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The political idea of Slovak identity and its effect on the chamber and orchestral music of the Slovak composers of the 20th century

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Abstract

The 20th century was an extremely difficult time era for Slovakia, since it only gained independence at the beginning of the 20th century, in a form of an union with another nation. That is why the political pressure to create national identity to claim its place in the world was immense, having an effect on each sphere of the country's existence, especially on the culture, which was supposed to be one of the pain pillars of the process.

Both chamber and orchestral music in Slovakia in the 20th century, due to all of the political events, went through an intense development throughout several generations of composers, going an uneasy way, however proving their potential and capability to learn from composers of another countries, bringing their own incentives and thoughts into the musical process. The music of the twentieth century is for Slovakia the bearer of the progress and a symbol of the Slovak culture and identity, as well as an essential part of the Slovak cultural heritage.

The main aim of this thesis is to understand the process of creating the Slovak identity and its effect on the chamber and orchestral music of the Slovak composers of the 20th century, as well as the result and effects it has today.

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1. Introduction

The choice of this topic is relevant for several reasons. The first being an attempt to capture the atmosphere in the musical culture of Slovakia in the 20th century, in which the typical Slovak classical music has been formed as well as, to define what this music and its creators make Slovak and whether it is at all possible to create such a definition. The other reason is the fact, that chamber and orchestral music in Slovakia (with chamber music focusing on string instruments) despite many efforts has not yet been summarized according to such an order. Many Slovak composers kept focusing on composing pieces for voice or piano, whereas chamber and orchestral music is often put into the background by the interpreters. This thesis might also help to those interested to see an overview of these pieces in order to play or research them, both in Slovakia or abroad and to better understand the pieces as well as their composers.

2. Questions and theses of this work

Slovakia went through a long process and countless cultural influences until it managed in the 20th century to gain independence and to become a country with its own territory, language, culture and traditions, its identity. 20th century was a breakthrough for Slovakia in every way and as any country, Slovakia too strived for claiming its place in the world. The political situation however significantly slowed down, even limited the process. The musical scene in Slovakia, the composers, faced a difficult task – to create a classical music typical for the country, but according to certain rules. Therefore, it is right to ask: was it possible at all to form an identity of the nation under so many difficult circumstances? Was the demand to create Slovak national music really possible or relevant? Could under such circumstances be created valuable chamber and orchestra pieces, recognized worldwide?

To find the answers, it is first important to describe first the political, then the cultural development of the country, always closely connected, with focus on the chamber and orchestra music in different time periods, as well as forming of the national identity of Slovakia, based on which the music was supposed to be created. It is also important to see the result of the process and its consequences, both positive and negative.

3. Historical development of Slovakia

3.1 A brief history of Slovakia

The history of Slovakia reaches far back into many centuries before B.C. Since the territory of Slovakia as we know it today has been constantly shaping throughout centuries and only in the 20th century it became an independent country with its present shape, in this thesis, i will use the term Slovakia to describe the development of the present-day territory of the country, to stay in the musical line rather than political.

The oldest settlement in the territory of Slovakia is dated into Paleolite. At the end of the 8th century B.C., the development of the country was influenced by the historical circumstances of the whole Europe.¹

There exist proofs of the contact with the Greek culture, in the 5th century B.C. however it were the Celts settling down in Slovakia. At the turn of the 5th century, German tribes came from northwest, the south territory was occupied by Romans. Slovakia was thus a place of a contact between civilized Roman empire and middle and north parts of barbaric Europe. In the time of the Migration Period, it was inhabited by the tribes of western Slavs.

In the 6th century, on the territory of Slovakia the first state formation was created – Samo's Empire, a West Slavic tribal union.² At the beginning of the 9th century the first Slavic state was formed – the Great Moravia. It was an independent state, politically, culturally and religiously gravely impacted by the mission of Byzantine theologians Cyril and Methodius in 863. Under their influence, Great Moravia became the center of Slavic literature and education, with spreading of Christianization in Slavic language. Cyril and Methodius created the Slavic alphabet – the Glagolitic script and introduced Slavic liturgical language.

Under the strong pressure of the Kingdom of the East Franks and Hungarian tribes, the state fell apart and the territory of Slovakia today became until the 16th century part of a newly formed Kingdom of Hungary. The Slovak culture was spread in the form of folk songs, legends and fairy tales, mainly through folk singers and musicians. In years 1241 – 42 was Kingdom of Hungary plundered by the Tatars, which resulted in an economic decline of the kingdom. King Béla IV summoned foreigners into the country, mainly German colonists, who gave rise to mining of precious metals, crafts and trade. New cities and castles were built, noblemen were

¹ Dvořák, Pavel (2002): *Stopy dávnej minulosti 1. [Traces of the old history 1.]*, (=I), Budmerice., p. 44

² Dvořák, P. (2004): *Stopy dávnej minulosti 2. [Traces of the old history 1.]*, (=II), Budmerice., p. 102

claiming their social status. Such a growth is documented by murals, Roman and gothic buildings and constructions in Slovak cities, for example the highest gothic altar in the world in Levoča (18,6 m), winged altars in Bardejov or the Cathedral of St. Elisabeth in Košice, biggest church construction in Middle and Eastern Europe.

At the beginning of the 16th century, Turkish armies invaded the area of Slovakia, which resulted in a collapse of the Kingdom of Hungary. Slovakia thus became part of Habsburg Monarchy. In Central Slovakia, among German inhabitants, Reformation was spreading. Through this period of time, first names of the country start to appear – Slovakia (Slavonia nostra). Spreading of the Reformation was supposed to be stopped by the Counter-Reformation, mainly through orders (Jesuits, Benedictines, etc.), as well as newly established Trnava University (1635). The period of the 17th century was marked by anti-Habsburg uprisings of the nobility, which practically ended after the defeat of the Turks near Vienna (1683). Slovakia was devastated after the Ottoman Empire rule and at the beginning of the 18th century it was struck by the Black death plague.

Slovakia, country focused mainly at agricultural production was supposed to expand its horizon with several reforms during the reign of Maria Theresa (1740 – 80) and Joseph II. (1780 - 90), taking place in a name of Enlightened absolutism.

Due to Vienna being positioned rather near, had Bratislava and another Slovak cities contacts with many artists, for example in December 1762 visited Bratislava Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. In the 1770s Joseph Haydn performed with the orchestra of Prince Esterházy in Bratislava. In Bratislava was also born composer Johann Nepomuk Hummel (1778 - 1837). At the beginning of 19th century, Ludwig van Beethoven several times visited aristocratic manor house in Dolná Krupá village.

At the beginning of the 19th century, the multi-national Habsburg monarchy led to the formation of the modern Slovak nation. There appeared first attempts to codify Slovak language (1787 Anton Bernolák, 1843 Ľudovít Štúr). Slovak culture and education started to evolve, first literary works in codified Slovak language appeared. Due to the revolutionary process in the whole Europe in 1848/49, villeinage in Slovakia was stopped, opening way to capitalism. Part of the inhabitants started to work in new factories all over Slovakia, many however travelled for work to Budapest, Vienna and another European cities.

After the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867, Slovakia was incorporated into the Hungarian part of the monarchy (Cisleithania). After that, Slovakia was experiencing a national op-

pression from the Hungarian side. In the 1860s there appeared certain loosening up of the situation, Slovak high schools were founded, as well as Slovak books and newspapers started to be published.

At the end of the 19th century, the process of the Industrial Revolution started, giving rise to the industry and energetics, however at the same time the phenomenon of growing unemployment was taking place. Thus, before the First World War many Slovak inhabitants emigrated to the United States of America to find there an employment. At the end of the 19th century was Slovak culture hardly developed, the cultural life was represented only through a few vocal and theater ensembles.

After the end of the First World War, 28th of October in 1918, Slovakia and Czechia formed together a sovereign democratic state – Czechoslovakia. The new state gave a possibility to the Slovak nation to develop the culture and social life. New cultural institutions were founded, such as the Slovak National Theatre (1920). During the Second World War, Czechoslovakia was experiencing a decline of all economic, social and cultural activities. In 1948, Czechoslovak coup d'état took place. It meant the totalitarian rule of the communism until 1989. In communistic Czechoslovakia, the social life was under the powerful control and censorship. Artists were creating important works in literature, fine arts and music, free expression and all western impulses were however forbidden. Within the totalitarian regime, the method of the socialist realism was widely applied. In 1968, there was an effort to consolidate and to loosen up the political situation. The result however was the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia, where the Soviet armies controlled the country until 1991.

The time of the unfreedom was marked by the political persecution and imprisonment of the opponents of totalitarianism. Many artists who were against socialism, were imprisoned and had forbidden a free creativity. Many of them emigrated to the Western Bloc. After the Velvet (also Gentle) Revolution in 1989 and the Fall of Communism, the democracy took place in the country. In 1993 it also split into two separate countries – Slovak and Czech Republic.

With foundation of Slovakia (Slovak Republic), a space for an own identity in the European context and deeper self-reflection was created.

3.2 Middle age

From the middle age era there exist only a limited number of artifacts demonstrating the musical culture of the Great Moravia, especially from the territory of Slovakia. However, later in the 20th century, the composers were interested to capture the atmosphere of this time era, even concrete events of it through music (see Chapter 5.2). The first specific historical proof from middle age is dated around the year 830, the time when the missionaries of German (Frankish) origin brought the roman liturgy and the Gregorian chant into the whole kingdom of Great Moravia.¹

The best prospect to spread the new culture was in the big cities through local priests, teachers or public figures, having a large influence on the thinking of the whole nation. Rastislav, the ruler of Great Moravia on the contrary disapproved the German influence and thus summoned missionaries Cyril and Methodius, the Byzantine Christian theologians to bring the liturgical music, sung in Old Church Slavonic language. This fact is one of many proofs that Slovakia has been connected to other nations since the very beginning of its existence. The Latin and Greek texts were being translated into the Old Slavonic language, even the Gregorian chant was adapted to it. Despite the fact that the Old Slavonic was largely used among the whole Kingdom, after the fall of Great Moravia the liturgy returned to the previously used Latin language. In the 9th century the church started to broaden its influence and as a result, in the city of Nitra the Benedictine Cloister was founded, having an important purpose as a center of the spirituality, public service and culture.²

From the second half of the 11th century the amount of existing sources, showing the development of the culture in Slovakia was rising significantly. The most preserved material is the Gregorian chant with its spectacular organal improvisations.³ Although it is impossible to talk about chamber or orchestral music, choral is the first official form of music making. It can be said that choral music is the founding element of the music in Slovakia.

¹ Rybář, Richard / Chalupka, Lubomír / Elschek, Oskár, *Slovakia*, in: <https://www-1oxfordmusiconline-1com-1oskm4uwa0116.han.bruckneruni.at/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000040647> (13.06.2020)


² Smolka, Jaroslav (2001): *Dejiny hudby [History of music]*, Praha, p. 100

³ Rybář, R. / Chalupka, E. / Elschek, O., *Slovakia*, in: <https://www-1oxfordmusiconline-1com-1oskm4uwa0116.han.bruckneruni.at/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000040647> (13.06.2020)

From the nonclerical music the Minnesängers (spreading the love poetry through music) were known to be the most active artists in Slovakia (among the most famous were Neidhart von Reuenthal, 1190 - 1237, Tannhäuser), apart from them, there were also many wandering entertainers and musicians who are believed to spread music around the country.¹ Despite the fact that the territory of Slovakia was at the time based on peasantry and crafts, it is obvious that music has been an important part of the country's life.

The essential part of the music culture in Slovakia are the folk songs. Some of them were created already at the end of middle age, passing from generation to generation only in oral form. They usually had a certain function, like weddings or funeral songs, festive songs (celebrating the arrival of the spring), lullabies, working songs, sung during working in the fields for example, or love songs.

Despite the fact that the folk music started to develop much later, the oldest documented folk song, The Song About the Castle of Muráň, is dated back to 16th century:²



Muránský zámek v Uherskéj zemi, na vysokaj ská - le jest posta - ve - ný,
 bí - lý svi - tí se me - zi ho - ra - mi, zdi, bašty, palá - co - vě pěkně spravení.

<i>Muránský zámek v Uherskéj zemi na vysoké skale jest postavený; bílý svítí se mezi horami zdi, bašty, palacové pěkně zpravení.</i>	<i>Na něm přebýval Bazald Matiš tu s svými bratřimi i s svými syny; polkoráb jeho Ferenc s turbaky, tež i s svými se všemi záškodníky.</i>
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*Radu sou tam, jednání mívali
a v horách mnohé lidi loupili,
mordovali, také zabíjeli,
a na Muráň zajímané často vodili.*

Fig. 1. Melody and Lyrics of The Song About the Castle of Muráň³

It is obvious, that already in the Middle age, Slovakia was a territory struggling to create its own musical and cultural tradition based on Slavic elements. Different nations however had a huge impact on the cultural and political forming of this territory. In the following time era, renaissance, such an impact was about to get even stronger.

¹ Smolka, J. (2001): *Dejiny hudby [History of music]*, Praha, p. 109

² Šmatlák, Stanislav (2002): *Dejiny slovenskej literatúry [History of the Slovak literature]*, (= I.), Bratislava: Literárne informačné centrum, p. 24

³ Brtáň Rudo (1953): *Historické piesne [Historical Songs]*, Bratislava, p. 10

3.3 Renaissance

Since the 15th century there exist increasing sources documenting the cultural life in Slovakia than ever before. They provide us with the useful information of how the music in Slovakia was developing. It started to grow and expand, especially in the bigger cities with more possibilities. The noblemen, wealthy middle-class citizens, teachers, clerks – through all of them, music was coming to be of great importance. Since Slovakia has already many centuries been a place of interconnecting cultures (see Chapter 3.1), the country was constantly getting new influences. Also, as previously mentioned (see Chapter 3.1), for the first time in history, there appeared a name for the present-day territory of Slovakia - Slavonia nostra.

One of the most important influences was the polyphony, spreading from western Europe.¹ Thanks to Slovakia belonging to the Habsburg monarchy, it had an easier access to another countries. At the church, the vocal pieces started to be arranged for more voices singing antiphons, Sanctus for 2 (descant/soprano and bass) or 4 (descant, alto, tenor, bass) voices, or descant pieces for 3 voices.² This played an important role for the music in later centuries, not only in the middle age, also later the basis of many composers' works were exactly vocal pieces.

Before the Reformation, the Hussite ideology started to find its ways into the Slovak culture through the students of the Prague university; many Slovak noblemen and knights also joined the movement. As a result, many of the Slovak cities were reacting in an opposite manner as in the middle age, wanting to get rid of the impact of other nations (Žilina, Topoľčany, Ružomberok, Skalica), introducing mass in the church in the national language and spreading Czech Hussite songs. During this time, apparently the political and cultural connections between Slovakia and Czechia was growing stronger, which had a major impact on the formation of the Slovak music in later centuries.³ There is visible the struggle to accept international elements and incorporating them into the country's life. The fact that already in the renaissance the nation on the territory of present-day Slovakia was rejecting foreign impacts, which lasted already for centuries, was overpowered by another one: the country (the territory) was not enough autonomous nor organized to exist on its own.

