

Notes from the Underground:

Explorations of Dissent in the Music of Czech-born Composers Marek Kopelent and Petr Kotik

by

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ABSTRACT

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, musicologists have been delving into formerly inaccessible archives and publishing new research on Eastern Bloc composers. Much of the English-language scholarship, however, has focused on already well-known composers from Russia or Poland. In contrast, composers from smaller countries such as the Czech Republic (formerly Czechoslovakia) have been neglected. In this thesis, I shed light on the new music scene in Czechoslovakia from 1948–1989, specifically during the period of “Normalization” (1969–1989).

The period of Normalization followed a cultural thaw, and beginning in 1969 the Czechoslovak government attempted to restore control. Many Czech and Slovak citizens kept their opinions private to avoid punishment, but some voiced their opinions and faced repression, while others chose to leave the country. In this thesis, I explore how two Czech composers, Marek Kopelent (b. 1932) and Petr Kotík (b. 1942) came to terms with writing music before and during the period of Normalization.

My research draws on the work of Cold War scholars such as Jonathan Bolton, who has written about popular music during Normalization, and Thomas Svatos, who has written about the art music scene during the fifties. For information particular to art music during Normalization, I have relied on primary sources including existing interviews with the composers. I also conducted archival research to draw on primary sources, such as correspondence, writings, music sketches, and other documents provided by Petr Kotík. Through this thesis, I hope to fill an important lacuna by presenting a picture of art music in Czechoslovakia during Normalization and to bring recognition to lesser-known composers and musicians such as Kopelent and Kotík.

DEDICATION

“And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.” –Colossians 3:17

I thank my God and Savior for the grace given to me: for the talent and ability to study, research, and write. Without Him I am nothing.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Small nations. The concept is not quantitative; it describes a situation; a destiny: small nations haven't the comfortable sense of being there always, past and future: they have all, at some point or another in their history, passed through the antechamber of death; always faced with the arrogant ignorance of the large nations, they see their existence perpetually threatened or called into question; for their very existence *is* a question.

–Milan Kundera, in his essay on Janaček, “The Unloved Child of the Family”¹

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union in the late eighties and early nineties, musicologists have been delving into recently opened archives, and publishing new works on Eastern Bloc composers—especially the already famous Russian composers Sergei Prokofiev and Dmitri Shostakovich.² One country that has been relegated to the musical sidelines, though, is the former Czechoslovakia.³ Czechoslovakia became a satellite state of the Soviet Union in 1948 and gained independence in 1989. During these forty years, the degree of cultural freedom varied: in the fifties, musical compositions

¹ Milan Kundera, *Testaments Betrayed*, translated by Linda Asher (New York: Harper Collins, 1995), 192.

² For example, Simon Morrison has researched and restored the original uncensored versions of several of Prokofiev's works, some of which he discusses in his book *The People's Artist: Prokofiev's Soviet Years* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009). Two (now) standard resources on Shostakovich are Elizabeth Wilson's oral history *Shostakovich: A Life Remembered* (first published in Britain in 1996, second edition Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006) and Laurel Fay's *Shostakovich: A Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

³ Czechoslovakia, once part of the Austro-Hungarian empire, birthplace of musicians from Karl Stamitz to Bedřich Smetana, whose capital city, Prague, had once been the site of the premiere of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and *La Clemenza di Tito*, is now better known (if it is known at all) as the country whose first post-Soviet president was a playwright. Aside from Václav Havel (the poet, playwright, and president), other well-known writers include Milan Kundera, Bohumil Hrabal, and Tom Stoppard.

were strictly controlled, but in the sixties control was relaxed. Against this backdrop came the “Normalization” program of the seventies and eighties—a program whose aim was to once again make Czechoslovakia a model Communist society. The period of Normalization was a time of great cultural duplicity—many people led a double life, saying one thing in public and another in private. Writer Josef Škvorecký called these people the “Gray Zone.” “They hang portraits of the Big Brothers over their desks,” he writes, “but right under their eyes they read George Orwell and listen to Charlie Parker.”⁴ Many no longer retained faith in the ideals of communism, but to say so could result in the loss of work, status, educational privileges, or worse.⁵ As far as musical composition went, the Union of Czechoslovak Composers was one of the first cultural institutions to acquiesce to the pressure to return to the ideals of “socialist realism.” Of course, the retreat was not universal: some composers chose to continue working on their own projects in their own style and face the consequences. Others chose simply to emigrate. In this thesis, I consider the cultural implications of the Normalization process for the authenticity and originality of Czechoslovak musical life and then compare the manifestations of dissent in the music of two nonconformist composers: Marek Kopelent (b. 1932), who has lived in Czechoslovakia (later the Czech Republic) and Petr Kotík (b. 1942), who emigrated to the United States in 1969.

⁴ Josef Škvorecký, “Hipness at Noon: Communism’s Crusade against Jazz and Rock in Czechoslovakia,” *New Republic* 191 (1984): 28.

⁵ Barbara Day, *The Velvet Philosophers* (London: The Claridge Press, 1999), 2.

I. Research in the Field

Little has been written about the music of Czechoslovakia during the years of Normalization. The works of musicologist Mark Carroll and British cultural historian Frances Stonor Saunders have been invaluable for understanding the cultural atmosphere of the fifties in Europe, which set the norm for Normalization.⁶ Historian David Caute has also written broadly about the role of the arts in the Cold War.⁷ In addition to their works, Thomas Svatos has written and published articles about the Union of Czechoslovak Composers during the fifties.⁸ Three collections of essays have also provided valuable information on music in both Czechoslovakia and in surrounding countries: The publication of the proceedings of the Colloquium Musicologicum Brunense in 2001, the proceedings of the international conference Crosscurrents: American and European Music in Interaction 1900–2000 in 2008 and 2009, and Speculum Musicae’s publication, *Music and Propaganda in the Short Twentieth*

⁶ Mark Carroll, *Music and Ideology in Cold War Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Frances Stonor Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters* (New York: The New Press, 2000).

⁷ David Caute, *The Dancer Defects: The Struggle for Cultural Supremacy during the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003). This book provides a useful overview, but should be taken with a grain of salt, as it treats Solomon Volkov’s controversial *Testimony* as a quotable source.

⁸ Thomas D. Svatos, “Sovietizing Czechoslovak Music: The ‘Hatchet-Man’ Miroslav Barvík and his Speech *The Composers Go With the People*,” *Music and Politics* 4, no. 1 (2010): 1–35; Thomas D. Svatos, “A Clash over *Julietta*: The Martinů/Nejedlý Political Conflict and Twentieth-Century Czech Critical Culture,” *Ex tempore: A Journal of Compositional and Theoretical Research in Music* 14, no. 2 (2009): 1–41.

Century.⁹ For general information concerning Normalization, I have consulted the work of historians Barbara Day and Jonathan Bolton.¹⁰ Journalists Timothy Garton Ash and Padraic Kenney have written firsthand accounts about the revolutions in 1989, which provide useful information about the cultural atmosphere toward the end of the period of Normalization.¹¹ I have also consulted pre-revolution sources, such as the 1978 work of Vladimir Kusin, who provides numerical data, and the 1984 memoir of Milan Šimečka, a professor who had lost his university job during Normalization.¹²

Information specific to Kopelent and Kotík is largely found in interviews.

Kopelent has been interviewed by German musicologist Horst Leuchtman in 1990, and by Czech musicologist Tereza Havelková in 2000 and 2002 for the journal *Czech Music*, as well as by Klaus Röhrling for the journal *Musik und Kirche* in 2008 and 2012.¹³ Kotík

⁹ Mikuláš Bek, Geoffrey Chew, and Petr Macek, editors, *Socialist Realism and Music* (Prague: Koniasch Latin Press, 2004); Felix Meyer, Carol J. Oja, Wolfgang Rathert, and Anne C. Shreffler, editors, *Crosscurrents: American and European Music in Interaction, 1900-2000* (Basel, Switzerland: Paul Sacher Foundation, 2014); Massimiliano Sala, ed., *Music and Propaganda in the Short Twentieth Century* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2014).

¹⁰ Barbara Day, *The Velvet Philosophers* (London: The Claridge Press, 1999); Jonathan Bolton, *Worlds of Dissent: Charter 77, the Plastic People of the Universe, and Czech Culture under Communism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012).

¹¹ Padraic Kenney, *A Carnival of Revolution: Central Europe 1989* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).

¹² Vladimir V. Kusin, *From Dubček to Charter 77: A Study of "Normalization" in Czechoslovakia, 1969–1978* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1978); Milan Šimečka, *The Restoration of Order: The Normalization of Czechoslovakia, 1969-1976*, translated by A.G. Brain (London: Verso, 1984). As both these writers were living in Czechoslovakia during the time of their publication, I am aware of the less balanced nature of their input.

¹³ Horst Leuchtman, "Horst Leuchtman im Gespräch mit den Komponisten Evžen Zámečník, Marek Kopelent, Luboš Fišer und Roland Leistner-Mayer [Horst Leuchtman

has also been interviewed for the journal *Czech Music*: by Miroslav Pudlák in 1997, by Havelková in 2003, and by Petr Bakla in 2011.¹⁴ Another source of biographical information about both Kopelent and Kotík is the article by Victor Pantůček accompanying the publication of a CD of Czech music from the sixties.¹⁵ The most thorough biographical information about Kotík is on the website of his United States-based music group, the SEM Ensemble.¹⁶ My personal correspondence with Kotík largely informs my treatment of his music.

II. Methodology

For this study, I will examine the music of Czech composers in light of a political process. Since the process and its implications did not occur in a vacuum, I will review the scholarship concerning the years that led up to the period of Normalization, both in Czechoslovakia and in the broader context of the Soviet Union and its holdings. I will

in Conversation with Composers],” *Jahrbuch – Bayerische Akademie der Schönen Künste* 4 (1990): 228–237; Tereza Havelková, “Lone Knight: Interview with Marek Kopelent,” *Czech Music* 3 (2002): 2–5; “Marek Kopelent – Portrait,” *Czech Music* 6 (2000): 4–5; Klaus Röhring, “Befreiende Erinnerung: Der Komponist Marek Kopelent [Liberating Memory – A Portrait of the Composer Marek Kopelent],” *Musik und Kirche* 67, no. 6 (1997): 400–402; “Lob in der Frühe: Marek Kopelent zum 80. Geburtstag [Praise Early in the Morning: Marek Kopelent on the Occasion of His Eightieth Birthday],” *Musik und Kirche* 82, no. 2 (2012): 124–125.

¹⁴ Miroslav Pudlák, “Interview with Petr Kotík,” *Czech Music* 5 (1997): 1–3; Tereza Havelková, “Petr Kotík’s Umbilical Cord,” *Czech Music* 1 (2003): 8–11; Petr Bakla, “Petr Kotík: As a Composer, I’ve Always Been a Loner,” *Czech Music* 2 (2011): 2–16.

¹⁵ Victor Pantůček, “Some Experimental Trends in Post-War Czech Music,” *Czech Music* 1 (2008): 14–23.

¹⁶ S.E.M. Ensemble, “Petr Kotík,” last edited September 3, 2014. <http://www.semensemble.org/about/petr-kotik/>

explore the relation between music and politics and address such concepts as authenticity, originality, and dissent in composition. I will also discuss the role that the ideas of progress and conservatism play in the communicative ability of music (whether communicating propaganda or dissent) and compare the opportunities afforded to Kotík in America to the limitations faced by Kopelent.

