



Music of the 14<sup>th</sup>—17<sup>th</sup> centuries in Slovakia.

The music culture of Slovakia developed in a permanent confrontation of the musicality of Slovak people best expressed in the authentic Slovak music folklore, with the achievements of the music of other, neighbouring or more remoted nations.

Our knowledge of the character of music in the time of Great Moravia (9<sup>th</sup> century) or respectively of the still older period is of course very hypothetic. At the time being it is, however, possible to trace rather well the music art in Slovakia since the middle ages, and that on the basis of very interesting and valuable sources, which even though they have not yet been examined in detail represent Slovakia as a country with high musical culture.

The most spread kind of our mediaeval music art was the Latin chorale, very well documented by the quantity of the documents preserved. First traces can be found in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, the most important documents however, i. e. codices either imported from abroad or written in domestic scriptoria, date from the 14<sup>th</sup>—15<sup>th</sup> centuries respectively. The most important fact in this connection is that large illuminated manuscripts from Bratislava, Košice and the county Spiš do not only bring the currently known and everywhere spread international répertoire of chorale but also compositions (written of course within the purview of the chorale style), which originated in Slovakia, mainly various sequences, the so-called rhymed officia, anthems, tropes, etc. In consequence of the strong effort to make the Latin song uniform such works were not numerous, but their existence alone witnesses for a local resp. regional creative genius and for the effort to cope with the European development and fashion trends.

Polyphony the development of which occurred in Slovakia in the 15<sup>th</sup>—17<sup>th</sup> centuries, is also here a complex and many-styled organism. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century the very old forms of polyphony dating from the 12<sup>th</sup>—13<sup>th</sup> centuries were still preserved. At the same time together with the beginning of the Renaissance style we can very soon see the importation of this new music. Later on, in the 16<sup>th</sup>—17<sup>th</sup> centuries respectively there was practically no important composer whose work would not have penetrated into Slovakia, whether it was an Italian, Fleming or German respectively. Musical life in large and small towns such as Bratislava, Trnava, Kremnica, Banská Bystrica, Levoča, Spišské Podhradie, Ľubica, Bardejov, Prešov and Košice attained a very high level at that time; we can see from the preserved collections of music, old inventories and notations in town archives that our Renaissance and Baroque towns disposed of large choral and instrumental groups and that they had sufficient funds not only to obtain expensive foreign prints or original manuscripts but also to pay excellent musicians just as well. The economical prosperity of the towns and the

cultural level of their inhabitants also created good pre-conditions for the domestic polyphony composition which is represented in Slovakia by all important forms from simple school anthems, then classical and polychoral motets to great cantata concert with choir and orchestra.

Our record is a result of a very long musicological research and tries to present the most interesting and most valuable works composed in Slovakia or preserved among monuments of Slovak origin. Most of them sound in a reconstructed form for the first time. The choice from the surprisingly rich sources and necessary arrangements are made in a way conserving the original character of music and bringing at the same time enjoyment to modern listeners. The interpreters of this record, the Prague Madrigalists conducted by Professor Miroslav Venhoda are an assurance that both demands will be fulfilled with maximal satisfaction.

#### *Trope Sanctus.*

Trope is a special musical form with text created in western Europe in the 9<sup>th</sup> century which represents a verbal and melodic interpolation of a certain composition. Within the framework of the Latin chorale bound by norms and prescriptions, the trope and similar compositions are a manifestation of creative energy and freedom. The troped Sanctus *A quo sunt omnia* is chosen from a Bratislava missal (Bratislava, Town archives E. 1. 18) dated 1341. The extensive melismatic composition has nearer parallels and remoter ones in South German and Austrian materials respectively.

#### *Gloriosus rex humilis in Martino fuit mirabilis*

Late mediaeval sequence (sequence is at first a sort of trope, later on it develops as an independent composition much favoured in the middle ages) preserved in the Spiš gradual from 1426 (Matica Slovenská, archives Spišské Podhradie). It is sure to be of domestic origin because it can only be found in Hungary.

#### *Alleluia — Ave, benedicta Maria*

The composition of verses, i. e. the addition of shorter or longer texts to the melismatic alleluia was widespread in the middle ages. The composition chosen from the Košice gradual from the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century (Budapest, Széchényi Könyvtár, c. l. m. ae. 172) is neither original nor unknown. On the contrary it belonged to the most popular ones, beside the Košice gradual we have, however, no other proof that it had been executed in part-song. The accompanying, so-called organ part, which according to the indication in the gradual is to be improvised was elaborated by M. Venhoda.