¹ Smolka, J. (2001): *Dejiny hudby [History of music]*, Praha, p. 182

² Hudec, K. (1949): *Vývin hudobnej kultúry na Slovensku [The development of the musical culture in Slovakia]*, Bratislava, p. 20

³ Elschek, O. (2003): *A History of Slovak Music. From the Earliest Times to the Present*, Bratislava: Veda, p. 50

Hence, after the Reformation the German impact was inevitable, bringing the German polyphony into the musical culture. Apart from German polyphony, there are clear evidences of the impact of Roman (Italian) polyphony in Slovakia as well. In the areas under the German influence, the liturgical singing was performed in a colla-parte style, whereas in the areas under the roman impact in a-capella style. The city of Košice was the city with the biggest Roman influence. The Dominican friars in Košice kept a direct contact with Italian musicians, thus creating two codices of Magnificat canticles. In the churches, there are also many sources proving that the music of big Italian composers like Josquin Desprez, Nicolas Gombert or G. Pierluigi da Palestrina was also performed.¹ In fact, due to lack of contact between the Slovak cities, each city was influenced by different countries in a different way. Slovakia was missing one major cultural point, connecting the whole country, thus the polyphony in music was a mix of international cultures.² One of the reasons were the Turkish raids (see Chapter 3.1), the country was forced to focus at building defenses and fortresses instead of organizing culture.

The foreign influences had unquestionably a positive impact in Slovakia. Despite the resentment, in such a small territory and despite harsh political events, there were created even several styles of polyphony. It shows that the country already in this time era had a potential to take any important incentives and to build a strong cultural basis for the later centuries, especially with the experience of another nations. So, the disapproval of the foreign impacts could not bring the nation any further, however, this approach was unfortunately the case in later centuries as well. (see Chapter 4.1).

The process of development of non-clerical music was significantly slower than of the clerical. That is the reason why there exist lesser sources from this time. Nevertheless, there exists a painting from the 15th century from the time of King Matthias I., depicting a parody of hunting with animals playing instruments – a rabbit playing viola and bears playing drums and harp. It is known, that the painters of the 15th century tried to capture the picture of their time in their works as authentically as possible. That is why we can certainly take this painting into account when researching the history of instrumental music in Slovakia and use it as proof that chamber music already existed in Slovakia in the 15th century.³

¹ Ebd., p. 36

² Hudec, K. (1949): *Vývin hudobnej kultúry na Slovensku [The development of the musical culture in Slovakia]*, Bratislava, p. 34

³ Ebd.,



Fig. 2 Fresco of the city of Zvolen¹

At the end of the middle age era the references about folk music were beginning to slowly appear in the historical sources. Slovak folk music „...is based on eastern European elements but contains many features of west European origin, especially in the newer style. Slovak folk music has served as a bridge between the folk music of the two areas by introducing styles and elements of west European melodies and harmonic and tonal principles to Hungary, the Ukraine and other areas.’’² Most of the folk songs were not preserved in a written form, being passed on only through oral tradition.

The folk songs had mostly a concrete function, sung during particular ceremonies (weddings, funerals, birth of a child, etc.) or feasts (celebrating the arrival of spring) but also war songs, love songs or lullabies. From the beginning they were being sung without any instrumental accompaniment.³ In time however, and through mixing of cultures and nations in Slovakia different folk instruments started to make their way into the Slovak culture. From the beginning, there were various types of flutes and fujara, the Slovak national instrument. Gradually there were also different types of string instruments, drums and percussion instruments, mostly rattles, tambourine, etc. Like this, the base of chamber and instrumental music in Slovakia was created. Yet it was only in the romantic era when the interest for folk music started to fully grow and thus also documenting and preserving on paper and not just through oral tradition.⁴

¹ Hudec, K. (1949): *Vývin hudobnej kultúry na Slovensku [The development of the musical culture in Slovakia]*, Bratislava: Slovenská akadémia vied a umení, p. 22

² Rybář, R. / Chalupka, E. / Elschek, O., *Slovakia*, in: <https://www-1oxfordmusiconline-1com-1oskm4uwa0116.han.bruckneruni.at/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000040647> (13.06.2020)

³ Elschek, O.: *Art. Slowakei, Kunstmusik, Renaissance* in: MGG Online, <https://www-1mgg-2online-1com-10000f8wa011b.han.bruckneruni.at/mgg/stable/394120> (30.06.2020)

⁴ Smolka, J. (2001): *Dejiny hudby [History of music]*, Praha, p. 183

In the Renaissance era, despite inconsequent approach to the foreign influences, Slovakia was getting familiar more than ever before with music world in Europe. A foreign impact was inevitable - German and Italian polyphony. Also, different folk instruments, taken from neighboring countries, were already a stable part of the musical life. As a result, in the baroque era the need of instrumental music arose and new musical forms and instrument formations appeared. However, it was the political situation having a strong impact on the cultural life as well. As will be later discussed in the next chapters, this particular problem - political situation - will go along each following time era.

3.4 Baroque

The music in Slovakia in the baroque era was evolving slower than in the neighboring countries, however several new elements appeared. As mentioned in the Renaissance era, after the reformation Slovakia returned to the German cultural tradition as well as the tradition of the neighboring countries. Following not only their cultural but religious tendencies as well, there was only little space for inventing Slovakia's own music.¹ Here it would be desired to consider already known facts – a territory existing already for eleven centuries in different official state formations, with its own name, customs and even basic culture. Is it possible up to this point to speak about a nation, a Slovak nation with its own identity? The answer here might be yes and no. Throughout the centuries, despite a high amount of various nations crossing or even occupying this territory, a group of Slavic ethnic settled here at the time of the Migration period (as previously mentioned, see Chapter 3.1) and remained till today. However, with such a high amount of foreign influences as well as lacking leading figures, the population occupying this territory could yet hardly be described as a true nation. Also, according to Jaroslav Smolka, in the baroque era "...the main disadvantage was the political non-uniformity of the country, Hungarian oppression, but also persisting Turkish raids and mixing of various political and cultural influences."² To better understand the position of the Slovak nation in this time era as well as the chamber and orchestral music in this time era, it is necessary to look at the cultural line.

In the baroque era a new element in the music in Slovakia arose: the organ music, a symbol of polyphony in music. Organ players, apart from playing the instrument were mostly active as

¹ Ebd.

² Ebd.

composers and teachers, enriching the musical life in the country. From the historical sources from the 17th century, we know that the organ music in Slovakia in this time was on a professional level. The biggest centers of organ music were cities like Levoča or Bardejov.¹

Apart from organ music the interest for singers, instrumental players and a wider range of instruments was significantly rising. Slovakia was taking part in the international cultural development.² It is obvious that both chamber and orchestral music were finally becoming a bigger part of the local culture and everyday life. Even the conservative monasteries were interested in praising God in a more pompous way than ever before. Gregorian chants therefore became an ordeal for ordinary days, whereas the feasts in the churches and monasteries were celebrated with big choirs, accompanied with various instruments and fanfares. In the celebratory church masses, the usual combination of instruments was timpani and trumpets. Later on, the church ensemble was already a permanent accompaniment to the church choir, supporting the presence of orchestral music in Slovakia. The ensembles and chamber orchestras usually consisted of string instruments such as violin or viola, drums and wind instruments.³

From the 16th century, there already exist many historical sources mentioning vocal and instrumental music, for example Levoča Tablatures, where the music formation apart from singers clearly also mentions instruments.⁴ One of the most important figures from this era is the organ player Adam Plintovič, who wrote church music with description of a concrete instrumentation.⁵

Apart from interest for chamber and orchestral music, the Slovak culture kept actively mingling with the Czech one, despite the fact that the political situation of these two countries was considerably different. In Czechia, a strong catholicization of the Czech nation was taking place, impeding the process of development of its culture. Until this moment, in the protestant church music, mainly church songs were musically the most developed form. Thus, many Czech musicians and composers were forced to migrate to Slovakia, which tolerated different religions.⁶

¹ Ferguson, J. Scott (1927—2001): *Slovak Choral Music: Part 1: In Memoriam: Ivan Hrušovský*, www.jstor.org/stable/23554009. (31 May 2021)

² Hudec, K. (1949): *Vývin hudobnej kultúry na Slovensku [The development of the musical culture in Slovakia]*, Bratislava: Slovenská akadémia vied a umení, p. 22

³ Ebd.

⁴ Rybář, R. / Chalupka, L. / Elschek, O., *Slovakia*, in: <https://www-1oxfordmusiconline-1com-1oskm4uwa0116.han.bruckneruni.at/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000040647> (13.06.2020)

⁵ Hudec, K. (1949): *Vývin hudobnej kultúry na Slovensku [The development of the musical culture in Slovakia]*, Bratislava, p. 52

⁶ Smolka, J. (2001): *Dejiny hudby [History of music]*, Praha, p. 190

In Slovakia the Czech musicians and composers had the possibility to evolve different music types. Apart from protestants, there were also many evangelists, relocating their activity into Slovakia, for example Czech preacher Jiří Tranovský (1592 - 1637), known for his Latin odes and hymns (1629) but mainly for his hymn *Cithara Sanctorum* (1636). Tranovský strongly supported mutual relationship between Slovakia and Czechia, thus thanks to him many Czech and Slovak folk songs were mingling with each other. As a result, many Czech folk songs were embraced from the Slovak nation, becoming an essential part of the music in the country and vice versa, thanks to Tranovský, many Slovak folk songs spread to Czechia.¹

In Czechia until this moment, there were already musicians and composers actively writing music for a chamber music formation, for example the German organist playing and working in Prague, Valerius Otto (1579 - 1612), who wrote a collection of dances for five voices and an instrumental ensemble. In Slovakia this art of composing only started to evolve much later.²

Another important part of the music and culture in Slovakia arose in this time era – Basso continuo. A new art of it - a harmonic support of music without its own melodic significance was spreading throughout the world. However, in Slovakia, such a complex way of music making was from the beginning a problematic topic.³ The music theory was until this moment an unknown, unexplored area. For many centuries, music was spread only orally in rather easy music forms. At the beginning of the 17th century however, there appeared first efforts to understand the characteristics and use of basso continuo. The composer Adam Škultéty, who was dedicated to this new way of music making, can be consider as the first music theoretician in Slovakia. In his work of church songs *Melodyatura aneb Partytura to gest: kniha hlaso-zpewu* (published in 1798), he wrote a twelve-page long introduction describing theoretical knowledge about basso continuo as well as a guideline of how to play it properly. In spite of noble intentions, at the time of publishing this work, there was no theoretical work written or at least available to learn from in Slovakia. That is why the Škultéty's introduction was perceived as simple-minded, even ridiculous, lacking a proper scientific language. For many scientific terms, he either made up his own names or freely translated from other languages, for example about preludes, he spoke as following: "Preludes may not be scandalous, too long lasting running up

¹ Hudec, K. (1949): *Vývin hudobnej kultúry na Slovensku [The development of the musical culture in Slovakia]*, Bratislava, Slovenská akadémia vied a umení, p. 53

² Smolka, J. (2001): *Dejiny hudby [History of music]*, Praha, p. 192

³ Hudec, K. (1949): *Vývin hudobnej kultúry na Slovensku [The development of the musical culture in Slovakia]*, Bratislava, p. 70

and down the organ keyboard, but those of inspiring the people to eagerness and religiousness at the church mass.”¹ Nevertheless, it was an important step for the Slovak artists towards taking music as a complex, noble art worth studying properly.

From the non-clerical music, opera and theatre were the most famous genres in the baroque era. In Slovakia however, there was not enough foundation for them yet. Instead of opera there were biblical performances, school plays or processions, organized for the occasions of religious festivities, accompanied by loud singing and music. There exist several exceptions like the city of Skalica in west Slovakia, where the music dramas with choir, ballet and vocal soloists were performed.²

If to look at the facts, up to the Baroque era the culture on the territory of „Slavonia nostra” was basically evolving quicker than the nation in Slovakia itself. There already existed in this territory the most important basic pillars of the music of the later centuries – vocal music, instrumental music and formation of folk songs based on many foreign musical elements, in contrary to the basic pillars of the nation, such as common language, religion, etc. On one hand, it was supposed to take another 300 hundred years until formation of a united, autonomous Slovakia, on the other, mingling of different nations on this territory helped to create a solid cultural level, important for the further evolvement of the country.

3.5 Classicism

In this era, both Slovakia and Czechia became part of the Habsburg monarchy and with basically no privileges from the position of a hereditary land, Slovakia was soon forced to culturally adapt to the taste of monarchy and to accept orders from Vienna, the monarchy’s center. This period can be described through two main opposing phenomena: the first one is a low artistic activity of Slovak and Czech composers on one hand and a rise of musical and cultural life on the other. Thanks to the monarchy, the most prominent musicians from entire Europe came to Bratislava to perform their music, making Bratislava the main political and cultural center as well as a coronation city.

An advantage of the direct connection with the monarchy was also the support of aristocracy coming to live in Slovakia, which was one of the most important steps for the Slovak culture

¹ Škultéty, Adam (1798): *Melodyatura aneb Partytura to gest: kniha hlaso-zpewu*, Brno

² Hudec, K. (1949): *Vývin hudobnej kultúry na Slovensku [The development of the musical culture in Slovakia]*, Bratislava: Slovenská akadémia vied a umení, p. 70

and its development. Aristocracy was supporting and cultivating music, in this class of society, it was basically an obligation to have a musical education. Aristocrats in Slovakia (Families like Grassalkovich, Pálffy, Erdödy, etc.) started to organize court orchestras and ensembles, taking an example from other nobles like the Esterházy family in Eistenstadt, Austria. These court musicians performed all the past and current works of the greatest composers, mainly symphonies, oratorios and chamber music.¹

Similarly like in the baroque era (see Chapter 3.4), also in the era of classicism there were many Czech musicians living, composing (mainly sacral music) and performing the chamber and orchestral music in Bratislava. One of the most important Czech composers is Anton Woldán, he composed not only religious songs, but also chamber and orchestral music. His most memorable pieces are Pastoral symphony and a Clarinet concerto. Another great composer is Jan Bilnický with his Symphony. August Šmehlík, another Czech composer in Slovakia was focused on chamber music pieces, songs and dance pieces in arrangement for the piano or orchestra. From the court, it was Jozef Chudý (1752 - 1813), kapellmeister of count Jozef Erdödy (1754 - 1824), focusing on pieces with bigger formations and mostly for the theatre. His most famous piece is a ballet: The hospital of madmen.²

Nevertheless, it was not only the aristocracy forming the musical culture. The middle class was parallelly creating its own way in the Slovak culture. The difference was that the taste of the middle class was rather liberal and unconventional, taking inspiration from any kind without making differences. The music of the middle class had a considerably entertaining character, used mostly for dance evenings and dance balls.

There are many distinguished composers, mostly also of the Czech origin, creating music for exactly such events such as Ján Čaplovič (1780 -1847), composing dances for a chamber formation and orchestra like Tedeschi, Salto mortale, Balle Tedeschi, etc.

The composer Anton Július Hiray (1770 - 1842) is also worth mentioning for his pieces for a chamber music ensemble such as Menuetti for a string trio or Civitatis Neosoliensis Militare Marsch, a ceremonial march for wind instruments, namely two clarinettes, two horns and two

¹ Smolka, J. (2001): *Dejiny hudby* [History of music], Praha, p. 193

² Hudec, K. (1949): *Vývin hudobnej kultúry na Slovensku* [The development of the musical culture in Slovakia], Bratislava, Slovenská akadémia vied a umení, p. 73

bassoons (1798) or pieces for a chamber orchestra like Tedeschi (1797), Polonese, Country dances or other.¹

In the countryside, folk music was widely developing, which later in the romantic era definitively became representative for the national character in Slovak music. In the era of classicism however, the folk songs were still neither being collected nor written down, that is why there exist only texts of a few songs from this era.