I use many primary sources including existing interviews with the composers. But I also conducted archival research to draw on primary sources, such as correspondence, writings, music sketches, and other documents provided by Kotík.

I will present case studies of two particular composers: Marek Kopelent and Petr Kotík. These case studies draw on published interviews and newspaper reviews as well as my personal correspondence with the composers and their associates. In each study I also examine a musical work that I believe is representative of the composer's work during the period of Normalization and that is demonstrative of the effect of Normalization policies in the case of Kopelent, and the lack of governmental constraint in the case of Kotík.

III. Clarification of Terms

A few terminological clarifications are in order. Throughout this thesis, I will discuss the relation of music to dissent. My understanding of the concept of dissent draws on Jonathan Bolton's discussion in *Worlds of Dissent*. He emphasizes the origin of the term as applied to non-conformists under the Soviet Union's control: The label, he says, originated among Western (mostly British and American) journalists and Czech protestors "at first rejected but ended up adopting [it], albeit often with a certain ironic

distance.”¹⁷ He also reminds the reader that dissent is not binary—that is, a person is not necessarily *either* a dissident or a collaborator, cf. Škvorecký’s Gray Zone.¹⁸ Finally, he points out that the dissidents did not comprise a monolithic, united movement. People had different motives for deciding not to perpetrate the cultural lie, as well as different ideas about what a successful transition out of Soviet-style Communism would look like.¹⁹ It is with this understanding of the concept of dissent as a heterogeneous scale of behavior rather than a homogenous movement that I will examine elements of dissent in the musical output of Kopelent and Kotík.

Two terms under the heading of dissent require additional clarification. The first is authenticity. In this work, I will use the term as Bolton does to describe “reconciling . . . private convictions and . . . public behavior.”²⁰ For a musician, this might entail composing music according to one’s own tastes or conscience despite the consequences rather than following official guidelines out of fear. The second is irony. I will consult the work of Esti Sheinberg, *Irony, Satire, Parody and the Grotesque in the Music of Shostakovich*.²¹ Sheinberg describes irony as incongruence based on semantic ambiguity

¹⁷ Bolton, 20.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 21.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 23

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 2. Václav Havel calls this “living within truth” in his essay *The Power of the Powerless: Václav Havel, “The Power of the Powerless,”* in *The Power of the Powerless: Citizens against the State in Central-Eastern Europe*, trans. Paul Wilson, ed. John Keane (Armonk, New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1990), 39.

²¹ Esti Sheinberg, *Irony, Satire, Parody and the Grotesque in the Music of Shostakovich*. (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2000).

and multiple layers of meaning,²² and distinguishes between two motivations for irony: irony as stimulus and irony as terminus (terms borrowed from the philosopher Søren Kierkegaard). Irony as stimulus often has a satirical function, and “dissimulates one meaning by openly stating another in order to ridicule and debase.”²³ Irony as terminus is essentially ambiguity and incongruence for their own sake, and often “represents the human inability to communicate, that is, to emit a message as well as to comprehend it.”²⁴ As I examine the works of Kopelent, I will unpack Sheinberg’s definitions and criteria further to examine Kopelent’s claim that his music was “ironic.” Irony often becomes a fail-safe for composers (or their biographers) who wish to retroactively give works credit for dissent. Shostakovich’s works, especially, have been claimed as examples of irony.²⁵ Nevertheless, if a composer describes an element of his work as ironic, while we do not have to accept his or her word unequivocally, we should at least hear it out.

In order to talk about dissent, it is also necessary to specify a definition of repression. For this thesis, I use the typology of repression developed by sociologist Jennifer Earl in her 2003 article *Tanks, Teargas, and Taxes: Toward a Theory of Movement Repression*, which is an expansion of the 1973 work of sociologist Anthony

²² Ibid., 27.

²³ Ibid., 35.

²⁴ Ibid., 37.

²⁵ See especially Solomon Volkov’s controversial memoir, *Testimony: The Memoirs of Dmitri Shostakovich as Related to and Edited by Solomon Volkov*, trans. Antonina W. Bouis (New York: Harper and Row, 1979).

Oberschall.²⁶ Earl distinguishes between coercion, which involves use of force and other police or military action, and channeling, which involves limiting capacity to dissent by channeling resources available to movements.²⁷ Coercion tactics may be harsh, involving physical violence, or they may be soft, involving harassment or intimidation. Earl also distinguishes between repression from state agents tightly connected with national politics, local agents loosely connected, and private agents.²⁸ For the purpose of this thesis, I focus only on repression from state agents tightly connected with national politics, because of the particular governmental model in Czechoslovakia.

In addition, it is necessary to illuminate the use of genre terms. I will use the term modernist as used by Leon Botstein to broadly describe any Western non-tonal music, which can be divided into “avant-garde” and “experimental” music.²⁹ I will use “avant-garde” to refer to the increasingly complex systems of serialism, integral serialism, and their offshoots, while “experimental” refers to trends pioneered by such composers as John Cage, Cornelius Cardew, and Morton Feldman denoting music whose outcome is unpredictable as in an experiment—establishing parameters and then observing what happens.³⁰

²⁶ Jennifer Earl, “Tanks, Tear Gas, and Taxes: Toward a Theory of Movement Repression,” *Sociological Theory* 21, no. 1 (2003): 44–68.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 48.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 47.

²⁹ *Grove Music Online*, s.v. “Modernism,” by Leon Botstein, accessed October 31, 2015, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40625>.

³⁰ John Cage, “Experimental Music,” in *Silence: Lectures and Writings by John Cage* (New Haven, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1961), 7–12. See also *Grove Music Online*,

Finally, although Czechoslovakia was technically one country during the Communist years, both the Czech and Slovak regions remained relatively separate, each having their own Communist Party under the umbrella of the Czechoslovak Communist Party. For this thesis, I confine myself to the study of the Czech region of Czechoslovakia, focusing mainly on the capital city of Prague. The city of Brno, in the southeastern Czech region, was also a musical and intellectual center, but does not fall within the scope of this thesis.

IV. Layout of Content

This thesis is divided into six chapters. The next chapter discusses the political developments of Czechoslovakia in the twentieth century as a background to understanding the period of Normalization. Czechoslovakia was under the control of Nazi Germany for most of the Second World War, so when the Soviet troops arrived in 1945, the Soviets were perceived as “liberators.” In fact, there had been Communist sympathizers and a Communist party in Czechoslovakia since the 1920s, so although they reported to the Soviet Union, those who took over in the coup of 1948 were Czech and Slovak nationals.³¹ All this affected how the re-enforcement of Soviet ideology in the seventies and eighties played out.

s.v. “Avant-Garde,” by Jim Samson, accessed October 31, 2015, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/01573>; *Grove Music Online* s.v. “Experimental Music,” by Cecilia Sun, accessed October 31, 2015, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/A2224296>.

³¹ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, s.v. “Communist Party Czechoslovakia,” last accessed October 19, 2015, <http://www.britannica.com/topic/Communist-Party-of-Czechoslovakia>.

In chapter three, I focus on how Communist ideology affected music in Czechoslovakia. In this chapter I elaborate on the musical infrastructure of Czechoslovakia, including its musical institutions and organizations. In addition, I discuss the concept of Socialist Realism and the officially approved styles and genres of music.

In chapters four and five, I turn my attention to two musicians who decided not to comply with official cultural policy. The first, Marek Kopelent, chose to continue composing music in his own avant-garde style and accept the consequences, which included losing his job, and which I believe led to his current obscurity. The second, Petr Kotík, chose to emigrate from the country, settling in New York and establishing himself first and foremost as the director of an ensemble dedicated to experimental contemporary music.

In chapter six I provide a brief comparison of the two composers and conclude with some final thoughts about the implications of their works and their impact on the current Czech musical situation.

V. Significance of Study

Since the Velvet Revolution in 1989, a wealth of new information has become available to musicologists. Although some have written about the popular music scene (including Bolton), very little has been written about the “art” music of Czechoslovakia, especially during the period of Normalization. I believe this thesis will fill an important lacuna, and with it I hope to bring attention and recognition to composers and musicians

such as Kopelent and Kotik who sought to remain true to themselves, despite a culture of lies.

CHAPTER 2: PUTTING THE “NORM” IN “NORMALIZATION”: THE POLITICAL AND MUSICAL EVENTS LEADING TO THE SEVENTIES

On the night of August 20, 1968, the largest Soviet military force deployed since World War II crossed into Czechoslovakia, signaling the beginning of the end of what is known as the Prague Spring. Despite the numbers—approximately 100,000 Russian troops, 40,000 Polish troops, 10,000 East Germans, 10,000 Hungarians, and 5,000 Bulgarians airlifted in—the maneuver was not an act of war.³² Rather, it was the beginning of Leonid Brezhnev’s program of Normalization for Czechoslovakia. But what *was* normal, after all, and how had Czechoslovakia become abnormal?



Figure 1: Warsaw Pact tanks invading Prague, August 1968.³³

³² Vladimir V. Kusin, *From Dubček to Charter 77: A Study of “Normalization” in Czechoslovakia, 1969–1978* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1978), 9.

³³ “Illustrated History: Relive the Times,” last accessed October 19, 2015, <http://incredibleimages4u.blogspot.com/2010/04/soviet-invasion-of-czechoslovakia-1968.html>.

I. Politics as (Un)usual

In his memoir, *The Restoration of Order*, Milan Šimečka seeks to see the 1968 invasion through the eyes of “the men in the Kremlin” who “had the final say concerning Czechoslovakia’s future.”³⁴ From their point of view, what was *normal* was a state of order. Abnormality was disorder. According to Milan Šimečka, the disorder rising in Czechoslovakia during the Prague Spring of early 1968 was largely in surface matters, but the men in the Kremlin feared (rightly or wrongly) that the small surface changes were indicative of a larger problem. To use the metaphor of a “satellite” state, they feared that Czechoslovakia was trying to break out of its orbit and seek a Western sun. For particulars, Šimečka is worth quoting at length:

It does not take much imagination to appreciate the alarming effect that the changes in the outward signs of Czechoslovak socialism in 1968 had on the Soviet Union. I remain convinced to this day that it was those changes in the façade of Czechoslovak society, which, above all, and most convincingly, fostered the idea that widespread disorder reigned here. ... When it came down to the cardinal question of the leading role of the Party, it was no good, in the face of Soviet superiority, arguing that in fact the Party continued to take all the crucial decisions alone, and that there was no talk of any other party, no good telling them that the men of January were not even capable of thinking in terms of plurality. What was crucial was that the leading role of the Party had ceased to operate in the sole permitted manner, and this was immediately obvious in all outward expressions of public life.³⁵

Šimečka enumerates these alarming signs of disorder: instead of meeting in secret, Party bodies had started to write *and publish* accounts of their meetings. Instead of giving only pre-approved speeches, Czechoslovak politicians had started speaking

³⁴ Milan Šimečka, *The Restoration of Order: The Normalization of Czechoslovakia, 1969–1976*, translated by A.G. Brain (London: Verso, 1984), 27.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 23–24.

extemporaneously, even diverging from each other in emphasis. Worst of all, ordinary people had begun purchasing more than one newspaper, a sign that the papers were publishing different accounts and might even disagree with one another.³⁶ It is important to note that the changes in the political climate that allowed for these “abnormalities” were being undertaken by reform Communists *within* the Party rather than activists *outside* the Party. It was clear that the government in the Kremlin was losing its hold on the local enforcement in Prague and Bratislava (the capital of Slovakia), and something had to be done.

