals. His frequent platforms were the journals *Hudební věda*, *Estetika*, *Opus musicum*, and *Hudební rozhledy*; he attended and wrote papers for various conferences abroad, and produced a wealth of smaller published works (reviews, critiques, announcements, etc.).

Fukač often submitted his thoughts on various problems in musicology, and the wider music community, in the form of reports for conferences and seminars, and the subsequent volumes or journals they produced. Here was an opportunity for Fukač to debate the issues. He loved confrontation – he was always one of the most enthusiastic, well-informed, and charismatic contributors and debaters, both at home and abroad (especially after 1985, when he was allowed to go to the West for the first time, to a conference on research on popular music in Montreal). He successfully represented Czechoslovak or Czech musicology at dozens of events. He also did important work in organizing such conferences, and it would be a great mistake and injustice not to acknowledge his significant role in shaping and enriching such European musicological event as the Brno fall musicology colloquia (though this is not to diminish the contribution of Rudolf Pečman, Jiří Vysloužil, and others).

Fukač also worked hard to enlighten the general public, especially during his time at Brno radio, and after November 1989 in several television series on and about classical music. Another sphere of activities that got Fukač out from behind his typewriter or lecture podium were those of an organizational-administrative nature. These took up much of his time - of which he was unaware that he had so little left. During his life he worked on the preparation and realization of many seminars, conferences, congresses, and festivals, including Brno's annual fall music festival. The biggest impression he made on the organization of educational music conferences, which were organized near the end of the totalitarian era, and during the 1990's in Nitra, and had a real effect on the quality of the music teaching. He served in a number of musicians' organizations – at the beginning, for example, with the Union of Czechoslovak Composers, from which he was ostracized in the normalization years; later he was a member of the Association of Music Artists and Musicologists. In the 1990's he became co-founder and vice-chairman of the Czech Music Council. He was active in the field of research on Leoš Janáček and in related organizations (later becoming Chairman of the International Leoš Janáček Society, the third functioning organization today bearing that name). He was a member (and always a very active member!) of a number of academic councils (university council; also the council of the re-founded Institute of Musicology); he was a member of editorial councils, various commissions on the local or national level, such as the commission for the awarding of academic honours. He was also a board member for a number of music societies and institu-

tions (foundations, etc.). It was natural that after November 1989 he became part of the academic administration of his home faculty and university. He served on his faculty's academic council, and in its Academic Senate (serving as chairman for a time). Not long before his death he served in 1998-2001 in the very visible function of pro-rector for foreign relations.

Although Fukač took great interest in these institutions and their operations, he took the most joy and gratification from the Brno musicological institute with which he had a lifelong association. Though as a teacher his options were limited during the normalization era of the 1970s and 1980s, his scholarly spirit was always felt at the department, and he himself was a good teacher in the university sense: the creation of ideas before students and with students. In any case, music teaching – and pedagogy in general – was one of Fukač's main interests, as illustrated not only by his publications, but his organizational activities as well. By coincidence, Fukač's last work, written (actually dictated) from a hospital bed less than a week before his death, was an essay on music teaching, printed posthumously under the title *Co může a „zmůže“ hudební výchova* [What Music Education Can and is Able to Do]. It was only natural, then, that after the events of November 1989, Fukač was elected and confirmed in 1990 as head of the Department of Art and Aesthetics (the department later became today's Institute). Fukač resigned from his post in 1998 to move to the rector's office, tapping Mikuláš Bek as his successor. Fukač well understood the new conditions and new demands of the time, and began to introduce a number of reforms, acquiring (through grants, etc.) and creating new resources in support of research activities, and forming ties with the outside world. He helped start the program of student exchanges abroad, and himself kept up very lively contacts with a number of European musicologists. His most active contacts were with Vienna (especially Theophil Antonicek, a long-time friend), where he worked in 1993 as a guest professor specializing in the semiotics of music; he also lectured in Boston and elsewhere. As for international contacts, it is important to note the courage (in the face of certain domestic criticism) that Fukač brought to research on issues of German music in this country, especially in cooperation with the Sudeten German Music Institute in Regensburg, the research and publication of which he took direct part in.