Despite lower activity of Slovak composers in this era, the country had thanks to the monarchy for the first time a full access to the professional musical world. Not many musicians had a possibility to travel abroad to learn from the most influential composers and interprets, that is why their presence in Slovakia was highly appreciated. Nevertheless, in the classicism there is obvious the strong impact of politics on the Slovak culture as well as the fact that the Slovak nation was still not in the position to take a step towards political and cultural independence. It was experiencing a pressure not only from the Austrian side. The process of Magyarization started to take place, meaning that the nation living on the Slovak territory was supposed to adopt Hungarian identity and language.² A hope for a new direction however brought the idea of Pan-Slavism, which started to form in the middle of the 18th century, a movement created to unite the Slavic nations to get rid of the supremacy of another nations. Based on this idea, Slovakia had a wish to no longer experience the oppression and it was about to experience a major change in every aspect throughout the romantic era.

3.6 Raising of a new national identity in romantic period

Romanticism is a time era where Slovakia finally took the first steps towards its independence, creating of a national identity, both politically and culturally. This tendency existed in many countries, for Slovakia however it was a rather challenging task. For a comparison, in the 18th century in the countries of western Europe, the great composers like Joseph Haydn³ or Ludwig van Beethoven were creating and performing their masterpieces all over Europe.⁴

¹ Bárdiová, Marianna: *Anton Július Hiray (1770 – 1842) a hudobný život stredoslovenských banských miest [Anton Július Hiray (1770 – 1842) and musical life in mining towns of central Slovakia]*, in: Slovenská hudba [Slovak music], Vol. 29, No. 3-4/2003, p. 403-423

² Perry, Marvin (1989): *Western Civilization: Ideas, Politics & Society, from the 1600s, Volume II*, Boston: Cengage Learning, Inc., p. 58

³ Larsen, Jens Peter; Feder, Georg (1997): *The New Grove Haydn*, New York: W. W. Norton & Company, p. 36

⁴ Ballová, Luba, *Einige Dokumente Über Beethovens Musik in Preßburg [Some documents about Beethoven's music in Pressburg]*, www.jstor.org/stable/902049, (31.02.2021)

The main ideas of the romanticism in the whole Europe was longing for freedom as well as the idea of nationalism.

In Slovakia, it was only the time, when many scholars started to search for national rights for the nation in the Slovak territory for historical and ideological point of view, especially through the interest for the history and the language. The most important figures among them are Ján Kollár (1793 - 1852) and Pavol Jozef Šafárik (1795 - 1861), however it was Ľudovít Štúr (1815 - 1856) who was engaged politically to support the Slovak identity and to unite the Slovak nation with its own language. Interesting is that despite the general disapproval of foreign influences, in the romantic era was Slovakia keeping a strong connection to Germany, since most of the scholars were studying there (Ľudovít Štúr studied at the the Protestant University of Halle in Germany, Šafárik at the University of Jena).¹ The fact that the leading figures in the Slovak history were educated outside of Slovakia even strengthens the above mentioned thesis that Slovakia must let go of the forced idea of having nothing in common with another countries.

The situation was however not going according to the wished plan for Slovakia, since the monarchy, which Slovakia was part of, used the revolutionary thoughts for its own interests, promising to Slovakia to gain freedom from Hungary through the 1848/49 Revolution. At the end, the Hungarian government issued a warrant for Štúr as well as other leaders of the revolutionary movement.² It is hence clear that the political independence was a matter of the 20th century. However, despite the fact that no independent nation was created, one of the most important milestones in the Slovak history happened, the first version of the Slovak language was officially codified in 1843, created by Ľudovít Štúr. It was a fundamental step towards strengthening the idea of Slovakia as an independent country.

In the literature, many poets were writing about the new principles, idealistically, often in a exaggerated and unrealistic way depicting Slovak heroes from the history fighting against oppression and their bravery, depicting the ideal portrait of the Slovak nation and their wishes connected to it to strengthen the idea of nationalism. A wish to form an own country was logical and inevitable, however to build the identity of the nation based on unrealistic principles was not the best idea to start with. It had however a positive effect onto the music. The people started to collect folk songs which would later become a national heritage. There were

¹ Kohn, Hans. "Romanticism and Realism among Czechs and Slovaks.", www.jstor.org/stable/1404717 (15.03.2021)

² von Gogolák, Ludwig (1969): *Beitragen Zur Geschichte Des Slowakischen Volkes. II. Die Slowakische Nationale Frage in Der Reformepoche Ungarns (1790-1848)*, [Articles about the history of the Slovak people. II. The Slovak National Question in the Reform Era of Hungary (1790-1848)]. Munich, p. 225–227.

more than 2600 songs written down and collected, depicting the life of the Slovak nation, its history, much-favored mythology and fairy-tale culture, the typical character of the people, customs and even more. From the musical point of view, many folk songs are written in church modes, mostly Lydian, Aeolian or Dorian. In the harmony, it is typical to use also the augmented fourth, building a typical element in Slovak folk music. This interval was in fact adopted from Polish folk music.

If to come back to the connection of Slovakia and Czechia from previous chapters, in both countries the interest for choir organizations started to suddenly rise, thanks to the awareness about the domestic musical culture. Their aim was to spread the cultural education and patriotic feeling among all of the social classes. The result of being part of the Habsburg Monarchy however was slowing down this process on the Slovak territory. Apart from the folk songs, it was also the impact of the German music finding its way into the Slovak culture, being a result of the aristocratic cultural traditions and presence and activity of the German nation in Slovakia already for many centuries (see previous Chapters).

In Czechia on the other hand, up to this point, the cultural situation was way further developed, that is why many world's famous composers arose through this time such as Antonín Dvořák (1841 - 1904), Bedřich Smetana (1824 - 1884), Leoš Janáček (1854 - 1928), Július Fučík (1872 - 1916), etc.¹

In the instrumental music, the tradition of sacral music, namely the organ music was further developing and became an essential part of the church masses as well as church concerts. Due to the cultural versatility, the composers in Slovakia kept further to take an example the mentioned countries – Germany, Poland, Hungary, Czechia, etc. and started to slowly expand their works, composing not only for the organ but also for various formations and instrument combinations. One of the most influential composers was František Hrdina (1882 - 1963), composing mainly pieces for violin and piano such as *Reverie*, *Naši kováři* (Our Blacksmiths), *Rozmarný furiant* (Capricious furiant), *Preludium*. František Janeček (1837 - 1909), other Czech organists in Slovakia were composing pieces for chamber ensembles in a late romantic style. Jozef Chládek (1856 - 1928) was composing for chamber ensembles as well as the orchestra, mainly dance music.

Ján Levoslav Bella (1843 - 1936) was the first composer, who would surpass all of the previous composers in Slovakia with his works. Due to the cultural underdevelopment and rising political pressure, Bella was forced to leave the country for as long as forty years to fully

¹ Elschek, O. (2003): *A History of Slovak Music. From the Earliest Times to the Present*, Bratislava: Veda, p.15

devote himself to his own musical development and to experience the freedom of composing without any pressure of the society. Only in his later years, Bella returned to Slovakia, celebrated and respected as the patriarch of Slovak music. Bella mainly composed string quartets, he also composed the first Slovak opera *Kováč Wieland* (Wayland the Smith) and many other orchestral works, giving new hope and inspiration to Slovak composers.¹

Romanticism brought a completely new spirit into Slovakia, despite the political events and the fact that the country was constantly under reign of a different nation, the revolutionary tendencies were irreversible. These tendencies served as a base for the following events in the Slovak culture in the 20th century and for shaping its identity.

¹ Ebd.

4. The idea of the Slovak identity and its direct connection to the music in Slovakia in the 20th Century

4.1 Czechoslovakia – freedom and pressure at the same time

In the 20th century, after Czechoslovakia was founded in 1918, the new official national identity was supposed to be Czechoslovak with a common Czechoslovak nation and language, with many foreign minorities living in the country as well. It is impossible to speak about the identity and music in Slovakia and not to point out the bond with the Czech Republic, as well as its impact on the culture. At the beginning of the 20th century was Slovakia still not sure, what exactly to base its identity on. As I previously mentioned (See Chapter 3.6), the country was not ready to understand its roots and to embrace its entity, but from the political side the pressure to have an identity was immense. Which possibility did the country have? Only to embrace something, what was politically possible to directly influence – art. There were even many Czech figures who fully supported Slovakia and its autonomous position within the union. And there is also, where the problem begins. One of the first figures supporting the Slovak identity and musical culture was a Czech musicologist Dobroslav Orel (1870 - 1942), whose idea was to create modern Slovak music based on Czech music.¹ „...But as an expert on Czech church music he could not recognize the values of the modern music, he built an impression of being ideological, forcing (in the name of the official doctrine) the cult of the Czech music, despite the fact that Slovakia was still not acquainted with the (contemporary) European one, and he overrated and preferred the second-rate local composers.’’² It is clear that although the connection of these two countries brought many positive aspects, such a pressure from the Czech side could not have any good results. Slovak composers were not ready to become an equal to the Czech ones, not to mention the fact that despite many similarities between the two nations, each nation has its own point of view and thus should not be pressured to copy its identity based on another one. Orel’s interest for the Slovak culture and nation thus seems rather as a spreading of the Czech impact rather as an effort to create something new in the Slovak part of the country.

Orel was however not the only one busy with art and identity of Slovakia. It was also Otakar Zich (1879 - 1934), a Czech composer, who represents another extreme and who even wrote a

¹ Hrková, Nad'a (2005), *Dejiny hudby [History of music]: Hudba 20. Storočia[Music of the 20th century]*, (= VI), Bratislava: Ikar, p. 301

² Ebd.

precise definition of a true Slovak composer: „A Slovak composer must: 1. Be as familiar as possible with the folk songs, 2. Come from the national style, 3. Be born Slovak, 4. Connect himself with his artistic technique to the current state of the development of the music, however 5. In this process it is necessary to avoid pure contemporary experiments, because the young, beginning music can not afford it, unlike the old one, which has a tradition, protecting it from a wrong path.”¹ From Zich’s definition it is obvious, that the composers in Slovakia should feel „Slovak”, whatever it meant at the time, and focus at the tradition rather than being open for new incentives. Like this, the composers did not exactly have the freedom to compose according to their own wish, and were even obliged to compose in a manner easily acceptable for the society and politics. All of these points are rather contradictory, since the ‘traditional’ music in Slovakia is a mix of cultures of different nations (see previous Chapters). From this definition it is also obvious, that to be Slovak basically means to be closed from the foreign influences and to be focused on being purely ‘Slovak’. Such thinking certainly could not have any positive effect on the composers as well as the Slovak people. The rejection of foreign impacts however was nothing new in Slovakia, it appeared already many centuries ago (see Chapter 3.3). It seems like Slovakia has been struggling with the ‘foreign’ question for quite a long period of time. There certainly exist nations, who at the beginning of their existence were really secluded from the rest of the world. However, since Slovakia has a history of so many international influences, it is highly improbable that Slovakia would exist today at all without them. That is why such an approach remains highly questionable. The Slovak identity was thus in the first half of the century a struggle between Czech impact and a forced lingering on the traditions, mainly created throughout the Romantic era (see Chapter 3.6). However, a positive fact remains that music played the main role for the political processes in the country and thus gained a bigger importance than ever before.

4.2 Music of the 20th century in Slovakia with Prague as the main cultural impact

As mentioned earlier, the Czech part of Czechoslovakia at the beginning of the 20th century had a completely different, much more developed level of culture and economics. It was mostly due to the connection of Czechia with different countries lasting already for centuries

¹ Hrková, N. (2005), *Dejiny hudby [History of music]: Hudba 20. Storočia [Music of the 20th century]*, (= VI), Bratislava: Ikar, p. 302.

(see Chapter 3.4). That is why it's logical that Czech Republic was highly attractive for Slovak composers to study and learn from, despite the Czech culture dominating in the country. The composers had the possibility to broaden their knowledge with elements of other cultures and their advanced compositional techniques. The beginning of the 20th century, namely death of Antonín Dvořák in 1904, meant for Czech music a turning point, a completely new direction. The young composers turned away from purely romantic or late romantic compositional style and walked towards the way of innovation, new and exciting musical compositional styles bringing ideas full of experimentation with harmony and form. All these ideas originated from various arts like theatre or literature, experiencing a new wave of *critical realism*, criticizing the society and pointing out its "true face".¹ The whole world was facing the phenomenon of abandoning the old rules and experimenting with new ideas. The music at the beginning of the 20th century in the world was a mix of several developing compositional styles in different phases. The new artistic approach was arising, putting the individuality of the composer at the forefront, abandoning mono-style of musical development and thus bringing contrasting ways of music making. "The musical scene was becoming less and less transparent, the leading composers were engaged in searching for opposing ways of working with the melody, harmony, polyphony, rhythm, dynamics, colors and form."² Czech composers, as well as the rest of Europe were influenced by composers like Arnold Schönberg, Igor Stravinsky, Richard Strauss, Sergei Prokofiev, etc., however, musical composition style which influenced the Czech composers the most was Impressionism with its new harmonic features, focusing on the colors of the sound creating the mood of the piece.³ Their thematical and motivic work was also inspired by impressionism, while still keeping its typical, traditional form.

One of the most important Czech personalities directly connected to building music in Slovakia is Vítězslav Novák (1870 – 1949), a composer and teacher at the Prague university. Novák studied composition directly with Antonín Dvořák, but at the same time he was passionate about newly arisen movement with innovative approach to the art and thinking, also called modernism. The core of his works are principles of the romantic era, he also took many compositional elements from the Slovak folk music. Into these two, Novák integrated the

¹ Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Realism". *Encyclopedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/art/realism-art>, (27.08. 2020)

² Burlas, Ladislav (1983), *Slovenská hudobná moderna [Slovak Musical modernism]*, Bratislava: Obzor, p. 7

³ Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Impressionism". *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 13 Mar. 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/art/Impressionism-art>, (27.08.2020)

impressionistic style. All these three elements connected together were forming his typical compositional style, best visible in his vocal and instrumental works such as *Melancholie* (1901), *Údoli nového království* (Valley of the New Kingdom, op. 31, 1903), etc. His professional approach and clever merging of different compositional styles gave rise to the Slovak modernism – generation of Slovak composers forming in the time around the first world war.¹ Most of the Slovak composers of the first half of the 20th century studied with Novák in Prague and step by step they started to employ new and experimental elements as well, such as impressionism, jazz, modality, twelve-tone technique, etc., until then completely unknown in Slovakia. Their compositional style thus resembled to his style in many ways, taking him as the absolute authority. From one side Novák made sure that each composer should have a solid level as a composer, however such an impact could have also had a negative effect of the lack of an original approach.

The question of the identity can be described as a process of searching for a base of thinking and feeling of the nation, interrupted by the two world wars and the political regime of the second half of the 20th century. The culture, one of the most important pillars of a nation, played the main role in the process. That is why it is interesting to see how the composers reacted with their works on such direct political demands and rules, strongly interfering with their creation.