What was done was, according to the official Party line, an act of “fraternal assistance.” The initial invasion of August 1968 was followed by almost three years of consolidation, during which hopes for reform from within the system gradually faded away.

To understand the mindset of 1968, why the Soviet invasion served its purpose in reeling Czechoslovakia back rather than sparking an outright revolution, we must look back to the years preceding. Since the sixteenth century Czechoslovakia had been part of the Hapsburg Empire (later the Austro-Hungarian Empire) and only became an independent Republic in 1918. It was during this period of independence that the Czech Communist Party was organized. In 1939, Czechoslovakia was invaded by the Germans and became part of Hitler’s Third Reich. When World War II ended in 1945, it was the Soviet army that entered Prague triumphantly as liberators. Because of the existing

³⁶ Ibid., 24–25.

indigenous Communist Party and the perception of the Soviets as heroes, Czechoslovakia easily fell to the Soviet-backed Communist coup in 1948.

In order to consolidate power, the Communist Parliament passed Act 231, which defined treason against the state and over the next decade became the basis for thousands of political show trials. Punishment for treason ranged from imprisonment to forced labor to execution.³⁷ Jonathan Bolton tells the story of Karel Pecka, a student who had failed his university entrance exams on political grounds, published dissenting opinions, and tried to emigrate:

Pecka spent a year in forced labor at the coalmines in Kladno; in December 1950, he was sent to the uranium mines in Camp Svornost (Harmony), near Jáchymov. Later, he was sent to Camp Nikolai, where the prisoners were awakened at 4:00 A.M. and marched to the mines a mile away, grotesquely bundled with barbed wire into groups of five. With no protective gear, miners choked on uranium dust, boiled radioactive water for tea, and walked through the underground passageways with Geiger counters in order to find pockets of ore that hadn't been collected. All together, Pecka would spend ten years in various camps.³⁸

Šimečka describes the decade of the fifties as a time of uncertainty and irrationality—anyone could be arrested and sentenced for anything, it seemed:

Most of the acts for which people were punished were either invented or provoked, and they were indictable offenses only in a situation of political lawlessness. People would get ten years in prison for having offered a bed to a friend who tried to escape across the border the next day. One still comes across

³⁷ Thomas E. Shriver and Alison E. Adams, “Cycles of Repression and Tactical Innovation: The Evolution of Environmental Dissidence in Communist Czechoslovakia,” *The Sociological Quarterly* 51, no. 2 (2010): 336.

³⁸ Jonathan Bolton, *Worlds of Dissent: Charter 77, the Plastic People of the Universe, and Czech Culture under Communism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 75.

people all over the country whose fate was decided by just such an absurdity at some time or other.³⁹

Stories such as Pecka's were at the forefront of people's minds during the second consolidation period of 1968–1971, as Czechoslovak Reform Communists continued to make compromises to hardliners and hopes dwindled. Most people decided to keep their opinions to themselves (this time) rather than risk a return of the repressions of the fifties, when a denunciation by a neighbor was enough to land a person in prison. Thus, because of fear of the past and mutual distrust, Czechoslovakia became “a society of false answers and dissimulation.”⁴⁰

II. The Composers Go with the People

The year 1948 was important for musicians as well as politicians in Prague. From May 20–29, the newly formed Union of Czechoslovak Composers (UCC) hosted the Second International Congress of Composers and Music Critics, attended by composers, musicologists, and critics from Eastern bloc countries as well as from countries with strong Communist parties such as France and Brazil.⁴¹ The Congress addressed, among other things, the “crisis of audience” in New Music, that is, the discrepancy between what composers wanted to compose and what listeners wanted to hear. Czech musicologist Miloš Jůzl describes the situation as a “pair of scissors” that “has to be closed.” But, he

³⁹ Šimečka, 85.

⁴⁰ Barbara Day, *The Velvet Philosophers* (London: The Claridge Press, 1999), 2.

⁴¹ Mark Carroll, *Music and Ideology in Cold War Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 37.

asks, “Which end should be closed?”⁴² According to the members of the Congress, the composers ought to close their end. The conference resulted in a document, known as the Prague Manifesto, which clearly showed the influence of Soviet cultural commissar Andrei Zhdanov and his “socialist realist” aesthetic, although neither was mentioned directly. The first four articles of the Manifesto read:

1. If composers...manage to dispense with extreme subjective tendencies in their music and instead express the higher progressive ideals of the popular masses.
2. If composers in their works pay closer attention to the national culture of their county and defend it against cosmopolitanism, because true internationalism in music stems from the development of diverse national characteristics.
3. If composers turn their attention to musical forms which permit a grasp of these points (above all, vocal music, oratorios, cantatas, choirs, etc.).
4. If composers and musicologists work practically and actively towards the liquidation of musical alphabetism and for the musical education of the masses.⁴³

The implied apodosis for each of these protases is, then the crisis of audience will be solved.

The man responsible for enforcing these criteria was the twenty-eight-year-old Moravian apparatchik, Miroslav Barvík.

⁴² Miloš Jůzl, “Music and the Totalitarian Regime in Czechoslovakia,” *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 27, no. 1 (1996): 41.

⁴³ Quoted in Carroll, 39. The proceedings of the conference were never published in full, but were reported in the French journal, *Les lettres françaises* 228 (October 1948): 6.



Figure 2: Miroslav Barvík.⁴⁴

After compositional studies in Brno (1937–42) and Prague (1942–44), he became the director of the Brno Conservatory. Then he served as the director of the Action Committee of the Syndicate of Czechoslovak Composers (SCC), which dissolved into the UCC in 1948.⁴⁵ The dissolution of the SCC into the UCC by necessity required some removal of old modernist personnel and addition of new personnel who would follow the guidelines established in the Prague Manifesto, and as the director of the Action Committee, Barvík was responsible for many prominent musicians losing their positions,

⁴⁴ Thomas D. Svatos, “Sovietizing Czechoslovak Music: The ‘Hatchet-Man’ Miroslav Barvík and his Speech *The Composers Go With the People*,” *Music and Politics* 4, no. 1 (2010): 3.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 2. The following information concerning Barvík is taken largely from Svatos’s work.

earning him the title of “Hatchet Man.”⁴⁶ In October 1948, the journal *Hudební rozhledy* [Musical Perspectives] was established with Barvík as Editor-in-Chief, and his introductory essay in the first issue made it “clear that musical life would be synchronized with the demands of Soviet policy and no other views would be tolerated.”⁴⁷

By May 1949, consolidation was complete, as the SCC and several other musical associations were officially incorporated into the UCC, and the first plenary conference was held in April 1950.⁴⁸ The theme of the conference, and the title of Barvík’s opening address was “The Composers Go with the People,” implying as the Prague Manifesto did, that the responsibility of closing the scissors rested with the composers. The speech, ostensibly to celebrate the victory of socialist music, also became a platform to castigate modernist composers and warn other composers who might be tempted to follow their lead. Barvík specifically targeted Bohuslav Martinů, who had emigrated to Paris in 1923 and was currently in exile in the United States, as having succumbed to a destructive “cosmopolitan” influence, describing him as little more than a Stravinsky epigone.⁴⁹

Another dominant figure in Czech musical life, musicologist and professor Zdeněk Nejedlý (1878-1962), also opposed Martinů. During the inter-war years, Nejedlý and Martinů had been ideological rivals, with Martinů advocating modernism and a move

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 5.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 6.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 12–13.

away from a programmatic or propagandistic approach to composition, while Nejedlý viewed composition as a vehicle for promoting social and national causes.⁵⁰ Although Martinů seemed to have won the debate, the Nazis stifled the dialogue during their occupation, and after the Soviet coup in 1948 it was Nejedlý's ideas that won the day.⁵¹

More complicated was the case of Alois Hába, a pioneer of microtonal music in the early twentieth century. At the first plenary conference in 1950, Barvík announced that Hába had received a “subsidy” to free him to compose socialist works.

But in reality, Barvík's formulation was a cover for the embarrassing fact that Hába, a composer of international repute, was about to be dismissed from HAMU [Music Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts], the newly established music academy, where Hába's department for microtonal composition had already been discontinued.⁵²

⁵⁰ Thomas D. Svatos, “A Clash over *Julietta*: The Martinů/Nejedlý Political Conflict and Twentieth-Century Czech Critical Culture,” *Ex tempore: A Journal of Compositional and Theoretical Research in Music* 14 no. 2 (2009): 4.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁵² Svatos, “Sovietizing Czechoslovak Music,” 29. Hába's microtonal division of HAMU, the music department of the newly established Academy for Performing Arts, had been discontinued in the 1948–49 academic year, and his contract was canceled for the 1950–51 year, following Barvík's speech. Svatos tells an anecdote about Hába, related to him by Ivan Vojtěch, a music critic, editor for the International Schoenberg Gesamtausgabe, and functionary who had opposed Zhdanov's policies in the 1950s: “Well-known for his indestructible personality, Hába made an open mockery of the young ideologues at the UCC's 1951 plenary conference by forcing one of the sessions to an abrupt close. At one moment, when a fair number of auditors were nodding off, Hába suddenly raised his voice from the back of the hall crying out, ‘And I would like to say something!’ He then went up to the podium and placed a stack of manuscript paper on the table exclaiming, ‘I'm in favor of a productive discussion, but what you've been saying here are empty phrases. During the time you've been speaking I've composed 40 mass songs. Here they are.’ Caught by surprise, the speaker replied, “Thank you for your contribution, Comrade Hába, I think we can bring matters to a close now.”

In contrast to Hába and Martinů, composers such as Josef Bohuslav Foerster (1859–1951),⁵³ Vítězslav Novák (1870–1949), and Václav Dobiáš (1909–78) were held up as exemplary. Foerster had recently returned to Czechoslovakia after twenty-five years abroad, and Novák, the founder of the Czech chapter of the International Society for Contemporary Music, had distanced himself from their modernist tendencies before his death.⁵⁴ Dobiáš, who had studied with both Foerster and Novák, was perhaps the most prominent composer of the fifties; in addition to winning prizes for pieces such as his cantata *Buduj vlast, posílíš mír* [Build up your country, you will strengthen peace!], he also served as the chairman of the UCC from 1953–63.⁵⁵ He was praised at the conference in 1950 for being progressive by keeping continuity with the Czech classical tradition, embodied in the works of Smetana.⁵⁶

III. Musical Institutions

While quelling modernist musicians, the Czechoslovak government spent a good deal of effort on developing the classical tradition. State-run orchestras were established

⁵³ Foerster, who succeeded Dvořák as organist at St. Vojtěch's Cathedral in Prague, composed in a lyrical and harmonically conventional idiom. He tended to favor vocal genres.

⁵⁴ Svatos, "Sovietizing Czechoslovak Music," 12.

⁵⁵ Geoffrey Chew, "Václav Dobiáš's Celebration of Proletarian Prague: The Song Cycle *Praho Jediná*," in *Socialist Realism and Music*, edited by Mikuláš Bek, Geoffrey Chew, and Petr Macek (Prague, Czech Republic: Koniasch Latin Press, 2004), 214.