If we attempt in conclusion to briefly characterize Fukač's academic personality, which many obituaries have likewise attempted to do, we might say that his extraordinary ability to absorb ideas, his excellent memory and gift for eloquence, allowed Fukač to travel the entire range of ideas in musicology. He was at home in any of the disciplines, even though the focus of his interest was music historiography in close relation to aesthetics of music, taken in the broad sense of the word, including semiotics, theory of communication, etc. Even though Fukač grew up musically with an interest in classical music, he soon realized the importance not only of the socio-economic aspect of popular music, as well as its potential aesthetic capacity. Thus in some sort of parallel current he followed what was going on even there, mainly in jazz music. And not only did he keep

up with things, he took an active part with a number of reviews, music critiques, publications, etc. More important than his specific professional commentaries is the fact that throughout his career in musicology, and in his reflections on the sense, functions, and current state of music in a changing society, he was also constantly aware of the presence, significance, and uniqueness of this “other” music. Just as his work reflected the complex diversity of music itself, he, too, highlighted and analyzed the educational dimension: that music was and is part of anthropogenesis, and that its essence is the handing down of music from generation to generation. Fukač was primarily a theorist in this field, working to free music pedagogy from the spirit of mere pragmatism and long-standing practice; even so, he made an important impact on current events, and therefore enjoyed a great amount of respect among both musicologists as well as teachers of music, and across the range of disciplines. He was respected among other scholars in the arts for his knowledge of musical theatre, drama, and fine arts, and he wrote in an informed manner on the relations between the various arts.

If we ask in closing what Jiří Fukač’s contribution was, is, or may be for Czech musicology (and we may truly say for musicology in general), perhaps it was the following: Here was a person whose life story somehow exemplifies the trying and ambivalent arc of history during the second half of the last century. Here was a person who eventually matured into an important figure of the Brno school of musicology. As time went by, Helfert and the generation of his students emerged clearly as a group distinct from Prague musicology, partly thanks to Fukač’s contribution. He was a person who managed to transform musicology into meaningful vehicle for the production of ideas, compared to more general phenomena such as “the study of art”, “music”, “the music community”, “music culture”, etc. He was a person who succeeded in connecting the strictly academic, research focus, with service to the music community (in the form of a broad range of activities conceptual, organizational, journalistic, critical, etc.). He was not only extraordinarily hard-working and productive, but also an outstanding creative force, able to see things through to the end, to the realization phase, whether it be a publication, or establishing a new organizational structure. He was the person who during recent years best represented Czech musicology to musicology abroad, and succeeded in making his mark there in a broader context, to the benefit of Czech musicology. In short, Fukač was truly an extraordinary phenomenon, far beyond the narrow boundaries of academic or physical territory.

For his wealth of various activities, Jiří Fukač received a number of acknowledgements. Besides various medals (he was awarded the medal of the Janáček Foundation in memoriam in 2004) he also received the Award of the Czech Music Fund for his contribution to musicology (1992), the Masaryk University Rector’s Award for his Dictionary of Czech Musical Culture (1998), the Classic Award for the same work (1998), and the Award for Czech-German Understanding (awarded by the Adalbert Stifter Society in Hamburg in 1998). He was named member-correspondent to the Austrian Academy of Sciences in Vienna (1999). On the occasion of Fukač’s 60th birthday, a special edition of studies and articles

by his colleagues and friends was issued (Hradec Králové 1998, editor Stanislav Bohadlo).

Jiří Fukač died on 22 November 2002 in Brno, after a long and serious illness, soon after returning from his last trip abroad (conferences in Regensburg and Leipzig). He was buried at the Central Cemetery in Brno, not far from the grave of Leoš Janáček and many of Brno's other great cultural figures.