#### *Veni Sancte — Da gaudiorum*

The combination of the polytextual motet (each part has an individual text) and of the conductus (free composition for several parts) from the 15<sup>th</sup> century Trnava manuscript is a rare representative of part-song in Slovakia before Renaissance. Although it dates from the 15<sup>th</sup> century only the effective and artistically valuable composition built on the principle of contrast between polyphony and homophony — unknown in foreign sources up to now — surely arose much earlier. The composition is performed according to the transcription of F. Mužik.

#### *Quos confertis invicem ambulantes*

Four-part motet of an unknown composer from the Polyphony antiphonar which a citizen of Bratislava Anna Weilandt dedicated to the choir of the St. Martin collegiate church in Bratislava in 1971. (At present State Slovak Central Archives, Bratislava). This antiphonar contains 400 anonymous compositions (with the one exception) for 2—6 parts. The chosen motet documents the mature Renaissance choir polyphony based on the effort to attain a fluent composition and the beauty of song.

#### Juraj Tranoscus: *Almi parentis omnium Jo dies, jo dies*

Juraj Tranoscus (1592—1637), humanist, poet and composer of Czech origin lived in Slovakia since 1628. Both small compositions belong to the type of the so-called school anthems (simple verse and accord composition for four parts-song using antique metric forms) and are chosen from the *Odarum Sacrarum sive Hymnorum... Libri tres* (1629).

#### Ján Šimbracký: *O Domine Jesu Christe*

Ján Šimbracký (+1657) is one of the most remarkable Slovak polyphonists of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Since 1630 till his death he was organist at Spišské Podhradie. From his probably vast work approximately fifty large works for choir and orchestra have been preserved. The motet *O Domine Jesu Christe* known from the autograph score for two four-part choirs is indebted both to the Venetian polyphonal style and to German Baroque polyphony.

#### Zachariáš Zarevutius: *Magnificat*

Z. Zarevutius was organist at Bardejov between 1625—1665. He was inspired by similar sources like Šimbracký, but he still more emphasized the fullness of song and the cantability of voices. The eight-part *Magnificat secundi toni* for two choirs belongs to the cycle of three *Magnificat* from 1662 written by the composer into a tablature volume deposited under the sign MS 25 in the special fund of music department of the Széchényi library in Budapest.

#### Samuel Capricornus: *Te Deum laudamus*

Samuel Capricornus, Czech by origin and active in Bratislava between 1649—1657 is definitely the greatest personality of Slovak music culture in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. He oriented himself to the latest Italian music (Monteverdi, Carissimo) and during his stay in Bratislava he composed 112 large works from which he issued a small part only (22 compositions) in the collection *Opus Musicum* in 1655. We have chosen from it the *Te Deum laudamus* for eight solo parts, eight choir parts, four clarines, two violins, and organ. The work — a small cantata — is a fine illustration of Capricorn's talent and mastership and also of the quality of musical creation in Bratislava in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.



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Stereo 9112 0193

#### Side One

1. Trope Sanctus
2. Gloriosus rex humilis
3. Alleluia — Ave benedicta Maria
4. Veni Sancte — De gaudiorum
5. Quos confertis invicem ambulantes
6. Juraj Tranoscus: *Almi parentis omnium Jo dies, jo dies*

#### Side Two

7. Ján Šimbracký: *O, Domine*
8. Zachariáš Zarevutius: *Magnificat*
9. Samuel Capricornus: *Te Deum laudamus*

The Prague Madrigalists conducted by Miroslav Venhoda

#### Solo Sing

Jitka Čechová, Milada Jirglová, Jaroslava Kolganová, Vlasta Pecháčková, Stanislava Sežemská, Jaromír Bělor, Pavel Haderer, Pavel Jurkovič, Jaroslav Tománek, Vratislav Vinický, Josef Života

#### Clarines

Josef Svejkský, Stanislav Šimek

Realization Miroslav Venhoda  
Edition Dr. Richard Rybář  
Music Director Jaroslav Krček  
Sound and cut Stanislav Sýkora  
Technical cooperation  
Vladimír Kraffer  
Responsible editor Marta Glasová

Recorded in September 1972

Cover design © Juraj Linzboth  
Foto © Karel Plicka

Printed by Grafobal, n. p., Skalica  
OPUS, n. p., Dunajská 22, Bratislava  
Made in Czechoslovakia