⁵⁶ Mikuláš Bek, "Socialist Realism and Anti-Modernism in Czech Music," in *Socialist Realism and Music*, edited by Mikuláš Bek, Geoffrey Chew, and Petr Macek (Prague, Czech Republic: Koniasch Latin Press, 2004), 59.

so that each of the ten former regions of the country would have at least one professional orchestra, and two well-known choirs were established: the Kühn Mixed Choir (1958) and the Prague Philharmonic Choir (1963). In addition, state-sponsored chamber groups such as the Smetana Quartet, the Vlach Quartet, and the Janáček Quartet were established in 1945, 1947, and 1950.⁵⁷ Several schools were also established in addition to the Prague Conservatory, including a classical guitar school, a double-bass school, and an organ school.⁵⁸ In 1946, the “Prague Spring” International Festival was established. It was a yearly festival that begins on May 12, the anniversary of Smetana’s death, with a performance of his *Ma Vlast* and concludes on June 23 with Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9.⁵⁹ Almost ten years later, in 1957, the UCC began another yearly festival called the “Week of New Music” to feature new Czech compositions.⁶⁰ After this festival was over, the participating composers would receive subsidies to produce recordings of the new music, which meant that only music the State considered worthy was accepted.⁶¹ Folk music was also encouraged, as long as it was in professional and controlled groups, such

⁵⁷ Lenka Dohnalová, *Czech Music Guide*, revised by Jindřich Bajgar, Jiří Starý, and Petr Slabý, translated by Lenka Dohnalová, Anna Bryson, and Eliška Hulcová (Prague, Czech Republic: Arts and Theater Institute, 2011), 21.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 22. The founder of the Czech organ school, Milan Šlechta, was known for performing Bach’s entire oeuvre for organ.

⁵⁹ Janet Fishell, “The Organ Music of Petr Eben” (DMA diss., Northwestern University, 1988), 15.

⁶⁰ Jůzl, 47. Perhaps this was a Czech equivalent of the Russian annual *dekadī* [ten day] festival, which was essentially “the Composer’s Union’s annual report to the Party.” See Marina Frolova-Walker, “Stalin and the Art of Boredom,” *Twentieth Century Music* 1, no. 1 (2004): 104.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

as the Czech State Song and Dance Ensemble and the Brno Radio Orchestra of Folk Instruments, and official folk music festivals were established beginning in 1946.⁶² The Czech jazz culture, which had grown up during the inter-war period, was suppressed, and attempts were made to replace it with “so-called mass socialist culture.”⁶³ Part of this mass socialist culture was the genre of mass song, a simple harmonic setting of a strophic poem on a nationalist or socialist realist theme. The example below is Dobiáš’s setting of a text by František Halas:

G Em B F#7 B

Pro-hra - je to, kdo se vá - lí, re - pu - bli - ka prá - ce je. To - mu

6 G Em D A7 D A D7 G D7

čest, kdo ne - za - há - lí, ten je je - jí na - dě - je. Vy - hrň - me si ru - ká - vy, když se ko - la

13 G C Am D7 G D7

za - sta - ví. Hej rup! Ho - la - hej! A hej! Ho - la - hej! Do prá - ce se dej! la la la la la. Vy - hrň - me si

19 G D7 G C Am D7 G G

ru - ká - vy, když se ko - la za - sta - ví. Hej rup! Ho - la - hej! A hej! Ho - la - hej! Do prá - ce se dej! Ma - kat dej!

Figure 3: Setting of František Halas’s poem “Budujeme” by Václav Dobiáš.⁶⁴

⁶² Dohnalová, 22.

⁶³ Ibid., 23.

⁶⁴ “Budovatelská Píseň [Creative Song]”, last accessed October 19, 2015, <http://budovatel.cz/data/pisne/noty/jpg/Budujeme.gif>. The website budovatel.cz is a collection of socialist realist songs, poems, and images. František Halas (1901–1949) was a lyric poet and contributor to two Communist periodicals in the 1920s. During World

Aside from the text, which advocates work for the republic, the melody displays nationalism by imitating Bohemian folk song characteristics such as the dotted polka rhythms, major tonality, and outlined triads. In addition, Bohemian folk songs often begin on the downbeat, since the first syllable is always stressed in Czech words.⁶⁵

As in the Soviet Union, the state became the sole patron of the arts. In order to record and export music, the state publishing company Supraphon was created from the merging of two private labels, Esta and Ultraphon.⁶⁶ In 1953, the Czech Music Foundation, which was created and was funded by a mandatory tax on all composers' earnings, provided grants, loans, and commissions.⁶⁷ In 1955, the Music Information Center was established, an institution which was intended to promote contemporary music composition by providing instruments for disadvantaged musicians, copying parts of new works for premieres, and other services.⁶⁸ Regarding all these state institutions and provisions, Croatian musicologist Miloš Jůzl writes,

These basically positive organizational changes to the cultural life of the nation were, however, to a large extent devalued by ideological requirements and interventions. The regime gave straightforward support to the works bound up

War II, he was active in the resistance and after the war he worked in the Ministry of Information.

⁶⁵ Fishell, 9.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 22.

⁶⁷ Miloš Jůzl, "Music and the Totalitarian Regime in Czechoslovakia," *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 27, no. 1 (1996): 34. These grants included the subsidies for compositions performed at the Week of New Music festival.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 35.

with the current ideology as if this would, in effect, guarantee their inherent artistic value.⁶⁹

Composers who did not want to “go with the people” were restricted or excluded from professional life, or even exiled.

IV. The Thaw

On March 5, 1953, the Soviet Union was shaken by the death of Stalin. In 1956, his successor Nikita Khrushchev delivered his “secret” speech denouncing Stalin and his cult of personality, leading to a cultural thaw within the Soviet Union and its satellite states. Change came slowly to Czechoslovakia because although party chairman Klement Gottwald also died just days after Stalin, many other Stalinist-era functionaries retained their posts. For them to denounce Stalinist policies would have been to denounce themselves.⁷⁰ Another factor restraining the Czechoslovak government from reform was the 1956 Soviet interferences in Poland and Hungary. Following Khrushchev’s speech in 1956, the Polish Communist Party began a process of democratization, which led to power struggles within the party. Events came to a head in June, when the workers in the city of Poznan struck and were met with state security forces and military, resulting in

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Joy H. Calico, *Arnold Schoenberg’s A Survivor from Warsaw in Post-War Europe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), 138. Composed in 1947, *Survivor* “seemed designed to irritate every exposed nerve in post-war Europe. A twelve-tone piece in three languages about the Holocaust, it was written for an American audience by a Jewish composer whose oeuvre had been the Nazi’s prime exemplar of *entartete* (degenerate) music.” Calico, 1.

hundreds of casualties.⁷¹ In Hungary, the Soviet intervention was not a result of gradual reform, but came in response to a violent outburst out of popular sympathy for Poland and the removal of the premier Imre Nagy. On October 23, 1956, street violence erupted in Hungary, resulting in the reinstatement of Nagy but also in the military intervention of Soviet tanks already stationed in Hungary.⁷² Because of these events, Czechoslovak politicians were wary of reform, but were unable to stop its gradual entrance. Gottwald's successor, Antonín Novotný, released 8,000 political prisoners in 1960 and was forced to enact some economic reforms, but did not go far enough in public opinion and was replaced in 1968 by the even more reform-minded Slovakian, Alexander Dubček, who championed the idea of "socialism with a human face."⁷³

V. A Golden Age of Czech Experimental Art

For musicians, an early sign of the thaw came in 1958 when *Hudební Rozhledy* published a favorable review of Arnold Schoenberg's work *A Survivor from Warsaw*.⁷⁴ The following year, Alban Berg's opera *Wozzeck* was performed in Prague, heralding a return of modernism and connection to the West.⁷⁵ At first, bureaucrats in

⁷¹ Jiri Valenta, "Revolutionary Change, Soviet Intervention, and "Normalization" in East-Central Europe," *Comparative Politics* 16, no. 2 (1984): 129.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 130.

⁷³ Shriver and Adams, 337–338; "Prague Castle," last accessed September 15, 2015, <https://www.hrad.cz/en/president-of-the-cr/former-presidents/antonin-novotny.shtml>.

⁷⁴ Calico, 145. The work was recorded by the Czech Radio studios in 1960 and was performed live for the first time in Czechoslovakia in 1963.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 147.

Czechoslovakia continued to follow the lead of bureaucrats in Moscow: When the Third Congress of Soviet Composers in March 1962 denounced Andrei Volkonsky, Valentin Silvestrov, and Arvo Pärt for “fruitless experimentation,” the UCC also delivered a “ringing endorsement” of socialist realism.⁷⁶ Nevertheless, by 1963, the generation of musicians that had studied at the conservatories in the fifties was ready to experiment and willing to push the bureaucratic envelope. The 1963 Prague Spring festival saw the performance of Krzysztof Penderecky’s *Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima* (1960) and Luigi Nono’s *La Victoire de Guernica* (1954).⁷⁷ Beginning in 1963, composers such as Marek Kopelent, Petr Kotík, Zbyněk Vostřák, and Luboš Fišer saw the first major performances of their works, while older composers who had been marginalized during the fifties such as Miloslav Kabeláč and Jan Rychlík returned to public life.⁷⁸

During this time, composers explored serialism, electronic sounds, experimentalism, and other modernist trends. Ensembles dedicated to performing New Music sprung up, especially during the years from 1963–1968, including Musica Viva Pragensis (founded in 1961 by flautist-composer Petr Kotík), Sonatori di Praga, Prague Group of New Music, Novák Quartet, and Due Boemi di Praga in Prague, and Studio of Authors and Group A in Brno.⁷⁹ The following program from a 1964 Musica Viva

⁷⁶ Ibid., 152.

⁷⁷ Victor Pantůček, “Some Experimental Trends in Post-War Czech Music,” *Czech Music* 1 (2008): 18.

⁷⁸ Dohnalová, 23.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 25.

Pragensis concert shows the sudden availability of modernist music:



Figure 4: 1964 Musica Viva Pragensis concert program.⁸⁰

During the sixties, electronic music was produced in the Pilsen Radio Studio, and the Panton division of Supraphon was established to promote new compositions.⁸¹ In addition to these art music styles, jazz became acceptable again, both in free-jazz styles and in rock-influenced styles.⁸² The first big jazz festivals took place in the mid-1960s, and many young people were drawn to groups such as the Matadors and the Primitives.⁸³

⁸⁰ Pantůček, 16.

⁸¹ Dohnalová, 25.

⁸² Ibid., 26.

⁸³ Barbara Day, *The Velvet Philosophers* (London: The Claridge Press, 1999), 201.

Despite all these opportunities for musical diversity, it is important to remember that the sixties were a time of *comparative* freedom, not complete freedom. For example, when ensembles like Kotík's Musica Viva Pragensis traveled abroad, they were accompanied by a delegation of functionaries to ensure that the ensemble properly represented Czechoslovakia on foreign soil.⁸⁴ The system of control set in place in the fifties was not fundamentally changed; it was merely relaxed. When Normalization began in 1969, that control began to be tightened again, and many feared the worst.

⁸⁴ Petr Kotík, in discussion with the author, October 11, 2014.