¹ Černý, Jaromír / Döge, Klaus / Wagner, Undine: *Art. Novák, Vítězslav*, in: MGG Online, <https://www-1mgg-2online-1com-10000f8k600d1.han.bruckneruni.at/mgg/stable/373272> (03.07.2020)

5. Reactions of the Slovak composers in Chamber and orchestral music

5.1 Introduction to the composers

The Slovak composers of the 20th century can be divided into three groups: first generation with composers like Frico Kafenda, Viliam Figuš Bystrý, Mikuláš Schneider-Trnavský, Mikuláš Moyzes and Alexander Albrecht; second generation, also called Slovak modernism with composers like Eugen Suchoň, Alexander Moyzes, Ján Cikker, Ilja Zeljenka, Július Kowalski, etc. and third, later generation of avantgard and post-modern composers of the second half of the 20th century such as Vladimír Godár, Vladimír Bokes, Stanislav Hochel, Peter Martinček, etc.¹ In this thesis there are included works of those, which are the most influential at chamber music and orchestra.

The first generation was rather traditional, taking the romantic compositional style as the basis of their works, but they gradually started to explore the world of newly forming musical styles as neoclassicism, impressionism, etc. Right from the beginning their task was to not only spread the education, it was also supposed to have a meaning in the society, to strengthen the feeling of nationalism. Through connection with the literature, namely poetry, they also had wish to support thinking and social and political freedom. The composers also meant to develop their own, for them characteristic compositional style.² However, due to the Slovak tradition of simple folk songs or church music, the process of discovering new compositional styles was rather difficult. This generation was missing a proper education for works with extensive form and with bigger formation such as symphonies or operas. Their creative process was indeed strongly influenced by the common (mis)conception of Slovak music and a Slovak composer (See Chapter 4.1).

The second generation, Slovak musical modernism, is a generation mainly active between the two world wars. In their works, the tradition and romantic style were no longer the highest priority despite the pressure of politicians to create Slovak national music according to the above mentioned criteria. This generation was creating its own way, shaping and modifying the Slovak culture forever. The three composers Alexander Moyzes (1906 – 1984), Eugen Suchoň (1908 – 1993) and Ján Cikker (1911 – 1989) were expected to manage the same as did Czech

¹ Burlas, L. (1983), *Slovenská hudobná moderna [Slovak Musical modernism]*, Bratislava: Obzor, p. 8

² Ebd., p. 11

composers Bedřich Smetana and Antonín Dvořák – to create a national music with all attributes connected with it. They were supposed to work in the national Slovak musical elements to their works on a highest artistic quality on a level acceptable internationally. Although Novák provided them in Prague with a professional education, he also strongly inclined to their connection to the folk music, which narrowed their creative possibilities.¹ After the second world war, the musical connection between the two lands was temporarily broken, resulting in these composers discovering their own musical way.

In the works of the second generation there are many mutual marks, it is the folk music in connection with elements of the contemporary music, such as tritone also used in different chord formations, dissonant intervals like seconds, sevenths, none, barely used before. The tritone chords were especially new as the central point of the tonality.²

The composers also started to educate themselves about the current events in the world, which resulted in their interest to increase the function of the music in Slovakia from its original, entertaining or purely educational function. Their aim was to look at music from another point of view, to feel its astonishing impact on people, to develop intellect and to also encourage interest for culture and art in Slovakia. With this initiative as well, the initiative to support the national thinking, many musical institutions were established, mainly in Bratislava, the capital city, where the musical life was mostly concentrated.

Many vocal institutions and choirs were also established. The tradition of singing, connected with folk music, had a long tradition in the Slovak culture (see Chapter 3.4), serving as an easy way of spreading music among the nation. Different choirs made the effort to present music as a noble art, with special focus on the countryside, where the cultural progress had a rather slow pace. Another step towards developing the Slovak national music was the establishment of new chamber and orchestral formations: Slovak Philharmonics, Slovak national theatre, the Bratislava Trio ensemble, etc.³

Step by step the Slovak composers started becoming more courageous (mainly due to a better education and experience), taking their works to the next level and composing pieces of bigger musical forms, so that the Slovak musical scene could welcome symphonic and theatrical

¹ Hřešková, N. (2005), *Dejiny hudby [History of music]: Hudba 20. Storočia [Music of the 20th century]*, (= VI), Bratislava: Ikar, p. 302.

² Micháľková, Sandra (2014): *Slovenská hudobná moderna a jej prínos k rozvoju Slovenskej národnej hudby [Slovak musical modernism and its contribution to the development of Slovak national music]*, Bachelor thesis, Constantine The Philosopher University in Nitra, Slovakia, p. 25

³ Medňanský, Karol: *Vývoj slovenskej hudby v 20. A 21. Storočí [Development of the Slovak music in the 20th and 21st century]*, <https://www.pulib.sk/web/kniznica/elpub/dokument/Mednansky2/subor/5.pdf> (20. 07.2020)

pieces with orchestra, choirs and soloists. During the second world war however, many composers faced several problems: duty to take part in the army, resulting in incapability to be engaged with composing, as well as the pressure of the fascist regime, because of which many composers were forced to fall into silence due to their works which were improper for the regime. Only after the end of the second world war in 1945 the musical life in Slovakia started to slowly convey the national character. Many musical institutions changed their status and were run by the state from now on to demonstrate the cultural level of the country (the academy of fine arts changed to a State conservatory, in 1949 it was also the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava which changed the status to a state institution). The radio as well joined the movement, organizing public symphonic concerts with a high artistic level. The development of the national identity continued also after the second world war, however in according to the restrictions of the totalitarian regime. Both social and cultural life in Slovakia were strictly regulated by the communist government, which preferred „centralistic, unitary form of the state.”¹ Like this, the freedom of thinking and composing was destroyed, where many composers fought within themselves with the moral question „compose or fall into the silence.”

The third generation on of the Slovak composers are those of the second half of the 20th century. These composers faced even a bigger enemy, a new cultural phenomenon “socialist realism”, which was now in charge of the culture and art. According to the socialist realism, the official ideology, the art was supposed to serve the nation and the ideology itself. The art was supposed to depict explicitly the positive sides of socialism. In Slovak music the ideology had character of peasantry, folclorism, program music, national musical style and connection with traditions. Such music was supposed to be simple, traditional and in no way connected to the contemporary, new genres and compositional techniques. Otherwise it could support the thinking of people, mainly creative and critical, unsuitable for the regime. Despite many composers falling into silence or their works having to adapt to these rules losing thus their artistic value, the brave ones took the risk and started to experiment with newly forming compositional techniques of Europe. Despite the cultural pressure, they managed to cleverly combine traditions and their own ideas.²

In the 1960s, the spreading of intense waves of experimental movements like serialism or dodecaphony, the twelve-tone technique was inevitable. The Avantgarde was born as well. It

¹ <http://www.svusav.sk/data/uploads/publikacie/narod-a-narodnosti-2004.pdf>, (05.04.2021)

² Hřčková, N. (2005), *Dejiny hudby [History of music]: Hudba 20. Storočia [Music of the 20th century]*, (= VI), Bratislava: Ikar, p. 201.

united the composers with new and experimental tendencies, fighting with their art against the regime.

In the 1970s, after the invasion of the troops of the Warsaw Pact, the cultural life in Slovakia got to the extreme point, where several cultural institutions were closed immediately, with many composers and musicians leaving the country or falling into silence completely.

The 1980s and 90s brought a new feeling of hope for a political cataclysm, resulting in the fall of communism and long desired end of the rules limiting the culture. A completely new generation was formed – postmodernism. The main principle of postmodernism was “first of all to reject the ideas of avantgarde about the development of music in the linear form from simple to complicated, on the basis of artificial exclusivity, eurocentered tradition and experience, which affected European music after 1945.”¹ In another words, the music was not supposed to be explicitly orientated on experimental technique nor purely European style. The composers of postmodernism however split into two groups. The aim of the first group, was to get back into the traditions and folkloristic musical components, the aim of the second group was to build a strong connection with the composers and musicians of other countries to finally abandon the folklore musical tradition connected with long years of the political pressure. The young composers also faced a new problem: their innovative, unconventional musical approach was not understood in Slovakia, because the Slovak nation was not completely used to new compositional techniques, but at the same time their music outside of Slovakia was considered “old-fashioned”, not modern enough.

After 1980s the musical life in Slovakia started coming to life again, ensembles and orchestra from entire Europe appeared on stages, performing also contemporary works apart from all the musical periods from composers like Krzysztof Penderecki, Schnittke, Olivier Messiaen and even computer music.²

To summarize these three generations of composers, each was taking a different approach to the question of the Slovak identity, first being strongly connected to the traditions, second daring to experiment with new styles, despite risking rejection and third abandoning all of the old and traditional principles, going against the idea of a „Slovak” composer (See Chapter 4.1)

¹ Majoroššiová, Petra (2013): *Hudba a politika - prierez slovenskou hudobnou tvorbou 20. Storočia* [Music and politics – survey of Slovak music production in the 20th century], Bachelor Thesis, University of Presov, p. 28

² Karol Medňanský, *Vývoj slovenskej hudby v 20. A 21. Storočí* [The development of Slovak music in 20th And 21st century], <https://www.pulib.sk/web/kniznica/elpub/dokument/Mednansky2/subor/5.pdf> (20. 07.2020)

5.2 The first generation

Mikuláš Schneider Trnavský (1881 - 1958)

Chamber music

Mikuláš Schneider-Trnavský is considered the first Slovak composer, who studied composition professionally, at the Budapestian conservatory and at the conservatory in Vienna. Apart from being a composer, he was also active as a conductor and music teacher. He founded several musical institutions, among them the most important being the Academy of Music and Art in Bratislava. Like this, he made a direct impact on the strengthening of the idea of the national identity through supporting the cultural life.

Schneider-Trnavský was deeply interested in Slovak melodies. His main focus were vocal works, however in his instrumental pieces he is working with many new incentives, exploring the foreign musical impacts. He traveled through many European countries, collecting ideas for his works, especially after spending time in Germany, which influenced his musical style. Musical connection of Slovakia and Germany was already mentioned in the previous chapters in all time epochs, German musical tradition is thus a stable and inseparable part of the Slovak music in the 20th century as well. However, following tendencies of the early 20th century, such an impact on Schneider-Trnavský's works was almost immediately turned down by critique M. Lichard for being a part of „international musical modernism”.¹ Several conservative composers also found him too modern and not enough nationalistic.² The problem of rejecting the foreign impact is thus visible right from the beginning of the 20th century.

One of the most successful chamber music pieces of Schneider-Trnavský is a piece for violin and piano “*Duhopol*” (1953 - 54). In this piece Schneider-Trnavský incorporates folklore songs into the classical form and gives to the violin technically rather virtuous part: simple folklore melodies and motives keep appearing in the violin through the whole piece in form of double stops, the arpeggio bow technique going through all four strings and many virtuoso passages. Through all these elements he gave to the simple or trivial folk songs much more energetic character, however, according to Ladislav Burlas, he failed to bring enough original approach,

¹ Jurík, Marián / Zagar, Peter (1998): *100 slovenských skladateľov [100 Slovak Composers]*, Bratislava: Music Centre Slovakia, p. 244

² Burlas, L. (1983), *Slovenská hudobná moderna [Slovak Musical modernism]*, Bratislava: Obzor, p. 15

which would help to bring the Slovak chamber music forward. Even with using of several modern elements in the piece, such as for him characteristic modulations, altered chords or enharmony, Schneider-Trnavský is considered to lack the interest to expand his musical ideas and style.¹ It can be due to the lack of the professional education and experience, but also due to the mentioned rejection of the foreign musical elements. Like this, the composer only had a small choice of musical ideas. Nevertheless, *Duhopol* enriched the Slovak chamber music and is a stable part of the repertoire of the Slovak violinists.

For a bigger formation wrote Schneider-Trnavský two quartets based on motives of Slovak folklore songs and their motivic work. The main aim of the quartets was use for pedagogical purposes as a study material for development of technical skills on the instrument. The quartets could not be compared to the compositional level of another European composers, they are however important to be mentioned. In Slovakia, especially in the first half of the 20th century, chamber music was lacking a professional, didactical approach, where the students would learn to understand how to give an importance to each four instruments, but at the same time to build one unit from musical as well as technical point of view. These quartets helped to bring an attention to these important aspects to make studying chamber music more effective and professional.²

In his piano quintet *Dumky* (1920) from all the instruments it is the piano which has technically the most demanding part, begin slightly in foreground. The piece has three movements – Lento, Allegro and Adagio. The composer is following the example of Dvořák's compositional technique, however the piece is missing the brilliancy and also introducing of unique features of each instrument.³

Despite the fact that songs and sacral music were the main forms of Schneider-Trnavský's works, his chamber music works contributed to spreading the interest for music and also interest for musical instruments, not only voice.⁴ Schneider-Trnavský's chamber music works might not have a world-known recognition, they however had a huge impact on the educational system.

¹ Burlas, L. (1983), *Slovenská hudobná moderna [Slovak Musical modernism]*, Bratislava: Obzor, p. 14

² <https://hc.sk/o-slovenskej-hudbe/osobnost-detail/987-mikulas-schneider-trnavsky>, 12.04.2020

³ Ebd.

⁴ Zvara, Vladimír: Schneider-Trnavský, in: Grove Music Online, <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000024999>, 12.03.2020

Orchestral music

Schneider-Trnavský also composed several orchestral pieces worth mentioning. For the composer, pieces with a more complex form such as opera were a challenge he did not feel like accepting. However, in his several orchestral music attempts he adopted the romantic compositional style, concretely in a symphonic poem *Pribinov slub*(1933)¹, his most famous orchestral work.

As already mentioned in the previous chapter (see Chapter 3.2), the middle age was an interesting subject matter for a Slovak composer, especially when pointing out at the old history of the Slovak nation, so important to base the national identity on. This piece focuses at the story about the pagan Slavs adopting Christianity.

In the whole piece passages of tremolo exchange with those with dancing themes, depicting pagan traditions and culture, connected with nature. Musically it is also expressed with lyrical passages of the harp, especially dancing of the pagans in the forest. When the story of the poem gets closer to the adopting Christianity, Schneider-Trnavský takes as a base for the music the liturgical choral and baroque fugue, both symbolizing the Christian religion. In the dramatic ending, he even applies in the orchestra the effect of the church bells. Instead of traditional musical gradation until a dramatical end of the piece uses Schneider-Trnavský general pause, following by a short coda. Such an effect was at the time a rather bold move for a slovak composer.²

If to look more precisely into the piece, one can in fact notice the reaction of the composer on the political demands, bringing several elements of a non-Slovak, but foreign origin, but which make the piece a solid work: Fugue, General pause, Coda.

Although Schneider – Trnavský certainly wished to create a piece of a high artistic quality, the piece generally might seem as a rather Slovak folk piece than a piece based on European musical culture. Despite using the impressionistic compositional technique and above described elements, different motifs here resemble mostly to the Slovak folk melodies, lacking the elements of the European compositional style. However, thanks to incorporating of new ideas into his pieces, the composer represents a significant progress in orchestral music in Slovakia, especially through using concrete instruments to create a more concrete impression of a piece or its

¹ Pribina's promise

² <https://www.9em.sk/mikulas-schneider-trnavsky-pribinov-slub/>, 05.05.2020

parts. He also plays an important role for focusing at the national history to point out its significance. It is however interesting, that despite the fact that Slovakia was for centuries a land where different cultures and nations brought their customs and impacts, even the slightest musical ideas which Schneider-Trnavský brought from his travels abroad did not fit to the criteria of being „Slovak”. The previously mentioned definition of a typical Slovak composer of Otakar Zich (see Chapter 4.1) had obviously a bigger importance than expected.