CHAPTER 3: COMPOSING A CULTURE OF LIES: THE ROLE OF MUSIC AND MUSICIANS IN THE NORMALIZATION REGIME

I. Repressions and Responses

The Prague Spring of 1968 was, to some extent, more of a cultural than a political event. Following the invasion in 1969, most of the creative unions initially refused to surrender their role as reformers. Unfortunately for musicians, the Composers' Union was one of the first to acquiesce:

On 24 November 1969 it accepted resignations of the majority of its central committee and renounced its reform-imbued resolutions of 1968. It did not save the union from the fate which was eventually meted out to all of them. They were officially declared disbanded in the course of 1970 because a "peaceful takeover" by a "sound core" of committed normalisers could not be accomplished.⁸⁵

The Composers' Union was reestablished, along with the other creative unions that had been disbanded, in December 1970 with only twenty-five members.⁸⁶

Needless to say, the organisational measures were accompanied by the imposition of strict ideological criteria whereby art in all its forms was to return into the mould of socialist realism and to the role of a didactic and militant instrument in the hands of the party.⁸⁷

Socialist realism was, however, really an outdated aesthetic, and "the composers who collaborated designated their mostly traditional stylistic endeavors euphemistically

⁸⁵ Vladimir V. Kusin, *From Dubček to Charter 77: A Study of "Normalization" in Czechoslovakia, 1969–1978* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1978), 104.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 105.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 106.

as ‘synthesis’.’⁸⁸ For example, Milan Báčorek (b. 1939), who was awarded the Czech Composers and Concert Artists Association prize in 1983 for his cycle for children’s choir, *Little Evening Music* wrote in a style described as “a synthesis of twentieth century classics heritage and ethnic melodies,” and “avoiding academic experiments and unemotional constructions.”⁸⁹

An anonymous political aphorism circulated among the Czechs that demonstrated the dominant attitude of the seventies: “Socialist Realism is a true reflection of the conceptions of functionaries, by means of practices comprehensible to those men themselves.”⁹⁰ The years of consolidation after 1969 provided the foundation for the culture of lies; the short but giddy years of cultural freedom—freedom *to* explore new musical ideas and freedom *from* harsh coercive governmental tactics—were hard to forget but equally hard to retain in the face of a foreign army presence. Štěpán Kaňa describes the years of Normalization:

The cleavage between reality as perceived by people and reality as officially described is evident; it remains, however, an open secret. To point that out is a crime. In such a situation, the whole society suffers from a kind of schizophrenia. To survive, one must arm oneself with several mutually contradictory models of reality.⁹¹

⁸⁸ Jiří Fukač, “Socialist Realism in Music: An Artificial System of Ideological and Aesthetic Norms,” in *Socialist Realism and Music*, edited by Mikuláš Bek, Geoffrey Chew, and Petr Macek (Prague, Czech Republic: Koniasch Latin Press, 2004), 21.

⁸⁹ “Milan Báčorek,” last accessed September 9, 2015, <http://www.musicbase.cz/composers/15-bachorek-milan/>.

⁹⁰ Fukač, 16.

⁹¹ Štěpán Kaňa, “Rock the State? The Czech Musical Underground versus the Normalization Regime,” in *Socialist Realism and Music*, edited by Mikuláš Bek, Geoffrey Chew, and Petr Macek (Prague: Koniasch Latin Press, 2004), 109.

He then proposes three ways of surviving:

1. The honoring of official fetishes, which must be superficially kept and dutifully honored, if problems are to be avoided (for example, the participation in May Day parades or in the “general election”...
2. Officially sanctioned methods of evasion...[which] usually involve the state’s concession of some goods to the citizens, who agree to be satisfied with such concessions and to pretend not to see the real socio-political problems...
3. Private methods of evasion: those can be embraced by individuals (for example, reading, meditation, religion, sex, family, alcohol) as well as groups.⁹²

Honoring the official fetishes often involved public lip service to those in power who created official taste, while discussing the rituals with detached irony or amused resignation in private—as expressed in the aphorism. Nevertheless, many professional musicians profited from following the prevailing trends.⁹³

For example, some composers who had begun to explore modernist compositional trends during the sixties abandoned experimentation and returned to “simpler” styles. Composer Jiří Barta (1935–2012) had experimented with electronic music, studying at the Janaček Academy in Brno from 1968–1970, but during the seventies and eighties returned to a diatonic and lyrical idiom. As a result,

His compositions from that time were socially acknowledged: *Concerto da camera per pianoforte ed archi* was awarded the annual prize of the Union of Czech Composers and Performing Artists in 1986.⁹⁴

⁹² Ibid., 109–110.

⁹³ Fukač, 21.

⁹⁴ “Jiří Barta,” last accessed September 9, 2015, <http://www.musicbase.cz/composers/22-barta-jiri/>.

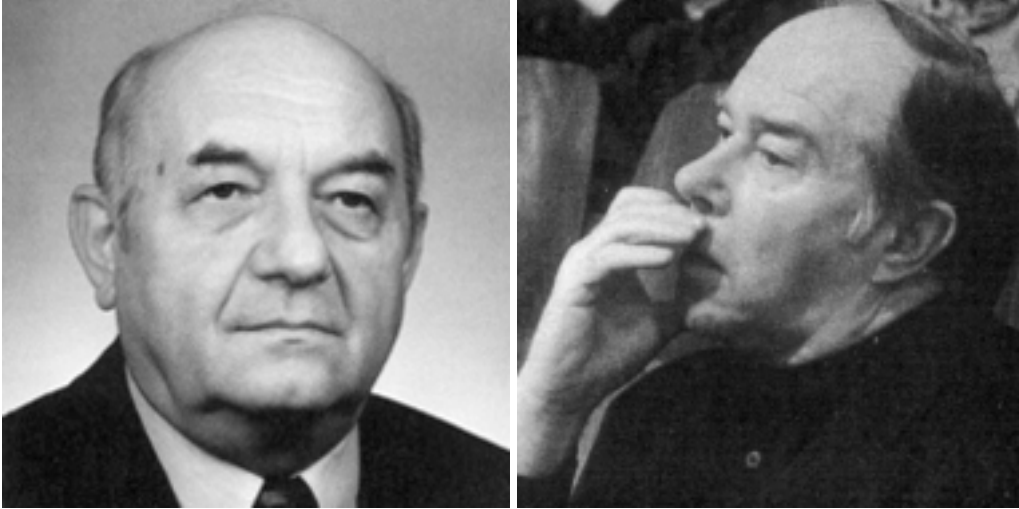


Figure 5: Jiří Bárta and Pavel Blatný.⁹⁵

Another composer who was rewarded for his return to tonality was Pavel Blatný (b. 1931), who used neo-classicism in the fifties and serialism and jazz elements in the sixties, but finally settled on writing in “classical genres, tonality, trim form, deliberately archaizing and simplified expression,” as he realized that tonal music was more accessible. He was awarded the Czech Composers’ Association Prize in 1981 for his cantata *The Willow*, and the Leoš Janaček Prize in 1984 for his cantata *Christmas Eve*.⁹⁶

Other composers departed little from the tradition learned from their teachers in the fifties. For example, Jiří Dvořáček (1928–2000) studied with Jaroslav Řídký (1897–1956) and Václav Dobiáš, and developed a style similar to Shostakovich’s chromatically and harmonically adventurous, but still essentially tonal approach, with traditional

⁹⁵ Ibid., “Pavel Blatný,” last accessed September 9, 2015, <http://www.musicbase.cz/composers/70-blatny-pavel/>.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

notation.⁹⁷ Dvořáček was especially known for his vocal and vocal-symphonic works, including *Aphrodite's Island*, an “opera inspired by the theme of people’s fight for independence, freedom and social justice,” which was premiered in 1971 in the German Democratic Republic, and *I am Living and Singing*, a cantata based on contemporary poetry that premiered at the 1979 Week of New Music.⁹⁸ Dvořáček also taught as a professor at HAMU in Prague, and received many awards for his compositions. He received the Artist of Merit award in 1983, and his composition for organ, *Improvviso*, was selected for performance at the Prague Spring festival of 1984.⁹⁹ The following figure is a selection from *Improvviso*, which is highly chromatic but lyrical and based on F-minor.

⁹⁷ Whether or not Shostakovich himself embedded dissent in his music is open to question, but from the official Czech point of view, Shostakovich was an acceptable model.

⁹⁸ “Jiří Dvořáček,” last accessed September 9, 2015, <http://www.musicbase.cz/composers/167-dvoracek-jiri/>.

⁹⁹ Ibid.; Václav Rabas, Notes to *Nuove Composizioni per Organo 6*, translated by Jana Kuhnová (Prague, Czechoslovakia: Panton, 1983), unpaginated.

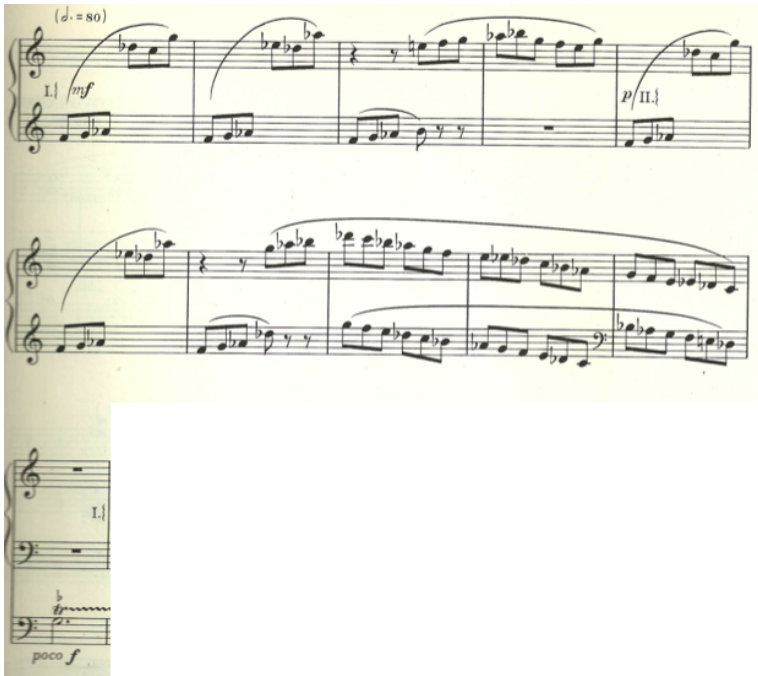


Figure 6: Jiří Dvořáček, *Improviso* for organ, mm. 32–42.¹⁰⁰

And what happened to those who did not follow the prevailing trends? Despite popular fears of show trials, forced labor, and exile, repression during Normalization usually manifested itself in the form of channeling or soft coercion. As power was being consolidated in the years from 1969–71, the Communist Party was purged through a series of “screenings”: Individuals were called before a commission and interviewed for about an hour, usually about their opinion of or participation in the events of 1968. If an interviewee was cleared, he or she left with his or her Party membership intact. If an interviewee was not cleared, he or she was either “struck off the party roster” or

¹⁰⁰ Jiří Dvořáček, “Improviso,” in *Nuove Composizioni per Organo 6*, edited by Václav Rabas (Prague, Czechoslovakia: Panton, 1983), 4.

“expelled.”¹⁰¹ Unlike in the fifties, removal or expulsion from the Party no longer meant abuse or exile. Instead, it affected the ability to work. Being struck off the roster usually resulted in being demoted or receiving a lower wage, while being expelled usually resulted in being fired. Vladimir Kusin explained, “only very menial, manual jobs were open to the expellees and they had to be such as not to give the victim opportunity to mix with people easily, for fear of spreading discontent.”¹⁰² On the other hand, if an expelled artist did not find a job and continued to pursue art privately, he or she was accused of “parasitism.”¹⁰³ In addition, losing one’s Party membership could mean one’s children would be barred from higher education. According to Milan Šimečka,

Children and their education were openly used as a means of putting pressure on their parents, or simply as targets of political revenge against those whom the regime regarded as responsible for the crisis or as obstacles to consolidation.¹⁰⁴

People who were considered moderately dangerous were subjected to multiple forms of harassment, including house searches and surveillance.¹⁰⁵ Musicians and other artists

¹⁰¹ Vladimir V. Kusin, *From Dubček to Charter 77: A Study of “Normalization” in Czechoslovakia, 1969–1978* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1978), 81–82.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 82.

¹⁰³ Barbara Day, *The Velvet Philosophers* (London: The Claridge Press, 1999), 190. Day later relates the anecdote of Jan Šimek, a visual artist who was repeatedly accused of parasitism: “Šimek survived with memories of policemen sitting in his studio, urging him to ‘find work.’ ‘Look,’ he would ask, turning momentarily from his carving, ‘which of us here is “working”—you or me?’” (197).

¹⁰⁴ Milan Šimečka, *The Restoration of Order: The Normalization of Czechoslovakia, 1969–1976*, translated by A.G. Brain (London: Verso, 1984), 116.

¹⁰⁵ Šimečka gives an anecdote about his own surveillance that illustrates both the level of harassment and the people’s sense of the absurd: “Once, for example, I was followed on a fishing trip. Three cars, each with two men inside, accompanied me to the river. They sat

often also suffered bans on performance or publication of their works. According to Barbara Day, although the punishments meted out during Normalization were generally less severe than those during the fifties, the proportion of the population that suffered was much larger.¹⁰⁶

Finally, the restriction to travel that had begun to relax during the sixties was again tightened during Normalization. In order to prevent too many people emigrating or vacationing and bringing stories of the affluence of the West, travel was limited to trips within the Soviet controlled states; travel outside these boundaries required special governmental permission. Thus, composers were hindered from following new international trends. Artists who received foreign commissions were unable to attend the premieres of their own works. According to Marek Kopelent, the worst aspect of the ban was that it wasn't that people in political circles hindered him, but that his own music colleagues also set up hurdles.¹⁰⁷ In addition, the isolation from outside influences and

and watched me for the next three hours, during which time I did not get one bite, and then they accompanied me home.” Later, Šimečka stopped for a cup of coffee with his wife: “My chaperones also stopped and watched us as we drank our coffee. At this point, it struck me that this was a regrettable waste of national resources, not to mention a spoiled weekend for my watchdogs. I went up to one of the cars and announced, to the astonishment of the men inside, that I was going to my allotment to turn over the compost and had no other activity planned worthy of surveillance. I told them I had a spare place in our car and that we would be quite happy to take one of them along with us and bring him back later. I explained that this would save lots of petrol and allow the rest of them to go home and enjoy their weekend. The car's occupants gave me embarrassed looks, but still pretended not to know what I was talking about. And so they followed me to the allotment after all. Orders are clearly orders.” Šimečka, 94.

¹⁰⁶ Day, 4.

¹⁰⁷ Horst Leuchtman, “Horst Leuchtman im Gespräch mit den Komponisten Evžen Zámečník, Marek Kopelent, Luboš Fišer und Roland Leistner-Mayer [Horst Leuchtman

the rejection of modernist music by the regime made it easy for composers to “stop trying to connect up with world trends.”¹⁰⁸



Figure 7: Divided Europe: Map of NATO and Warsaw Pact countries.¹⁰⁹

in Conversation with Composers],” *Jahrbuch – Bayerische Akademie der Schönen Künste* 4 (1990), 232.

¹⁰⁸ Tereza Havelková, “Lone Knight: Interview with Marek Kopelent” *Czech Music* 3 (2002): 5.

¹⁰⁹ “Warsaw Pact,” *Wikipedia*, last accessed September 16, 2015, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Warsaw_Pact. Members of the Warsaw Pact countries could travel anywhere within the red boundaries, but to travel outside required special permission. The numbers indicate the size of the military in 1973.

II. Official Musical Institutions

Most of the musical institutions established in the fifties and sixties continued to operate throughout the period of Normalization, and new ensembles were established, such as Musica Bohemica (1975), a folk music ensemble, as well as many new string quartets, including the Havlák (later changed to Martinů) Quartet (1976) and the Stamitz Quartet (1985) and other small chamber ensembles, such as the Wind Ensemble Academia (1971) and the Prague Guitar Quartet (1984).¹¹⁰ These ensembles now play a wide range of styles, but at their inception they performed repertoire from the classical music “canon.” For example, according to the website of the Prague Guitar Quartet, “Bach, Vivaldi, de Falla, Ravel and others are the musical foundations on which the PGQ has built its distinctive sound.”¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ Lenka Dohnalová, *Czech Music Guide*, revised by Jindřich Bajgar, Jiří Starý, and Petr Slabý, translated by Lenka Dohnalová, Anna Bryson, and Eliška Hulcová (Prague: Arts and Theater Institute, 2011), 26–27. In all, at least ten major string quartets were founded during Normalization.

¹¹¹ “Repertoire,” Prague Guitar Quartet, last accessed September 14, 2015, <http://www.pgq.cz/en/repertoire>.



Pražské kytarové kvarteto

Figure 8: Prague Guitar Quartet.¹¹²

The Martinů Quartet was “inspired by and modeled on such string quartets as the Vlach and the Smetana,” quartets which focused on classical era music and, of course, the music of Smetana.¹¹³

Ensembles dedicated to early music also became popular, as in the West, the leading ensembles being Musica Antiqua Prague (1982) and Schola Gregoriana Pragensis

¹¹² “Photo Gallery,” Prague Guitar Quartet, last accessed September 14, 2015, <http://www.pgq.cz/en/multimedia/photo-gallery/item/34-history>.

¹¹³ “Profile,” Martinů Quartet, last accessed September 14, 2015, <http://www.martinuquartet.eu/en-us/profile.aspx>.

(1987).¹¹⁴ Choral music continued to be a favored genre, and two new youth choirs were established, the Jitro children's choir in 1973 and the Boni Pueri boys choir in 1982.¹¹⁵ Music instruction was included in schools, beginning in primary school, and children who showed musical talent could also attend a "People's School of Art" (as long as their parents were not under political censure).¹¹⁶ As of 1985, Czechoslovakia had nine conservatories, the oldest and most conservative being the Prague Conservatory, in addition to the Academy of Performing Arts (AMU) in Prague established in 1945. Musicology was part of the department of philosophy at the Charles University in Prague.¹¹⁷ Outside of Prague, the biggest musical center was Brno, a city in the southeast of the Czech portion of Czechoslovakia. Other Czech conservatories were located in Ostrava, Pílarova, Pardubice, and Plzeň. In theory, all musical styles were encouraged in Czech composition departments, as stated in Jindřich Feld's 1985 contribution to the yearbook of the International Society for Music Education, whether "traditional, neo-classical or avant-garde and experimental."¹¹⁸ In practice, both composition departments and performance departments were, according to Kopelent, a "bastion of conservatism."¹¹⁹ Even today, says Kopelent, performers are trained according to the old

¹¹⁴ Dohnalová, 26–27.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Jindřich Feld, "The Education of Young Composers in Czechoslovakia," *International Society for Music Education Yearbook* 12 (1985), 70.

¹¹⁷ Ibid. The Prague Conservatory was established in 1811.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 72.

¹¹⁹ Havelková, 5.

mindset: “[They] do not know the new style, they are trained to resist it, and they often cannot cope with they new techniques of play.”¹²⁰

III. Unofficial Music Practices and Challenges

In addition to the official musical channels, many music groups continued to operate semi-officially or unofficially. The rock culture that had begun to grow in the 1960s continued unofficially, but was blasted into the public consciousness with the so-called “trial of the Plastic People.” The Plastic People of the Universe was a psychedelic rock group “accused of ‘disturbing the peace’ and portrayed by the Communist regime as a group of long-haired, foul-mouthed, drug-using delinquents.”¹²¹ Until 1975, the group was semi-official (or semi-unofficial): tolerated but not endorsed. In September 1976, however, two members of the band (saxophonist Vratislav Brabenec and the artistic director, Ivan Martin “Magor” Jirous) along with a member of another band, Pavel Zajíček, and gospel singer Svatopluk Karásek (a protestant minister who had been denied permission to preach), were put on trial as the result of a large-scale police raid on rock music festivals.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Jonathan Bolton, *Worlds of Dissent: Charter 77, the Plastic People of the Universe, and Czech Culture under Communism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 115. Bolton analyzes the trial, its history, and its consequences at great length, which becomes the basis for his discussion of dissent.



Figure 9: Ivan “Magor” Jirous, artistic director of the Plastic People of the Universe.¹²²

Although only two of the defendants were actually from the Plastic People of the Universe, their name became shorthand for the persecution of non-conformist rock groups, and their trial became a major impetus in the drafting of Charter 77, a document decrying human rights abuses.¹²³ All four were convicted and received prison sentences ranging from eight to eighteen months.¹²⁴ After the trial, many rock groups were forced to operate underground, but a culture and series of legends of dissent grew up around them.

Another anomaly was the semi-official, semi-autonomous Jazz Section of the Composers Union under the direction of Karel Šrnp. Many jazz enthusiasts, or “beatniks,” emigrated after protesting the 1968 invasion, but when all the creative unions were being

¹²² Photo by Tomáš Vodňanský for David Vaughan, “Mike Baugh and Magor: Translating the Untranslatable,” *Radio Praha*, last accessed 16 May 2015. <http://radio.cz/en/section/books/mike-baugh-and-magor-translating-the-untranslatable>. “Magor” is a slang term for “loony.”

¹²³ Bolton, 116. Charter 77 will be discussed in further detail in section IV.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 139.

reorganized during the period of consolidation, there remained enough interest to create a separate Jazz Section of the Composers Union in 1971.¹²⁵ Like the Plastic People and other rock groups, the Jazz Section was tolerated until it became too influential. In 1984, it was ordered to be shut down for “irregular and illegal” activities. The Jazz Section continued to operate in defiance of orders, and in 1987 after a long postponed trial, its chairman Karel Šrpa and secretary Vladimír Kouřil were sentenced to imprisonment.¹²⁶

Jazz and rock musicians, while denigrated by the regime, often received more popular support than avant-garde or experimental composers, and many chose to leave the country. Those who chose to remain often retreated into what Kopelent calls “inner emigration,” writing works that were introverted and less for public consumption than for the private enjoyment of the composer.¹²⁷ Many of these works were never performed in Czechoslovakia, and some are still awaiting their premier.

¹²⁵ Day, 202.

¹²⁶ G. P. D., “Crime and Punishment in Czechoslovakia” *Economic and Political Weekly* 22, no. 14 (April 4, 1987): 576.

¹²⁷ Leuchtman, 231. The term is borrowed from post-World War II discussions of German literature. It was used earlier but was popularized by the post-war debates between novelists Thomas Mann (an “outer émigré”) and Walter von Molo and Frank Thieß (“inner émigrés”). The concept of inner emigration is tricky because, like irony, it is easy to claim post facto and hard to verify. The inner émigré claims to somehow be outside of the country—perhaps outside of its influence—while simultaneously remaining in the country, thus freeing him or herself from any national collective guilt. The case in Czechoslovakia is a little different from the case in Germany, however, since Czechoslovakia was not actually defeated in a war and thus never had all its faults paraded before the international community. For a Czech composer, a claim of inner emigration could be an attempt to label silence as dissent (a composer could have been writing mass songs and cantatas, after all) rather than passive collaboration. I will inspect Kopelent’s claim in Chapter 4.