Mikuláš Moyzes (1872 - 1944)

Chamber music

Mikuláš Moyzes belongs to one of the first Slovak composers, who apart from studying a musical instrument also studied conducting and musical theory. Like the other composers, Moyzes too had a profound interest to bring the Slovak culture to a new level. Moyzes accepted the way culture was being transformed in the world, that is why in his works we find components of modern compositional techniques.

He took the direction of contemporary compositional styles and based on them he created his own ways of expression. Moyzes was convinced, that Slovak music must finally lose the folkloric character. Such a change however was possible only step by step, because of prevailing political and cultural state. A complete and sudden change in compositional style would be automatically rejected from both the state and the audience.

Apart from other composers, it was not only Antonín Dvořák's works Moyzes took an inspiration from. It was also Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 - 1750) and Joseph Haydn (1732 - 1809). Like this, Moyzes managed to connect folkloric music, modern musical approach and also the composers of the past centuries. He also intended to connect Slovak national music and European compositional styles. Moyzes's most significant composing period was the period after the first world war, the period when Czechoslovakia was created.

From the first generation, Moyzes was in the best position to create an individual style, the situation in Slovakia however supported cultural development only with limitations.

In Moyzes chamber music works, the composer shows his approach to the music, as well as his interest to make the „Slovak” music more European through taking different composers as an inspiration. In his String quartets D major, A minor, F-sharp minor, wind quintet or sextet is mostly visible the impact of Antonín Dvořák, Moyzes gradually creates his characteristic mu-

sical style typical for these compositions. It is mainly a combination of impact of several musical periods, counterpoint compositional style and folklore musical elements.¹ All of his music works also have in common an interesting element of Joseph Haydn's impact. "Haydn's impact is best noticeable in the subtle character of his chamber music pieces – mainly their fast movements. The most evident impact of Haydn and past music time periods, is using of minuet and gavotte as dance parts in his chamber works."²

Moyzes also draws inspiration from the form of Haydn's symphonies: "In his *Quartet Nr. 4 G major* Moyzes even used a motif from Haydn's symphony D major, which he even wrote down into the complete score's notes. It was also the symphony form A-B-A Moyzes applied in the quartet, however nevertheless he omitted and simplified several elements.

According to Ladislav Burlas, despite Moyzes's potential, certain technical stagnation and position of his generation kept Moyzes from realizing his musical wishes.³ However, thanks to Moyzes's inspiration from European composers, are his works significant for Slovakia. Moyzes did not manage to lose the folklorism in his music, he managed however to blend it together with the elements of foreign influential composers and showing that to form the national culture and with it its identity, he can accept the influences of foreign composers and still create pieces relevant for the Slovak culture. It is also interesting that many sources mention by Moyzes as well as Schneider-Trnavský the „interest” for the folk music. The question is, if the interest was genuine or artificial based on the regime's demands.

Orchestral music

Mikuláš Moyzes as one of the first Slovak composers was interested in composing more complex pieces and pieces with bigger instrumentation. His chamber music works can be considered as a pre-level of orchestral works. When composing them, his aim was to learn about the bigger musical forms and their character: "In the first place it was understanding the pattern of sonata form, quartet composition and instrumental continuity of the string quartets as a base of a symphonic orchestra."⁴

¹ Burlas, L. (1983), *Slovenská hudobná moderna [Slovak Musical modernism]*, Bratislava: Obzor, p. 10

² Medňanský, K.: *Vplyv Josepha Haydna na komornú tvorbu Mikuláša Moyzesa [The impact of Joseph Haydn on chamber music works of Mikuláš Moyzes]*, <https://www.pulib.sk/web/kniznica/elpub/dokument/Mednansky1/subor/3.pdf>, (25.07.2020)

³ Burlas, L. (1983), *Slovenská hudobná moderna [Slovak Musical modernism]*, Bratislava: Obzor, p. 17

⁴ Medňanský, K.: *Vplyv Josepha Haydna na komornú tvorbu Mikuláša Moyzesa [The impact of Joseph Haydn on chamber music works of Mikuláš Moyzes]*, <https://www.pulib.sk/web/kniznica/elpub/dokument/Mednansky1/subor/3.pdf>, (25.07.2020)

Moyzes's chamber music works for the wind instruments are as well a study of instrumentation of the winds section of a symphonic orchestra. From his orchestral works, the most outstanding is his first and only symphony, *Malá vrchovská symfónia* (1934 - 36).¹ Typically for Slovak composers, Moyzes also works with folk motives in the symphony. The symphony also maintains the typical "Haydn" form of the piece, although the "Trio" part, also known as a typical third movement of a symphony is left out.

The first movement of the symphony is marked as *animato*. Moyzes inclines here to the typical form of a first movement in a symphony, introducing two elements contrasting with each other – rhythm and melody. The second movement with *adagio* marking, is in a three-part form A-B-A, where the first part A repeats itself almost identically. The *adagio* is followed by a short *scherzo* in a dancing character. In the third movement, *Allegro vivace*, there are three main themes, which constantly keep repeating, but with a slight modification. It is a fugato theme, with a cheerful character, an abstract theme and third, folk theme.

This symphony represents a new step for the Slovak composers. From this point, all of them started to gradually work with more complex, orchestral pieces. Having poor access to foreign composer's works or professional education was no longer a reason to be satisfied with smaller musical forms.

Mikuláš Moyzes is one of the first proofs that to be a Slovak composer does not necessarily mean that he must come out explicitly from the traditional folk music or national style. Although he was missing the experience to create works of a bigger importance or to really lose the folclorism as intended, his works clearly show that without foreign knowledge it is impossible to compose any bigger musical form, especially symphonies, based on the form created by composer Joseph Haydn.

¹ Little Mountain Symphony

5.3 The second generation – Slovak modernism

Alexander Moyzes (1906 – 1984)

Chamber music

Alexander Moyzes, son of Mikuláš Moyzes, learned music and theory from his father. He also analyzed, studied and even modified Mikuláš Moyzes's works.

The composer's works can be divided into three periods. The first period lasted until approximately the year 1933, it was a period of experimenting with modern musical elements and search for his typical musical style. He as well had a task to shape the national identity through his works and to create the „Slovak” music. For this reason, Moyzes as well as his predecessors took the tradition of folkloric music as a base for his works, although he went a step further as his father and brought even more of the new incentives into his works.

For Alexander Moyzes, Vítězslav Novák was a dominating figure, having a huge impact on his works with his orientation on post-romantic music and music of impressionism. From Novák, Moyzes also seized the element of putting melody and harmony into the foreground, with certain color and characteristics of folkloric music and also putting emotional aspect of music in foreground. It is obvious that Novák indeed gave to Moyzes many important theoretical knowledge, however certain limitation is again present as well – folclorism, without which the music cannot really be „Slovak“ (see Chapter 4).

Despite the artificial need for folclorism, Moyzes wanted to bring the music in Slovakia further, so apart from Novák's incentives, he also experimented with other styles like jazz or any other experimental styles of European music. As an example, he took the “Les Six”, the group of six earlier 20th century French composers. In Moyzes's works chromatic sequences started to appear, also in connection with folkloric motifs. During this time, many of his chamber music works were created, forming his characteristic style, developing and improving with each composition.

The most famous piece from this period is the *String quartet Nr. 1 E flat major, op. 8* (1929). This piece is a demonstration of knowledge in Moyzes's studies, with the aim to create a modern, unconventional piece. It is much more complex as expected from a young composer at the beginning of his career. This quartet can be also understood as a way of preparation for his symphonic and vocal-symphonic works, evident in compound and deep thematic work.

From Vítězslav Novák, he took the technique of passacaglia (fugue) for this quartet. The piece consists of one movement with sonata form and its traditional technique and form of counterpoint.¹ The original complete score got lost, so Moyzes several years later, re-wrote the piece again, this time adding even more complex elements based on his gained experience.

Experimenting with jazz is mostly visible in his work *West-pocket suite op. 7* for violin and piano (1928), which represented the connection of traditional classical music and jazz. In this piece Moyzes lets the linear character to take over the piece, with a rhythmical ostinato and grotesque. He also puts the 12-tone technique into foreground, using the dissonant character of small second intervals. Even the tempo characteristics in his suites such as *Andante di Blues* or *Vivace di Fox* are a clear connection of jazz and classical music, even though they are far apart in their nature.

The second creative period of Moyzes lasts approximately until the year 1947. Moyzes takes a clear direction of a so-called compositional radicalism, a tendency in art in entire Europe after the first world war, but at the same time he was obliged to respect the rules resulting from the process of the social and historical development.

It was already his first creative period where Moyzes achieved a certain level of rebellion for the Slovak culture, in his second creative period he takes his ideas even further to try to achieve a modernistic radicalism to completely get rid of the romantic principles. The Slovak audience, still not used to his newly developing music styles, considered Moyzes's works rather exotic and accepted them only with a strong feeling of hesitation.

Generally, his works from this period have a similar characteristic. The chords are placed closely to each other, creating an intense effect of harmony. The melody receives an important role only if it supposed to, being the harmony to a different level or to connect two opposite harmonies. In this period Moyzes already achieved to create his typical compositional style with firm and natural melody, representing a national character.

Moyzes in his works employs tonality typical in Slovak folk songs, combining it with elements of the modern compositional techniques.² His most famous chamber music work of this period is the *Poetic suite op. 35* for violin and piano (1940)³. The word "Poetic" in the title describes a subtle intimate dialogue between the two instruments, where passages with dynamic mood in

¹ Music Centre Slovakia: Alexander Moyzes, <https://hc.sk/o-slovenskej-hudbe/osobnost-detail/985-alexander-moyzes/diela> (02.03.2020)

² Music Centre Slovakia: Alexander Moyzes, <https://hc.sk/o-slovenskej-hudbe/osobnost-detail/985-alexander-moyzes/diela> (02.03.2020)

³ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BPZ-VgIN6ps&ab_channel=LilianaDulanskaViolin (25.06.2021)

both instruments change with contrasting lyrical ones. The composer's aim in this work is to maintain as transparent formal structure as possible. The suite has five movements: *Introduction – A noble dance from the 17th century – Scherzino – Lullaby – Balada quasi una fantasia*. In this piece both violin and piano are equal partners, apart from a dialogue where each of them have some room for solo expression. The first movement - *Introduction* - brings important motifs, which in different variations appear in further movements in violin as well as in piano.

In the parts of both instruments appear virtuoso solo passages, dynamically and harmonically connected with each other. The dramatic arpeggio parts in both instruments stand in opposition to lyrical parts, which are based on folk songs.

The second movement - *A noble dance from the 17th century* – is a modern version of historical dance Sarabande. It is also a clever return to the tradition of the baroque music. What Moyzes kept from the classic form of Sarabande is its typical structure: the main motif of the second movement has a typical archaic methodical - rhythmical form, ornamentation and a two-part form. Nevertheless, he added several modern elements such as equality of violin and piano and also harmony enriched with intervals typical for the musical experimental movements of the 20th century, mainly dissonant intervals.

The third movement – *Scherzino* – has a cheerful, joyful character as well as the second movement, it also has a form of a baroque dance with both odd and even metre. “For the sake of emphasizing the introvert character of the Poetic suite he [Moyzes] changed the form of a capricious scherzo with a contrasting trio and better chose the form of a rhythmically fluent and active flow of music, resembling gavotte with its moderate and graceful character.”¹

In the fourth movement – *Lullaby* – Moyzes bring the main focus to the modality. The movement keeps the major-minor base, but the composer works with the tonal chords in a manner of free shifting. Like this, the movement is far from the typical modality of the folk songs. It rather resembles two parts of a whole-tone scale, or Aeolic-Locrian modes. It also breaks the tradition of a lullaby, which is expected to have a calm character and a quiet dynamic – in the end, the peaceful character is interrupted by dynamically grading chords, thus introducing the character of the final movement of the suite – *Ballada quasi una fantasia*.

In this final movement Moyzes is getting close to the modern style of a younger Slovak composer of his time – Eugen Suchoň, mainly by using the Aeolic-Locrian modes, this time putting it into the foreground, and spreading the contrasts along the whole movement.

¹ Chalupka, E. (2000): *Alexander Moyzes: Poetická suita pre husle a klavír op. 35 [Alexander Moyzes: Poetic suite for violin and piano op. 35]*, in: *Hudobný život [Musical Life]*, No. 1-2.

The fifth movement opens as a reminiscence of the motif of the first movement as a fourth interval going upwards and descending with chromatic intervals afterwards.

The second theme of the exposition of this movement is strongly inspired by the composer Suchoň, a composer from the second generations as well, mainly the second movement of Suchoň's *Sonatina for violin and piano, op. 2*, concretely the character of the monologue of the violin culminating into the cadenza.

In the development after the exposition, both themes stand in opposition to each other in polyphony, which makes the tension of music (necessary for the climax of the movement) more intense.

In the end, comes the recapitulation, a solo passage appears in the violin part, which is a variation of the exposition of this final movement. For the finale of the movement, instead of a typical dramatic ending, the composer chose to end the piece in a coda, where the tension in both instruments gradually dissolves.¹

The third creative period of Alexander Moyzes begins with the year 1948, at this time, his compositional techniques were already setting an example to young students of composition seeking for bold, modern techniques. The historical sources from this time involve evident motive to depict the history of Slovak music in the 20th century in the best way possible, as a process of victory of democratic art. However, this was only happening according to the norms of socialism, thus providing only a distorted image of Moyzes's works.²

In his third creative period, due to the pressure of the socialist regime to create music with national character, Moyzes was forced to come back to the topic of folk music.

Moyzes's third artistic period is rich in quartet repertoire, thus providing string players in Slovakia with extensive material. One of the most influential quartet works from Moyzes is the *Quartet Nr. 2 in D major, op. 66* (1969) with three movements: *Introduzione, Fugue, Finale*. In his second quartet, the composer again takes an example from the historical baroque dances, as well as in his previous chamber music works.

It is evident already from the name of the first and second movement: *Introduzione* and *Fugue*. In the baroque period, these two types of compositions were typically connected. "Fugue here

¹Ebd.

² Michálková, S. (2014): *Slovenská hudobná moderna a jej prínos k rozvoju Slovenskej národnej hudby [Slovak musical modernism and its contribution to the development of Slovak national music]*, Bachelor thesis, Constantine The Philosopher University in Nitra, Slovakia, p. 30

is however related to a counterpoint form with the scherzo of a classic type, thus representing slow and quick movements of a sonata form at the same time.”¹

The cyclic character is completed with the third movement *Finale* with the tempo indication “allegro”.

Orchestral music

Due to a professional education, Alexander Moyzes is one of the first slovak composers whose main focus was orchestral music, concretely symphonies. „The distinguishing feature of Moyzes’ style include masterly thematic development which becomes the basis for long teleological strands, including themes that are carried over into subsequent movements. As with Shostakovich, his musical expression emphasizes epic breadth with a range of gradations, and deep, poignant meditation on human existence”.² In these works, the main focus was on working with thematic transformation, whereas in long musical parts the aim was to build them harmonically as interesting as possible. In his symphonies, apart from following certain traditions, Moyzes excessively employs twelve-tone technique.

One of his most significant works is *Symphony nr. 1 in D major, op. 4* (1928 - 29) from his first compositional period.³ Despite little experience with composing such monumental pieces, Moyzes decided to create a symphony right at the beginning of his career, being only twenty years old.

The fundament for Moyzes’s symphonic works were traditional, classic and romantic compositional styles. He respected the four-movement structure as well as other elements, however, he did not let himself be limited by any rules. He was driven by his passion for the massive sound of a symphonic orchestra, using as much color and sound possibilities of different instruments as possible to build one body, one organism.

In the first movement, *Allegro Moderato*, the main focus are smaller themes and their groups instead of one, major theme. It is interesting to note the opening motif, based on the String

¹ Music Centre Slovakia, *Alexander Moyzes*, <https://hc.sk/o-slovenskej-hudbe/osobnost-detail/985-alexander-moyzes/diela> (02.03.2020)

² Zvara, Vladimír (2001): *Moyzes, Alexander*, Grove Music Online, <https://www-1oxfordmusiconline-1com-1oskm4ude006b.han.bruckneruni.at/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000019265> (12.05.2020)

³ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RfHmsZePOiQ&ab_channel=SlovakRadioSymphonyOrchestra-Topic

quartet in F major, op. 135 from Ludwig van Beethoven. The principle of this motif is the same as in the quartet, a question “Muss es sein?”¹ on a principle of three notes.

The motif is then further transformed in the development of the first movement. In the first movement Moyzes included, in fact intentionally worked in the theme of a Slovak folk song “Hrmelo, pršalo”², in order to directly connect the symphony with Slovak cultural heritage and thus to strengthen the national character of the piece.

In the second movement, *Adagio*, Moyzes takes a deeper look at the possibilities of using the most sensitive music colors an orchestra can produce and the intimate atmosphere in the string sections. This movement resembles a meditation, the main element here is motivic work, focusing on motif's variation. It is noticeable that this movement also has a growing impact of impressionism, mainly of composers like Claude Debussy or Maurice Ravel, concretely in a part where string players create a mystical atmosphere through various bowing technique, together with harp and celeste.

In the third movement, *Adagio, Allegro con brio* Moyzes returns to historical dances and generally to dancing joyful music, taking an example from symphonies of Ludwig van Beethoven or Antonín Dvořák.

In the last movement, also *Adagio, Allegro con brio* Moyzes applies polyphony. This movement with its complexity emphasizes the professional quality of the piece. In the beginning, there are two different motifs, put against each other later, only to build a gradation together at the end in a romantic style.³

Several years later, Moyzes again rewrote the symphony, as he did with many of his other pieces. In his new version, many parts of the symphony were less rough and more artistic. He even removed the motif of the folk song in the first movement. This work is a symbol of forming of the Slovak modernism, a generation of Slovak composers between the two world wars. Another significant orchestral work of Moyzes is the *Symphony Overture op. 10* (1929) for orchestra, composed in his first compositional period as well. Here Moyzes puts in foreground the form of the piece, rather than folk motifs, namely different counterpoint species of combination of sonata form and rondo. The massive sound of the orchestra here is of great significance. According to the critique, the aim to create a monumental work however was not really

¹ Must it be?

² „It thundered, it rained”

³ Chalupka, E. (1999): *Alexander Moyzes. I Symfónia D dur op. 4/31*, Hudobny život [Musical Life], Vol. 31, No. 1-2, p. 18

successful. Apparently, the piece was missing artistic feeling and also emotional depth, putting only the piece's construction into foreground.¹

With Alexander Moyzes, the music in Slovakia, despite the folkloristic elements being present, was experiencing completely new directions. He was working with the experimenting techniques much more than his predecessors. Like this, even if the Slovak audience was not accepting all of these new elements, his music had a direct impact on the nation, showing that Slovakia can learn from another nations as well, making the identity of the nation even stronger.

Thanks to Alexander Moyzes, the music in Slovakia was slowly turning away from the tight connection of purely late-romantic and folk style.

Ján Cikker (1911 - 1989)

Chamber music

Ján Cikker is another Slovak composer who studied composition with Vítězslav Novák in Prague in years 1935 – 1936.² Cikker was one on the few composers of the second generation who also studied abroad, namely conducting at University of music and performing arts in Vienna with Felix Weingartner in years 1936 – 1937 , which brought him world-wide recognition.³

Despite his duty to join the military, during his serving time, Cikker started to teach composition at the Academy of Music and Art in Bratislava in 1939.⁴ Already through studying years, Cikker managed to compose works on a high artistic level. The most essential part of his works are operas and pieces for orchestra. In the chamber music string quartets and *Suite for violin and viola op. 13, nr. 1.*(1935) are prominent.⁵

Characteristic for him was never focusing on one compositional style. „He worked with the whole twelve-tone range by the way of extended tonality and free sequences of linear-chord procedures formed into the most intricate clusters, often determined by harmonic interval or by the form of free creation of the musical process which corresponded with a psychological profile of a displayed section. In addition to Cikker's harmonic constructions, these intentions are

¹ Burlas, L. (1983), *Slovenská hudobná moderna [Slovak Musical modernism]*, Bratislava: Obzor, p. 142

² Burlas, L. (1983), *Slovenská hudobná moderna [Slovak Musical modernism]*, Bratislava: Obzor, p. 126

³ Ebd.

⁴ Ebd.

⁵ Jurík, M. / Zagar, P. (1998): *100 slovenských skladateľov [100 Slovak Composers]*, Bratislava: Music Centre Slovakia, p. 66

all parameters of composition, including instrumentation. In Cikker's music the sound focus is on the strings, but their functionality is completed by the other instrumental groups.”¹

Suite for violin and viola op. 13. Nr. 1 (1935) was composed during Cikker's studies. This work has a character which was gradually becoming a character typical for Cikker's compositions – explosive and fiery.² Almost in the entire piece, Cikker uses the chromatics, bringing intense character of music and further developing musical themes and motifs. He focuses on the compositional technique of counterpoint and widely uses dissonant chords. The line of both violin and viola are mostly autonomous, which results in harmonic and tonal independence of both lines.³

During his studies, Cikker also composed his first string quartet – String quartet op. 13 nr. 2 (1935).⁴ „This piece has a character of polyphonic linearity, in which lines of all four instruments develop into autonomy, without any compromise. If we take a look at the four voices in complete score vertically, together they built one sharp line with very different music in each voice.”⁵

In the quartet, Cikker is searching for ways of how to express his quickly developing artistic feelings as clear as possible, again through modern, contemporary compositional techniques. According to Ladislav Burlas, Cikker's aim was to abandon the traditional compositional style of romanticism through experimenting with atonality, however such a bold thinking was still at the beginning of the process, the society and regime in Slovakia was still not prepared for a purely contemporary music.⁶ That is why Cikker in the quartet also comes back to diatonic system, putting inside folk motifs. To stress the atonality in this composition Cikker uses second and seventh intervals, even augmented octaves or imitational technique in atypical intervals. Typical for the quartet is also counterpoint, especially in the variations of the main theme and ostinato figures. Nevertheless, Cikker did not limit himself by using a concrete compositional style, he intended to keep the freedom of using any compositional technique so that the folk motifs and contemporary thinking could be combined and thus create the perfect result.⁷

¹ Ebd.

² Burlas, L. (1983), *Slovenská hudobná moderna [Slovak Musical modernism]*, Bratislava: Obzor, p. 129

³ Ebd.

⁴ Burlas, L. (1983), *Slovenská hudobná moderna [Slovak Musical modernism]*, Bratislava: Obzor, p. 131

⁵ Ebd.

⁶ Ebd.

⁷ Šamko, Jozef (1955): *Ján Cikker*, Bratislava, p. 35

His second string quartet - *String quartet op. 14. nr. 2* (1936), can be considered as a preparation for his orchestral works.¹ In this piece, Cikker worked with various compositional techniques in a much subtle way as in his previous ones. Like in his first string quartet, here he also used chromatics and folk motifs but this time the piece even included chords consisting of compound intervals (bigger than octave) like eleventh or perfect fifteenth, responsible for creating the musical tension in the piece.² „Expression of this piece is no longer so aggressive as in his previous pieces and it serves as a sort of a preparations for his later pieces, mainly orchestral ones, from the point of its construction and conception.”³ It is a piece that consisted of only one movement, however written in sonata form. This work clearly showed the composer’s progress in technical knowledge and also growth and development of his musical ideas.⁴

Despite spending a long time abroad and collecting musical ideas outside of Slovakia, Cikker was strongly connected with his native country and its musical culture. „Cikker could very sensitively react on characteristic traits of the dancing element in Slovak folklore music tradition and apart from themes written similarly as a vocal tune, he was using characteristic traits of Slovak instrumental music, mainly the atmosphere of the folk tunes.”⁵

With Cikker the music in Slovakia underwent a major transformation. Various contemporary techniques were already a stable part of it, despite certain criticism: „...there appeared objections problematizing his maturity as a composer as well as lack of reflexion in the creative process, wild temper, problematic structure of form of his pieces.”⁶

Orchestral music

Cikker is also one of the Slovak composers who did not fear the massive orchestral instrumentation. He had an extraordinary sense for the combination of various instrument groups and imagination regarding sound complex. One of his most important orchestral works is *Symphonical Prologue Op. 13 No. 3* (1934) for a symphony orchestra. The piece has a sonata form and is a synthesis between twelve-tone technique and use of chords of postimpressionist music (where each chord has a concrete color with a concrete meaning). Cikker works with the chords in a rather advanced manner, using minor and major third at the same time, thus creating an

¹ Jurík, M. / Zagar, P. (1998): *100 slovenských skladateľov [100 Slovak Composers]*, Bratislava: Music Centre Slovakia, 66

² Burlas, L. (1983), *Slovenská hudobná moderna [Slovak Musical modernism]*, Bratislava: Obzor, p. 132

³ Ebd., p. 133

⁴ Ebd.

⁵ Ebd.

⁶ Jurík, M. / Zagar, P. (1998): *100 slovenských skladateľov [100 Slovak Composers]*, Bratislava: Music Centre Slovakia, p. 137

effect of altered chords, or different inversions of major seventh. Such various “thick” chords became typical for his musical style.

Cikker’s intention in this piece was to express his attitude towards life through music, mainly expressing his anti-war thoughts. He was also forming his original style of motivic work, working with a smaller amount of motifs, which keep varying through the whole piece.

Another influential work is *Spring Symphony Op. 15* (1937).¹ It has a character of a meditation, depicting awakening feelings (reference to the awakening of the Slovak nation and culture), just as nature awakens in the spring. In this piece, there is visible Cikker’s fully formed musical style, mainly work with chords, as well as focus at expressing personal feelings.

The symphony has four movements: *Molto Moderato*, *Allegro Grazioso*, *Scherzo*, *Vivo*. The piece is missing a slow movement, which Cikker compensates through focusing at constant movement of the phrases, in certain parts the pulse of the piece unexpectedly speeds up, the phrase is running forward, whereas in another ones it slows down.

For Cikker, in the symphony important are colors of sound, which he took an inspiration from composers like Richard Strauss, Claude Debussy or Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov.²

Hommage à Beethoven (1969) is a symphonic piece paying homage to the composer Ludwig van Beethoven.³ For this piece Cikker intentionally chooses Beethoven’s overture Coriolan. In this piece, he saw a connection with the modern world, concretely in the tragic story of the antique hero Coriolanus. It was also the form of the overture, which Cikker found appealing, for example parts with strong contrasts, which Cikker was also trying to imitate. Hommage has a similar form to Coriolan, sonata form with coda. Cikker does not intend to copy the form of Coriolan completely, however in this work there appear similar gradation moments as well as working with the dynamics.⁴

An important work from much later time is *Symphony 1945*, composed in 1974.⁵ In this work, Cikker hold on to his compositional style, expressing his personal feelings through the music. The piece is a memory of the suffering of the second world war, depicting endless sorrow and consequences caused by its terror. The war left enormous harms, that is why the piece as well has a monumental form. It has a manly character, avoiding sentimentality. Its dramatic mood is a proof that Cikker took a huge experience from composing many operas. For such dramatical

¹ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0HqyhUTVtWM&ab_channel=collectionCB3

² Burlas, L. (1983), *Slovenská hudobná moderna [Slovak Musical modernism]*, Bratislava: Obzor, p. 120

³ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aiOEjfeEuM0&ab_channel=dusssaaan

⁴ Jurík, M. / Zagar, P. (1998): 100 slovenských skladateľov [100 Slovak Composers], Bratislava: Music Centre Slovakia, p. 66

⁵ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ah2tuBYvRvc&t=5s&ab_channel=robt007

works many times found Cikker inspiration in nature, lyrism and dancing elements, confrontation of psychical tension with the outer world, anti-war thoughts. In this symphony Cikker implies many of them.

The first movement of the symphony has a sonata form with elements of a modern music like complicated harmonic features and melodic lines connected to them. In the second movement, the horror of the war is especially intense, musically extremely expressive with high tension. Two musical motifs change with each other in a rondo form. The third movement, written in a scherzo form with trio, has a folk character, with folk melodies and dances typical for Slovak nation like 'odzemok'¹. The tension in music is expressed through non-typically low notes in piccolo. The fourth movement, in a non-traditional sonata form, is an inspiration from Dvořák's second Symphony in b flat major, concretely in the main theme. The piece ends with an extremely dramatic coda.

It is of a great importance to mention that Ján Cikker enriched Slovak national music not only with his instrumental works, but also thanks to his nine operas. Thus, next to Eugen Suchoň is Cikker the first composer working into detail with such a complex form of a composition and also writing such a respective amount of them. „In all of them he was expressing the thoughts of humanism, desire for freedom, patriotism, whereas beautiful thoughts on the outside he was exploring more deeply, watching their effects in a society and from the results he was creating his own opinion about political and social course of events.“² It is obvious that in his instrumental works, Cikker's aim was not to only compose music, but to compose pieces which would bear a message for the humanity.

Eugen Suchoň (1908 - 1993)

Chamber music

Eugen Suchoň was a Slovak composer, active as well as a teacher of piano, theory and composition at several institutions, such as the Academy of Music and Drama and at the State Conservatory in Bratislava between years 1933 – 1948 or Comenius University (1948–50).³ Such an extensive pedagogical activity is not coincidental. According to Jozef Kresánek, Suchoň

¹ An off-ground dance, a traditional Slovak dance

² Jurík, M. / Zagar, P. (1998): 100 slovenských skladateľov [100 Slovak Composers], Bratislava: Music Centre Slovakia, p. 66

³ Martináková, Zuzana: *Suchoň, Eugen*, in: Grove Music Online, <https://www-1oxfordmusiconline-1com-1oskm4u9h0142.han.bruckneruni.at/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000027072> (12.05.2020)

(similarly as Ján Cikker) cared not only for the musical quality of his pieces, but also their impact in the society.¹ His main aim was to improve ethical, social and cultural level of the Slovak society, which could also strengthen national awareness².