Around 1983, the younger generation of composition students at AMU, including Miroslav Pudlák and Martin Smolka, founded the Agon Orchestra, which came together on an occasional basis to play new Czech works and American experimental music.¹²⁸ These composers were influenced by American minimalism and Fluxus and also collaborated with rock musicians, including Jirous. Like many rock bands before the “trial of the Plastic People,” the Agon Orchestra was tolerated but not endorsed; unlike the Plastic People, the orchestra did not become infamous and thus did not achieve recognition until after the fall of the Soviet Union.¹²⁹ Because of this lack of recognition, and because they only met occasionally, the Agon Orchestra did not have a community of support grow up around it but remained an isolated phenomenon.

IV. Charter 77 and Dissent Narratives

In light of the events of 1989, it is impossible to talk about intellectual activity during Normalization without mentioning Charter 77 and the community of dissent that it appropriated. The Charter itself was a rather clunky and vague document, drafted in 1976 in response to the human rights violations of the “trial of the Plastic People” and “published”—that is, mailed to the Federal Assembly and the various signatories—in

¹²⁸ Dohnlová, 27; Matej Kratochvíl, “Agon on the Road from Music, Sweet Music, to Discreet Music,” *Czech Music* 4 (2003): 11. The date depends on what is considered its founding; Smolka and Pudlák gave their first concert in April 1983, but the orchestra received its name in 1985.

¹²⁹ David Vaughan, “Encore: The Agon Orchestra: Bringing Experimental Music to Wider Audiences,” last accessed 12 May 2015, <http://www.radio.cz/en/section/music/encore-the-agon-orchestra-bringing-experimental-music-to-wider-audiences>.

January of 1977.¹³⁰ The Charter authors and the original signatories were mostly writers and philosophers who took up the cause of the young rock musicians, but the effects of the Charter soon reached the art music world. According to Miloš Jůzl,

Anyone who signed or publicly approved of this Charter was declared an enemy of the people and dealt with accordingly. Under great pressure, almost all musicians and music theoreticians signed the so-called Anti-Charter.¹³¹

Those who did refuse to sign the Anti-Charter were subjected to the usual soft coercive repression tactics of the regime, including harassment and loss of jobs.

The existence of Charter 77 allowed disgruntled people to step out into the open for the first time since 1968, and its vague language allowed a community with a wide spectrum of opinions to grow up around it. Indeed, the original drafters were hardly a monolithic group, as evidenced by the three men chosen as spokesmen: Václav Havel was a playwright who had never been a member of the Communist Party, Jiří Hájek was a reform communist who had been Foreign Minister in 1968, and Jan Patočka was a religious philosopher. Other members of the original group included Peter Uhl, a far leftist, Ludvík Vaculík, a journalist and “civic stylist,” and many others. Those who signed and supported the Charter did not necessarily agree on a solution, but they agreed on the problem, which allowed them to cautiously co-opt the term used by Western journalists to describe them: Dissidents.

¹³⁰ Bolton, 147–148.

¹³¹ Miloš Jůzl, “Music and the Totalitarian Regime in Czechoslovakia,” *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 27, no. 1 (1996): 47. Jůzl writes in a footnote, “I do not wish to conceal that I, too, signed this Anti-Charter. In my position at the Philosophical Faculty I resisted heavy pressure until, feeling isolated, I decided to sign, not wanting to give up the chance of still being able to influence my students. Personally I felt terrible.”

Historian Jonathan Bolton uses three narrative lenses to understand the motivations of people who were given that label. The first lens he calls the “Helsinki narrative,” after the August 1975 Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, better known as the Helsinki Accords. This agreement contained a set of guarantees, including “respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of thought, conscience, and religion.”¹³² By signing this agreement, Leonid Brezhnev unwittingly “handed his critics a standard, based on universal principles of justice, rooted in international law, independent of Marxist-Leninist ideology, against which they could evaluate the behavior of his and other communist regimes.”¹³³ The people who viewed Helsinki Accords and universal moral principles as a basis for dissent were largely those, like Patočka, whose biggest contention with the regime was the lack of religious freedom within Czechoslovakia, but the idea of Communism violating universal moral principles was also a compelling argument for those who wished to gain support from the international community.

The second lens Bolton calls the “Civil Society” or “Parallel Polis” narrative. He says civil society, as it is used to discuss dissent, “has generally referred to the independent organizational life of society, to forms of social and political life that are neither state-sponsored nor wholly private, but fall somewhere in between.”¹³⁴ In other words, civil society provides a social life independent of and parallel to that provided by

¹³² Bolton, 24–25.

¹³³ John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War: A New History* (New York: Penguin, 2005), 190.

¹³⁴ Bolton, 29.

the government. “For Czech dissidents,” writes Bolton, “the prototype of such an independent life was cultural—the informal concerts of the music underground in the early 1970s; *samizdat* [self] publishing; art exhibits, plays, or philosophy seminars held in private apartments.”¹³⁵ The label “Parallel Polis” came from the title of an essay by Charter signatory Václav Benda, in which he advocated developing not only parallel cultural institutions, but also parallel educational, informational, economic, and even political structures.¹³⁶

Bolton calls his third narrative lens the “Ordinary People” lens, after a collection of oral histories by Czech historian Miroslav Vaněk. Bolton points out that only 241 people originally signed Charter 77, and the final signature count was less than two thousand, while the Czechoslovak population was close to fifteen million.¹³⁷ If the Charter signatories were the only real dissidents, how did they suddenly break away from the Soviet Union without violence in 1989? After all, many people occupied Škvorecký’s “gray zone,” neither collaborating nor dissenting, but merely trying to live *ordinary* lives. The title of Vaněk’s collection, *Obyčeni lidé...?!* [Ordinary People...?!] derives from an essay by Czech president Václav Klaus in 2003, in which he criticized the idea that the so-called dissidents were the only driving force behind the Velvet Revolution:

That mass of ‘ordinary citizens’ did have a reaction to unfree conditions: resistance, inefficiency, alternate individual activities, the atomization of society, mere passive living against the backdrop of propaganda that no one believed any

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 30.

¹³⁷ Bolton, 33.

longer. But it was just these people who, through their behavior, created the preconditions for November 17, 1989.¹³⁸

According to Klaus—and to Bolton, in this third perspective—viewing the dissidents as grand heroes only gives us part of the picture of Normalization Czechoslovakia.

Bolton presents each of these three narrative lenses as one way for us to look back on the 1970s and 1980s; none of the three perspectives presents the entire truth, and none can fully explain the motivations of those individuals who *did* dissent in one way or another, but they are helpful categories as starting points. As I examine the life and works of Marek Kopelent and Petr Kotík in the next two chapters, I will consider these three categories as a basis for understanding their motivations, especially considering Kopelent’s claim of “inner emigration” and Kotík’s claims that his music is apolitical and that he only came to the United States to live an “ordinary” life.

¹³⁸ Quoted in Bolton, 35–36.

CHAPTER 4: INNER EMIGRATION: THE CASE OF MAREK KOPELENT

In 1999, sixty-seven year old Marek Kopelent received the Classic Prize for life-long services to Czech musical culture. Later, musicologist Tereza Havelková asked Kopelent what the prize meant to him. “Above all, of course, I’m delighted,” he replied, but,

What does it mean to me? It ought to mean something. At the moment I’m waiting to see what it means in practice. In a way, it took me unawares, because I don’t really know if I deserve it. Another thing is what difference it makes to the public attitude, but given the lack of interest in the Czech media in what is going on in serious music, one probably shouldn’t have too great expectations.¹³⁹

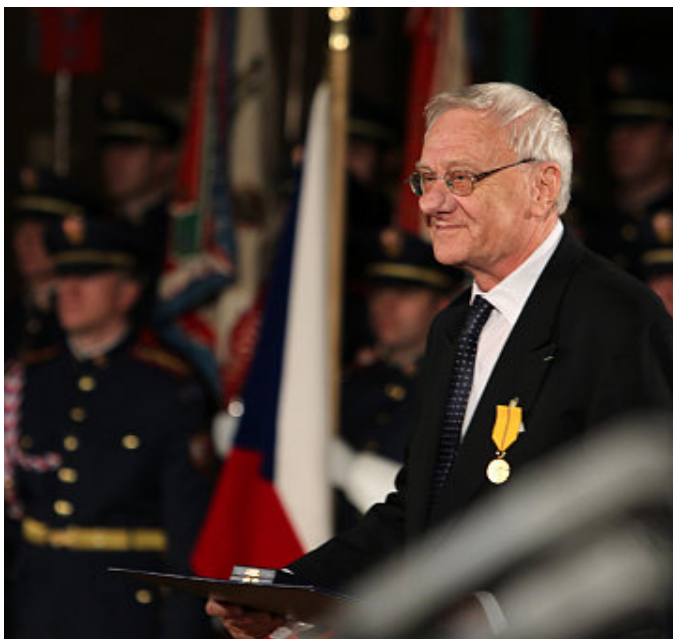


Figure 10: Marek Kopelent receives the Classic Prize.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁹ Tereza Havelková, “Marek Kopelent – Portrait,” *Czech Music* 6 (2000): 4.

¹⁴⁰ “Medaili za Zásluhy o Stát v Oblasti Umění [Medal for Merit in the Arts]”, OSA, last accessed September 21, 2015, <http://www.osa.cz/vsechny-novinky/2012/medaile-za-zasluchy-o-stat-pro-marka-kopelenta.aspx>.

Havelková has called Kopelent a “lonely long-distance-runner,” who has the reputation of an “eternal critic, polemicist, and even rebel.”¹⁴¹ These epithets might explain Kopelent’s perplexity at receiving his prize, but they also seem strangely appropriate for a composer who spent half of his life weathering the Communist regime without official support and often without a like-minded musical community.

I. Early Life and Influences

Born in 1932 in Prague, Marek Kopelent was only a small child when Hitler invaded Czechoslovakia. During the troubled war years, his father used to take young Marek to the St. Jacob’s Basilica in Prague, where Kopelent received exposure to what he calls a “high level of music” and considers his first musical schooling: The Baroque-style building, with its famous organ—built by Abraham Stark of Locket in 1709 and transformed in 1941 into a three-manual electro-pneumatic instrument with 75 registers—and the well-trained choir singing Gregorian chant impressed itself on the young Kopelent.¹⁴² He says that the music he heard there during those years still rings in his ears and is always present in his subconscious.¹⁴³ When he was thirteen he came under care of the organist Josef Kubán who also gave him lessons in harmony.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹ Tereza Havelková, “Lone Knight: Interview with Marek Kopelent,” *Czech Music* 3 (2002): 2.

¹⁴² “St. James Audite Organ,” last updated 2002, <http://www.auditeorganum.cz/organ.html>.

¹⁴³ Klaus Röhring, “Befreiende Erinnerung der Komponist Marek Kopelent [Liberating Memory – A Portrait of the Composer Marek Kopelent],” *Musik und Kirche* 67, no. 6 (1997): 402.