Suchoň was going through several creative periods, the first being a self-taught period (1923 - 28), from which there exist only a few chamber music pieces, such as *Pochod Pezinského športového klubu* (1923), a march composed for a local sport club.³

The second creative period (1929 – 1933) is already a period full of new incentives thanks to Suchoň's piano studies at the Bratislava School of Music with Frico Kafenda (1927 – 1931) and at the Prague Conservatoire with Novák (1931 – 1933).⁴ The two studies gave to Suchoň two different musical approaches. Kafenda was mainly following the tradition of the German late Romanticism (Johannes Brahms, Max Reger, Richard Strauss, Arnold Schönberg)⁵, whereas Novák was taking the direction of focusing at the Slovak folk elements, helping Suchoň to form Slovak musical style.⁶

Sonata A flat major op. 1 (1930), a chamber music piece from this period for violin and piano is an attempt to imitate composers of the German romanticism such as Johannes Brahms, Richard Strauss, Max Reger or Arnold Schönberg (thus revealing impact of Frico Kafenda), for example through numerous modulations, even such which are atypical for sonata form.⁷ Apart from modulations, it was also quick changing of tonal center and frequent use of chromatics. Although the key of the piece is in A flat major, this key appears in this Sonata only rarely, for example the second theme in the first movement is in B flat minor and the ending theme in E flat major, it is mostly the end of movements coming back to this key.⁸

In the second movement of this sonata there are less modulations and as mentioned above, most of the music of this movement is written in B flat minor instead of A flat major.⁹ The third movement is again rich in modulations. Suchoň is in such way putting into foreground never-

¹Kresánek, Jozef / Vajda, Igor (1978): *Eugen Suchoň. Národný umelec [Eugen Suchoň. National artist]*, Bratislava, p. 15

²Nad'a Hrková, *Masarykovská éra – kult českej hudby na Slovensku [The era of Masaryk – the cult of czech music in Slovakia]*, in: *Dejiny Hudby [History of music]*, Ikar, Bratislava 2006, (= VI), p. 303

³Kresánek, J./ Vajda, I. (1978): *Eugen Suchoň. Národný umelec [Eugen Suchoň. National artist]*, Bratislava, p. 13

⁴Burlas, L. (1983), *Slovenská hudobná moderna [Slovak Musical modernism]*, Bratislava: Obzor, p. 83

⁵Ebd., p. 83

⁶Hrková N. (2006): *Masarykovská éra – kult českej hudby na Slovensku [The era of Masaryk – the cult of czech music in Slovakia]*, in: *Dejiny Hudby [History of music]*, Bratislava: Ikar, (= IV), p. 302

⁷Burlas, L. (1983), *Slovenská hudobná moderna [Slovak Musical modernism]*, Bratislava: Obzor, p. 83

⁸Kresánek, J./ Vajda, I. (1978): *Eugen Suchoň. Národný umelec [Eugen Suchoň. National artist]*, Bratislava, p. 27

⁹Ebd.

ending sound and color possibilities of both violin and piano in different keys.¹ „The Sonata A flat major brings many melodic elements, most of which are not typical for Suchoň’s later melodic. In his later development needed his melodic to be held back, to create one unit and bring an order into it.’’²

String quartet op. 2 ESD 46 (1931) is another piece of this period with an obvious impact of Kafenda. According to Jozef Kresánek, an inspiration to this work were probably works of Arnold Schönberg, concretely his String quartet nr. 1, op. 7, mainly his imitational counterpoint technique he used here.³ Interesting is also the fact that Suchoň is using here elements of folk music like tritone in one voice and chromatic and polyphony in other voices at the same time, which build a strong contrast with each other. Remarkable is here also the counterpoint structure of the piece, here Suchoň was following the example of Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy or Hugo Riemann and in several places, each voice of the quartet has an autonomous line, crossing each other.⁴ With all these elements resembles the quartet to old music forms such as *ricercar* or *sonata da chiesa*, only with the difference of new elements like contrasting themes or modulations into distant keys.⁵

In 1939 Suchoň rewrote the quartet, he changed its form and musical character too. Originally it was written as one movement lasting 45 minutes, but such a form of a composition was too demanding for a listener to maintain focus. That is why Suchoň decided to split the piece into two movements with two different characters.⁶ The first movement in a sonata form with a shortened recapitulation is rather meditative, the second movement in a three-part ABA form is on the other hand is more of a *scherzando* with a playful character and *adagio-rubato* movement in the middle.

Suchoň’s third creative period was marked by the political situation, with second world war and afterwards establishment of the communism forcing composers to basically fall into silence or with a strong censorship modifying their works.⁷ Through this period there are no significant chamber music works, such compositions only came into foreground again in the next, fourth period.

¹ Ebd.

² Ebd.

³ Burlas, L. (1983), *Slovenská hudobná moderna [Slovak Musical modernism]*, Bratislava: Obzor, p. 85

⁴ Kresánek, J./ Vajda, I. (1978): *Eugen Suchoň. Národný umelec [Eugen Suchoň. National artist]*, Bratislava, p. 29

⁵ Ebd.

⁶ Ebd., p. 30

⁷ Hrková, N.: *Masarykovská éra – kult českej hudby na Slovensku [The era of Masaryk – the cult of Czech music in Slovakia]*, in: *Dejiny Hudby [History of music]*, Ikar, Bratislava 2006, (= IV), p. 303

„The fourth period (1955–68) was marked by a return to chromaticism and complex harmony, though in effect it involved a new approach to discovering relationships between dodecaphonism, serialism, modality and tonality.”¹

Poème macabre ESD 83 (1963) is a chamber music piece from this period, written for violin and piano, but this time, the inspiration for this work was political tension in the whole world in the year of 1962 as well as the poem of Slovak poet Pavol Országh Hviezdoslav „Krvavé Sonety”²(written in 1914), a cycle of poems with anti-war theme.³

The formation of violin and piano was Suchoň’s intention, so that he can create line of counterpoint in violin opposing piano with a function of a mere accompaniment.⁴

„The form of the piece is expanding of one of the oldest musical architectonic: the contrast of meditative rubato and ravishing dance.”⁵ It can be also described as a meditation with dances, where in the rubato parts Suchoň focuses largely on vertical structure of the chords and in the dancing parts more on horizontal allocation of the chords, using perfect fourths, major seventh, minor thirds or minor seconds. In the piano part, the composer frequently uses chords in their horizontal form, introducing technical possibilities of piano playing. However, both violin and piano are in the whole piece in a mutual connection, mainly through thirds or decimas they build together.⁶

Through his whole life was Suchoň actively following musical and social development to get an inspiration for his works, whereas at the same time he was trying, according to the demands of the regime, to create a national character of the music. In fact, based on his works, a famous Slovak critic, Ivan Ballo, defined Slovak music: „Ballo on the example of Eugen Suchoň defines the main character of Slovak music: emotion, sentiment, emotional fieriness, feeling dominating over ratio, high appreciation of irrationalism.”⁷ It is also belief and hope in people and their strength, dragging on through his whole work.⁸ In Ballo’s characteristics is present a

¹ Ebd.

² “The Bloody Sonnets”

³ Kresánek, J./ Vajda, I. (1978): *Eugen Suchoň. Národný umelec [Eugen Suchoň. National artist]*, Bratislava, p. 142

⁴ Ebd.

⁵ Ebd.

⁶ Ebd., p. 143

⁷ Hřešková, N.: *Masarykovská éra – kult české hudby na Slovensku [The era of Masaryk – the cult of Czech music in Slovakia]*, in: *Dejiny Hudby [History of music]*, Ikar, Bratislava 2006, (= IV), p. 303

⁸ Jurík, M. / Zagar, P. (1998): *100 slovenských skladateľov [100 Slovak Composers]*, Bratislava: Music Centre Slovakia, p. 262

strong urge to define the „Slovak” music. This characteristics basically fits to the Slovak nation, so till certain point Ballo ist right, his characteristic should however not take the already well-known direction of focusing on purely Slovak nature.

Orchestral works

Suchoň's orchestral works can be divided into works for a solo instrument with orchestra and works for an orchestra.

Nokturno for Cello and orchestra ESD 37 (1927) is a piece from Suchoň's first creative period. Inspired from romantic composers, mainly Antonín Dvořák and Rimsky-Korsakov, concretely with a melodic orchestral introduction, followed by cello with a slowly developing theme.¹

Suchoň uses here extensively harp, strengthening with its sound the lyrical and emotional character of the piece. Despite the fact Suchoň wrote this piece as a self-learner, it is technically rather advanced, using for example mediants (connecting c minor and E major chords).²

Burlesque For Violin And Orchestra op. 7 ESD 55 (1933) from this second creative period is depicting sound possibilities of the violin in connection with a massive sound of the orchestra. This work is a breakthrough in forming Suchoň's typical musical style.³ It is for example eight-tone modus, frequently appearing in his compositions, as well as a tone rows with whole tone and half tone intervals, building a base for septime jumps. Present here is also twelve-tone technique in various forms.⁴

Burlesque is also interesting from the point of its form, which is reversed, ABA-C-BA. This work is nowadays very popular among musicians, as it was already in time of its creation: „.....they[violin] are dazzling, making an impression with clear sound colors, the middle part is full of intimate sound colors and astonishing passion. After beautiful, lyrical middle part of the woodwinds, blending with several, soft chords of the strings, comes solo violin, having an imitational dialogue with flute, standing out as a wonderful dialogue of love.”⁵

The third period, already mentioned earlier, brought only a few pieces from Suchoň, mainly from the time before the second world war. „The third period (1934–55) was dominated by the

¹ Kresánek, J./ Vajda, I. (1978): *Eugen Suchoň. Národný umelec [Eugen Suchoň. National artist]*, Bratislava, p. 18

² Ebd.

³ Burlas, L. (1983), *Slovenská hudobná moderna [Slovak Musical modernism]*, Bratislava: Obzor, p. 100

⁴ Ebd.

⁵ Ernest Zavarský, *Eugen Suchoň*, Bratislava 2008, p. 52

folk music's diatonicism and modality (i.e. the Lydian, Dorian, Mixolydian, Aeolian and Locrian modes and combinations of tetrachords).''¹

Balladic Suite op. 9 ESD 58b (1934 - 36) for a symphonic orchestra from Suchoň's third creative period is a piece where Suchoň's typical musical style is completely shaped.² The form of the piece is connected to the passionate feelings.³ As typical for his works, the composer is expressing his feelings through music.⁴ Unlike previous works, focusing on German late romanticism, in this work takes Suchoň an inspiration from the works of French composers and their specific, impressionistic color of the orchestra, as well as homophony with more clear and individual themes.⁵ Melodics of the piece is built on twelve-tone scale, using specific combinations of perfect and augmented fourths, intervals the composer took from the Slovak folk melodies.⁶ The first movement, *Allegro moderato, ma energico*, is characterized by a restless, pugnacious theme, appearing also in the development of this movement. The first movement in general resembles with its character more a symphony as a suite with its musical monumentality. The second movement, *Adagio*, builds a meditative, almost melancholic contrast to the previous movement. It consists mainly of free variations. The third movement, *Allegro molto*, reflects detachment of Suchoň from his inner world and his perception of the outer one, although the character of the movement is much less passionate. At the end comes the fourth movement, where the composer reflects about various matters such as past wars and upcoming threats in the society.

„The fourth period (1955–68) was marked by a return to chromaticism and complex harmony, though in effect it involved a new approach to discovering relationships between dodecaphonism, serialism, modality and tonality.’’⁷ The fourth period was mainly focused on vocal pieces. It is obvious that Eugen Suchoň kept going his direction, paying only little attention to the political demands on the music, shaping the culture with his original ideas.

The Slovak modernism can be summarized as a generation of composers expected to create the „Slovak’’ music, to create a national musical style and to shape the identity of the nation

¹ Martináková, Z.: *Suchoň, Eugen*, in: Grove Music Online, <https://www-1oxfordmusiconline-1com-1oskm4u9h017f.han.bruckneruni.at/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000027072>, (10.03.2020)

² Kresánek, J. (1965), in: *Predslov k partituru* [Preface to the complete score], Praha – Bratislava, p. 3

³ Ebd.

⁴ Ebd.

⁵ Ebd., p. 4

⁶ Ebd.

⁷ Martináková, Z.: *Suchoň, Eugen*, in: Grove Music Online, <https://www-1oxfordmusiconline-1com-1oskm4u9h017f.han.bruckneruni.at/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000027072>, (10.03.2020)

through pointing out at the cultural history and musical folklore traditions of Slovakia. Despite the folklore as a certain „obligatory” element in the music, this generation brought to Slovakia the musical culture of the whole Europe as well as America and thus broadened the horizons of the Slovak nation, which due to the political regime had only limited options to travel abroad and to get acquainted with the world outside of the country.

5.4 The composers of the second half of the 20th century

Vladimír Godár (1956)

Chamber music

Vladimír Godár brought new incentives into the Slovak music in 1970s and 1980s. His music has two main lines joining together. It has as a base, old traditional principle of baroque or renaissance musical period on one hand and transforming these traditions into the context of the world today on the other. Typical for his compositional style is his “new attitude to the past, adopting historical form concepts (passacaglia, concerto grosso, partita) and a new form of consequent serialism, where the three main components cross each other: vertical (the principle of tonal centre), linear (canonical principle) and sonic(clusters).”¹

One of the most remarkable chamber music pieces from Godár is *Talizman, Nokturno* (1979 – 1983), a nocturne for a piano trio.² In this piece he works with the elements of almost each musical period. Godár intentionally blends different musical periods together, taking inspiration from Alfred Schnittke and his poetic polystyle.

The piece resembles to a nocturne in style of Frédéric Chopin and at the beginning, there is a quote of a French romantic politician and writer François-Auguste-René de Chateaubriand: “Every man carries within himself a world made up of all that he has seen and loved; and it is to this world that he returns, incessantly, though he may pass through and seem to inhabit a world quite foreign to it.”³

¹ Jurík, M. / Zagar, P. (1998): 100 slovenských skladateľov [100 Slovak Composers], Bratislava: Music Centre Slovakia, p. 106

² https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IUYGteEDJuU&ab_channel=Buzz

³ Prochádzka, Peter: *Vladimír Godár*, <http://hc.sk/o-slovenskej-hudbe/osobnost-detail/340-vladimir-godar> (26.08.2020)

One of his remarkable works is also his string quartet *Jesenná meditácia* (1979)¹ composed in a minimalistic style. For Godár it is an exploring in which a minimum of compositional elements will make sense, but at the same time will also manage to bear a musical legacy.

Orchestral music

Barcarolle (1993) for an orchestra is Godár's most influential orchestral work. When composing this work, Godár's main principle was based on aphorism of Eric Satie: „Do not try to be a genius in every bar.“ the composer was also taking an inspiration from the piece „Venetian Gondola Song“ from Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, mainly from its 6/8 measure, f sharp major key and melodic shape of a descending hexachord. It was also an association of Shakespear's Shyllock from *The Merchant of Venice* coming to Godár's mind when composing this piece. Godár meant for Slovakia in the 1970s a beginning of new generation of composers. His works completely abandon the folclore principles, the composer took a completely new approach to his music with much more freedom than ever before.

Vladimír Bokes (1946)

Chamber music

Vladimír Bokes is a composer who in 1970s helped Slovak music to better connect with the avantgarde in the world. His tendency was to keep the connection with the western world full of freedom and inspiration, which later in 1980s inevitably resulted in having his works forbidden to be performed. Many performers also criticized his works, considering his works unplayable. Several years later however, Bokes regained permission for his works to be performed and step by step Bokes found his way back to performers and audience. He also received several significant rewards.

His works are inspired by the Second Viennese School (the composers grouped around Arnold Schönberg and his pupils), dodecaphony and serialism. Step by step Bokes even broadened his interest to aleatoric music, a compositional technique based on the principle of chance, unpredictability, letting the performer to freely interpret the work's rhythm, sound and color. The interpretation thus mostly depends on the performer himself.

¹ „An autumn meditation“

Coll'age op. 28 (1979) is a piece for two violins, viola, cello and piano. The impulse for its creation was a Symposium of young Czechoslovak and soviet composers in 1979. In the symposium, the composers were informed that "... the socialist realism (already) accepts free dodecaphony (not the strict one) and also small aleatory (not big one!). Collage as an artistic technique is not accepted at all."

Despite such specific instructions, many composers continued to work with the newly forbidden techniques, Bokes included. The basis of the Coll'age is dodecaphony, the composer's intention here is using of certain "thorn" fragments of intervals, creating the impression of a piece of music broken into pieces, building a collage together. There also appears famous chords from Schönberg's op. 16. Fragments slowly transform into more coherent units with violin in the foreground, engaging in a dialogue of all instruments, culminating in a piano cadenza. Although brought together for a brief moment, the picture falls apart in the end again and the piece comes back into the form of a "broken mirror".¹

Orchestral music

From the orchestral works are the most important his symphonies. *Symphony Nr. 2, op. 24* (1978) is a piece, connecting several lines of thinking within itself. It is mainly connection of two main impacts: an impact of polish composers like Krzysztof Penderecki or Witold Lutosławski on one hand and impact of west-european avantgarde, concretely composers of the Darmstadt School like Karlheinz Stockhausen and Pierre Boulez, using serialism and modernism, on the other. The main topic of the pice is Bokes's musical „fight“ with the regime, as well as his passion for music.

Another important orchestral work of Bokes is *Symphony nr. 6, op. 73* (2002). It is a piece connecting the classicistic seriousness and avantgarde compositional elements. The symphony is writte as a one-movement work and unlike the use of aleatory, the piece has a stable 4/4 measure.

The beginning of the symphony resembles to human breathing. The composer is also connecting here words breath and spirit, which in the Slovak language sound almost identical² and for the composer also connected in their meaning. The message of the composer is the fact, that the art should touch the human soul, helping him to breath freely. With this, Bokes hints at the socialist realism, forbidding the Slovak composers to express themselves freely.

¹ Kastl, Pavel: *Vladimír Bokes*, <https://hc.sk/o-slovenskej-hudbe/osobnost-detail/271-vladimir-bokes/diela>, (05.03.2020)

² Dych - breath, duch - spirit

In this symphony Bokes is giving a direction to the music, which starts at first with indefinable musical parts, gradually forming itself into tone clusters, going further to more clear, harmonically sounding lines. The whole work is characterized by an enormous, growing energy.

The generation of the 2nd half of the 20th century obviously did not let the regime to take a full control over their works. They even left the folklore principles, a symbol of the nation's history and tradition, out. Could one consider them Slovak in spite of this?

5.5 Similar and different approaches of the three generations of composers

With so many complicated matters – world wars, regime, censorship, pressure to create the national identity, it is logical that different composers reacted in a distinct way. That is why I consider it relevant to once again look at their approaches and to clearly understand their similarities as well as their differences:

a) Use of folk music

The first way is using of folklore musical elements in their works, from an own initiative or because of the political pressure, either as a base for them or as an important part, it is concretely the first and the second generation. If to look critically on their works (since many of their works are mostly depicted in already mentioned idealized manner with an intention to create an exaggerated picture of the Slovak culture), many of these works are music pieces full of passion, life and exciting ideas, representing the best from the Slovak culture, where the composers despite the political pressure took the risk of bringing foreign compositional styles to Slovakia. However, many composers did not feel like taking such a risk, composing pieces that lack the true quality as well as a deeper meaning and a message to the listener. It is logical that many of them were scared to go against the regime, in which case they would risk horrific consequences, even death, thus composing „suitable” pieces. Nevertheless, one must consider also this fact not to idealize these pieces, but rather to try to look realistically at them.

The second way, with composers of the second half of the 20th century, is a complete detachment from folclorism and if such elements were used at all, their appearance was only minor. Such an approach brought a „new air” into Slovakia, bringing much bigger opportunities for the composers and the country as well, making a direct impact on the people through supporting the freedom of the choice.

b) Compositional techniques

For an interpret getting acquainted with the Slovak chamber and orchestral music of 20th century, it is also important to understand the contrast of the early and later composers of this century, as already mentioned above. Composers like Mikuláš Schneider-Trnavský or Mikuláš Moyzes kept their compositional style closely connected to the post-romanticism and impressionism, whereas the second generation of composers and those of the second half of the 20th century broadened their style with countless contemporary compositional techniques, making a complete contrast with the post-romantic style.

c) Studies abroad

The 20th century means for Slovakia the most important epoch so far. For the first time after many centuries, it gained independence, it got its official name and own territory, as well as right to shape its own identity. As previously mentioned (see Chapter 4), newly gained and long expected freedom however almost immediately met a major problem - political system affecting each sphere of the country, forbidding of excessive experimenting, even banning international influences of any kind. Many of the composers however decided to find another way of how to express their ideas. All of the mentioned composers apart from Vladimír Bokes travelled abroad for a better education and work, with aim to make the world acquainted to this culture and to shape the identity of the nation through the possibilities available abroad. Luckily, at this time, in another parts of Europe, such as Germany, Austria, Hungary, Czech Republic or Russia, despite their struggles, many musical institutions worked on a highly advanced, professional level with a long history, such as the University of Music and Performing Arts Munich, founded in 1846, the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, Austria, founded in 1817; Franz Liszt Academy of Music in Budapest, Hungary, founded in 1875 or Moscow State Tschaikovsky Conservatory in Moscow, Russia, founded in 1866. Already Ján Levoslav Bella, a previously mentioned composer (See Chapter 3.6), left at the end of the 19th century to Hermannstadt, now Sibiu in modern Romania, because of limiting creative possibilities in his home country. It were however mainly countries like Czech Republic, Hungary and Austria the Slovak composers chose for their education.

6. Slovak identity and music today

A century in a history might not seem very long, however if to compare the beginning and the end of the 20th century, with its many political events, the whole world underwent a major change. That is why it is interesting to see the result of forming of the Slovak nation and music in the country. It is also time to get the answer to the previously mentioned questions, let's take a look at them again:

1. Was it possible at all to form an identity of the nation under so many difficult circumstances?
2. Was the demand to create Slovak national music or to have Slovak composers really possible or relevant?
3. Could under such circumstances, valuable chamber and orchestral pieces be created and recognized worldwide?

After many centuries of political struggles between various nations on the territory of present-day Slovakia, a nation with its own land, history, language and culture was formed. Regarding its identity, it is a bit more complicated. As several times previously mentioned, the 20th century was the right time to definitively shape the identity of the Slovak nation, with political wish to make it based purely on Slovak history, thinking and culture. Especially music culture was supposed to help the process. Here we stumble upon the problem, since the Slovak nation, despite its Slavic origin, was created through blending of different nations and their cultures (see Chapter 3). Its nature thus lies in the multiculturalism. Generally, within Europe it is important to consider this fact, since there is no European nation which did not interact with other nations throughout its history. It is naturally important for a nation to hold on to its traditions, however being open towards foreign incentives makes it collect experience for its continuous development. After the research it can be summarized that an identity of the Slovak nation was indeed formed, it is a nation which despite its small size managed to form and to keep its position and to cherish its traditions. It should however be considered from an all-European context. This brings us to the next question, whether the demand for Slovak music and Slovak composers really is relevant. After taking into account several facts from this thesis, "Slovak" music or composer does not have such significance as often wished, especially from the regime of the 20th century, a wish which sadly prevails even today. Not to forget, music is considered a universal language worldwide without particular nationality. Indeed, every nation has the urge to be proud of its talented individuals, Slovakia

as well. However, the fact remains that the most influential composers from Slovakia succeeded abroad thanks to their openness to foreign incentives. Thus, if we really search for a definition of a Slovak composer, it can be defined as a composer connected with Slovakia (not necessarily only through his birthplace) with passion for music, bringing new, original ideas to the world and keen on constant learning.

Another important fact to consider is that forming of music in Slovakia was strongly influenced by the censorship and artificial regulation of it. Therefore, it can be summarised that the composers of the 20th century, especially of the second generation (See Chapter 5.3) in Slovakia have laid the foundation for the way music in Slovakia should evolve, but since they only got complete freedom in the 1990s, there are still many possibilities ahead of how to shape it. It can be also concluded that despite all of the above described events, many of the composers in Slovakia created works of high quality. Although from the regime's point of view, the composers were strengthening the identity of the nation by proving that Slovakia deserves its place in the world thanks to its history and traditions, it was on the contrary their respect from both domestic and foreign cultures which in fact shaped Slovakia, present in all three generations. For this reason Slovakia should connect with its roots, but to understand them in an all-European context on one hand and at the same time to be open to new, foreign cultures on the other. It has already been many years in a direct connection with the rest of the world, so getting experience has never been easier. Like this, the term "Slovak" will be not characterized as a small, closed country in the middle of Europe but a country proud of its history and traditions, which takes all possible incentives from all over the world, capable of constant learning and perfecting in all aspects of its existence.

7. New perspectives

New ways of folk music

Despite previously mentioned fact of a strong connection of the Slovak composers of the first half of the 20th century with the folklore tradition (See Chapter 5), this connection resulted in a positive transformation of the folk music in Slovakia. It was no longer a matter of cultural life in rural areas, representing the idea of music having explicitly entertaining meaning. The folk music got a completely new, much more professional character. For the first time, it was part of solo works like sonatas, part of chamber music works and even symphonies. Like this, folk music can be part of the music in Slovakia in the future as well, but bear its own importance, not be present in the pieces only out of obligation.

The identity of the Slovak nation

Music was one of the most powerful ways of connecting the country with the rest of the world in the 20th century. Even though new experimental compositional practices, spreading from Europe and America were mostly rejected in Slovakia because of the audience inclining to the old traditions, many composers dared to stand up against general opinion and implemented these into their works. It is thus clear, that impacts of various nations were crucial for shaping of Slovak nation in every way and they should be remembered. Thanks to the country's central position in Europe it is also clear that mixing of various nations on this territory was inevitable (see Chapter 3.1) and left major traces in every aspect of life. Therefore, if to already speak about the 'Slovak' identity and culture, it can be defined as a Slavic identity built on mingling of the western, mostly German and eastern, Slavic cultural and social principles.

Musical education

During the 20th century, Slovak musical culture was going through a major transformation, mainly towards the second half of it, when it was step by step becoming free from the political pressure. With each generation, chamber and orchestral music became a stable part of the culture, creating a new tradition apart from vocal music. Both chamber and orchestral music

brought a completely new point of view on music for composers, interpreters as well as the audience. Through many folk elements, the composers could speak directly to the Slovak people, but being part of classical pieces, the audience was gradually getting acquainted with more complex and extensive musical forms. It was obviously not only composers learning about music. Like this, through art the people were getting more educated.

In this process however the composers stumbled upon another unexpected obstacle: insufficient musical education and technical abilities of the interpreters, lacking the virtuosic level. Through composing a new piece, in the ideal case a composer cooperates with a vocalist/instrumentalist to get practical tips from the interpreter, bringing the piece into perfection from each side. At the beginning of the 20th century, there existed no musical institutions focused at professional musical education. They only started to gradually form throughout the century. Since the borders of the country were literally closed for the biggest part of the 20th century and only a few musicians got lucky enough to travel abroad, the level of the musical education is rather behind till today in comparison with other countries of the world. That is why it is a key role for the Slovak musical institutions to broaden their interest for a professional education, concretely accepting the foreign vocal and instrumental teachers and their approach. On one side, Slovak musicians and students of music should expand their horizons and to study abroad on music universities as well as various types of musical institutions, to get acquainted with the foreign approach to music and technique, on the other to return to Slovakia with newly gained knowledge and experience and thus to improve the musical educational system. In my opinion, the foreign teachers must be more frequently invited to not only Slovak universities, but also to any other musical institutions such as the music schools or music high schools, to either teach on a regular basis or in a form of master classes and workshops. The students must necessarily during their studies get a much more complex idea of music and get educated in a more advanced and strict form not only in the vocal/instrumental lessons, but also in subjects as solfeggio, music theory, music literature and history and musical and performance psychology. Educational programs for musically gifted students are also necessary to be created to support and direct the students towards the career of a professional musician as a soloist, orchestra as well as a chamber musician and to get the technical and musical education on the highest level. Like this, the musical culture of Slovakia will be represented by the highest quality musicians, who will elevate country's general level of education and stimulate interest of musicians as well as public for new, innovative approach to the culture and international relations. In such a way, Slovakia has the chance to get rid of the label of a country which lingers on the old principles and is still recovering from the harsh times of the 20th century. There is nothing wrong on the

old traditions, they must be preserved, respected and celebrated, but as Gustav Mahler said: „Tradition is not the worship of ashes, but the preservation of fire.”¹

Cultural and social diversity

Slovakia needs to also rediscover its long forgotten cultural and social diversity. The country's central position in Europe is providing excellent possibility for the Slovak composers and vocalists/instrumentalists to collect new experience and to bring new incentives into Slovakia, not working only with mostly the two well-known ways in the Slovak music – folk music or experimenting ways without broader musical experience. Folk music can also remain a part of the Slovak music, it builds indeed an essential part of the culture. With the incentives described above however it can get much more complex and advanced level as ever before.

A proof of Slovakia's ability to learn and connect on an international level is the fact that it neighbours on five countries – Czechia, Austria, Hungary, Ukraine and Poland, whereas inhabitants living in the border regions speak fluently the language of the country on the other side. The country only needs the right impulse to get new ideas and to realize them. Such an impulse in the music should come from the government in a form of musical scholarships, special schools, higher education and easier access to the education abroad on one hand, but also from the side of artists as well. Artists in Slovakia should make own ideas of how to support the culture and connect with each other to create a strong community with a common aim – to give the culture the importance it deserves, to spread music all over the country and to keep it on the best quality level. In such a way the nation can grow, learn and expand.

¹ <https://beruhmte-zitate.de/zitate/1366839-gustav-mahler-tradition-is-not-the-worship-of-ashes-but-the-pre/?page=2> , 03.08.2021

8. Summary

In a conclusion, Slovakia underwent a long journey until it gained its present shape. The fact that since the beginning of its existence it was a melting pot of different cultures gave to the country many incentives to think about its present and future as well. The above mentioned composers of the 20th century in Slovakia are a proof that their roots are in a powerful country, capable of surviving even under the worst life's circumstances as well as capable of breaking away from holding onto the old traditions, which limits personal as well as professional growth. With years Slovakia managed well to integrate itself into the world, however it has still great possibilities how to improve in each of the above mentioned aspects.

Although both world wars slowed down and inevitably shaped the direction of music, the Slovak composers managed to awaken hope for the whole nation through their music. They laid the foundation of the Slovak music, connecting folk music characterizing the nature and history of the nation with European music and music of America, coming out of the tradition of the major composers, as well as bringing new musical styles full of passion, unconventionality and creativity. Their contribution to the Slovak musical culture was also travelling abroad, bringing back as many new musical and cultural incentives as possible. The task of the current young generation of composers in Slovakia is to support the idea of Slovakia being a country full of freedom, open mind to new and foreign incentives, interest to connect and learn from another countries as well as bring exciting, original ideas.

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