Figure 11: St. Jacob's Basilica in Prague.¹⁴⁵

From 1951–1955, during the height of intolerance toward modernism within the UCC, Kopelent studied at the Prague Academy of Music under Jaroslav Řídký (1897–1956), whose compositional style was traditionalist and influenced by Antonin Dvořák.¹⁴⁶ Kopelent understandably adopted his teacher's conservative style, which formed the basis for his graduation piece for orchestra, *Satanela*.¹⁴⁷ After his graduation and the death of his teacher, however, he took a job in 1956 with the State Belles Lettres and Music Art

¹⁴⁴ Michal Matzner, *Český Hudební Slovník Osob a Institucí*, s.v. “Kopelent, Marek,” last accessed September 21, 2015, http://www.ceskyhudebnislovník.cz/slovník/index.php?option=com_mdictionary&action=record_detail&id=1459

¹⁴⁵ NRG Photos, allthingseurope.tumblr.com, last accessed September 1, 2015.

¹⁴⁶ Čeněk Gardavský, ed., *Contemporary Czechoslovak Composers* (Prague: Panton, 1965), 377.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 239. *Satanela* is a “symphonic epic” based on the eponymous poem by Jaroslav Vrchlický (1853–1912), a story set in medieval Spain about gypsies (the title character, Satanela, is a gypsy woman), devils, and forbidden love. In 1898 composer Josef Richard Rozkošný and librettist Karel Kádner transformed the poem into an opera.

Publishing House as an editor of modern scores.¹⁴⁸ In this way, he came into contact for the first time with composers of the Second Viennese School: Arnold Schoenberg, Anton Webern, and Alban Berg. He was especially taken with the music of Webern, finding in his approach to serialism a sense of order that provided a “rational but not dogmatic” basis for composition.¹⁴⁹ Drawn to avant-garde compositional techniques, he began to attend new music festivals such as the Week of New Music and the Warsaw Autumn festival in Poland, where he came into contact with the music of Krzysztof Penderecki and Witold Lutosławski, as well as that of Karlheinz Stockhausen and Luigi Nono.¹⁵⁰ Another significant inspiration came through his participation in the contemporary music ensemble, *Musica Viva Pragensis*, whose 1964 program was discussed in Chapter II. Originally a chamber wind ensemble, *Musica Viva Pragensis* soon attracted any musician interested in modernist music. Founder Petr Kotík and bassoonist Rudolf Komorous were particularly interested in the American brand of experimentalism represented by John Cage, and Kopelent took away from this involvement an interest in chance and indeterminacy.¹⁵¹

Kopelent’s own public compositional debut came in 1964, with his String Quartet No. 3, composed in 1963, which is worth a brief examination here, as it demonstrates some compositional elements typical of Kopelent. The quartet is in one movement,

¹⁴⁸ Victor Pantůček, “Some Experimental Trends in Post-War Czech Music,” *Czech Music* 1 (2008): 21.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ Matzner.

¹⁵¹ Pantůček, 18.

divided into a succession of “structures,” or sections of contrasting textures and dynamics, and the pitch material is atonal, emphasizing texture rather than particular combinations of tones.¹⁵² The quartet opens with one pitch, E in the viola, which expands outward in a wedge shape by growing intervals until the notes form a sound-cluster spanning a low G-sharp to high A, which marks the end of the first structure.

The image shows a musical score for four instruments: Violin I (VI), Violin II (VII), Viola (Vla), and Violoncello (Vc). The score is in 4/4 time and shows measures 44, 45, and 46. In measure 44, the Viola (Vla) plays a single note, E5. In measure 45, the notes expand: VI (A5), VII (F#5), Vla (G#4), and Vc (G#2). In measure 46, the notes further expand: VI (A5), VII (F#5), Vla (G#4), and Vc (G#2). The notes are sustained throughout the measures. A 'ff' dynamic marking is present in measure 45. Red circles highlight the sustained notes in each part.

Figure 12: Marek Kopelent, String Quartet No. 3, tone cluster on page 2.¹⁵³

From this moment on, the quartet is highly chromatic, though never dense, until it suddenly ends on a C-minor chord, following a progression typical for Kopelent, from simplicity to ethereal clouds of sound to final clarity. In order to notate the ethereal

¹⁵² Marek Kopelent, *3 Smyčcový Kvartet pro Dvoje Housle, Violu, a Violoncello* [Third String Quartet for Two Violins, Viola, and Violoncello] (Prague: State Musical Publishing, 1966), 2.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, 7. The circled notes are sustained.

quality of his clouds of sound, Kopelent uses proportional, rather than the traditional notation, allowing fluidity of time and variation from performance to performance—no tempo indication is given. This type of notation had been used by Cage, Earle Brown, Morton Feldman, and others since the 1950s. In his String Quartet, each pitch is represented by a filled note head without a stem, followed by a bar indicating the length of time the note is to be held, while numbered vertical dashed lines indicate relative time:

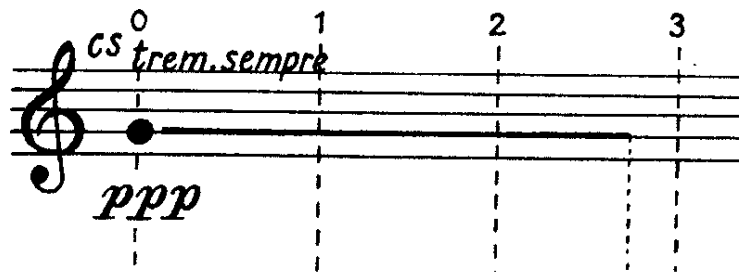


Figure 13: Marek Kopelent, String Quartet No. 3, notation example.¹⁵⁴

In addition, Kopelent uses indeterminacy and allows the performers a great deal of freedom. In the second structure and throughout the rest of the quartet, he introduced various extended techniques, notated by numbers inscribed in a circle. The key to these numbers is given at the beginning of the piece:

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 4.

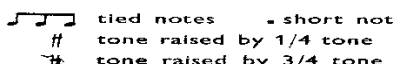
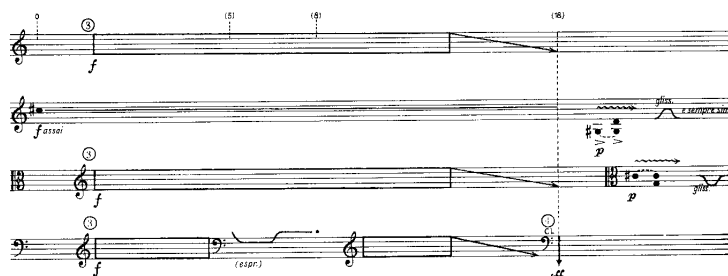
- 1 in free rhythm
 - 2 sharp impact of the bow on the strings
 - 3 very quick movement at highest extremity
 - 4 sharp impact *col legno* on the strings
 - 5 played *col legno* lightly *sautillé* from the bridge to the finger-board
 - 6 played with the bow on the D string or A string behind the bridge
 - 7 tremolo on the top of the bridge so that a buzz rather than a tone is produced
 - 8 the finger of the left hand strikes the strings at the touch points for the tones c^1 — a^1 — e
 - 9 aleatoric part; rapid movement from highest to lowest tones
 - 10 strike with the tip of the finger on the wood of the instrument
- 
 tied notes . short note
 # tone raised by 1/4 tone
 ## tone raised by 3/4 tone
- CS con sordino
 SS senza sordino
 SP sul ponticello
 ST sul tasto
 CL col legno

Figure 14: Marek Kopelent, String Quartet No. 3, legend.¹⁵⁵

In some places, Kopelent places a number above a set of pitches, but in others he is concerned primarily with the texture and timbre of the sound, leaving the choice of pitches up to the performers:

12



H 4196

Figure 15: Marek Kopelent, String Quartet No. 3, indeterminacy with regard to pitch.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 3. Although no. 9 refers to “aleatorics,” chance is not actually involved; the more precise term would be “indeterminacy.”

While not his first work incorporating avant-garde and experimental elements, the quartet was his first major success; the Novák Quartet, the piece's dedicatee, performed it over fifty times between 1964 and 1969, both in Czechoslovakia and at international festivals.¹⁵⁷ Kopelent describes his musical style in the sixties as “getting to grips with New Music,” and it was during these years of relative freedom that he established his personal style, which he was later forced to develop in isolation during the years of Normalization.¹⁵⁸

The year following his public debut, Kopelent took over the leadership of *Musica Viva Pragensis*, after Kotík was censured for a performance at the Warsaw Autumn festival (an all too clear reminder that the cultural thaw was only relative).¹⁵⁹ In this position, Kopelent was briefly catapulted into international fame, and he began to receive foreign commissions.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹⁵⁷ Pantůček, 21. The Novák Quartet, Antonín Novák (Violin), Dusan Pandula (Violin), Josef Podjukl (Viola), Jaroslav Chovanec (Cello), performed and recorded contemporary Eastern European music. See their recording of Bartók's String Quartets on http://www.arkivmusic.com/classical/album.jsp?album_id=1895.

¹⁵⁸ Havelková, 3.

¹⁵⁹ Pantůček 18. The incident is discussed further in Chapter V.

¹⁶⁰ Horst Leuchtman, “Horst Leuchtman im Gespräch mit den Komponisten Evžen Zámečník, Marek Kopelent, Luboš Fišer und Roland Leistner-Mayer [Horst Leuchtman in Conversation with Composers],” *Jahrbuch – Bayerische Akademie der Schönen Künste* 4 (1990): 232. Other important compositions during this period included *Matka* [Mother] (1964), a “fresco” for choir and flute, and *Snehah* (1967) for soprano, jazz alto, ensemble and tape.

II. Repressions and Isolation

In 1969, Kopelent received a grant from the German Academy of Arts in West Berlin, where he studied for a year, along with several other Czech and Slovak recipients. He left the country just as the Normalization process was beginning, and at the end of his studies, Kopelent was the only Czech or Slovak recipient who returned home.¹⁶¹ A year later he lost his post at Supraphon, and in 1973, *Musica Viva Pragensis* was forbidden from performing and disbanded. It was not until 1976 that he was able to take a job as an accompanist for children's dance classes—to avoid being labeled a “parasite”—where he worked until 1991.¹⁶² In addition, after 1971 and through the eighties, performances of many of his works were banned in Czechoslovakia.¹⁶³ After a lengthy dispute with the Czech Music Fund, Kopelent was permitted a performance of his 1971 *Ballad* for piano at the Janáček Hall in Bratislava in 1978, but he was not admitted into the Czech Composers' Union until 1983.¹⁶⁴

Despite being hindered at home, Kopelent continued to receive commissions from the international community. In the seventies, musicians in Germany and America commissioned works from him—including his concerto, *A Few Minutes with an Oboist*,

¹⁶¹ Matzner.

¹⁶² Miroslav Pudlák, “Marek Kopelent,” in *Komponisten der Gegenwart – Nachlieferung IV*, edited by Hans-Werner Heister and Walter-Wolfgang Sparrer, 1–2 (Munich: Edition Text + Kritik, 1994), 1.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Matzner.

commissioned by the Italian-born conductor Mario di Bonaventura, which was to be played by oboist Alfred Genovese at the 1972 Aspen Music Festival,¹⁶⁵ and the organ piece *Lob in der Frühe* [Praise in the Early Morning] commissioned in 1978 by Klaus Martin Ziegler in Germany for his annual festival for new religious compositions.¹⁶⁶ Because of official travel restrictions, Kopelent was unable to attend those premieres, which dealt a blow to his international reputation.¹⁶⁷ In addition, he was invited to judge composition competitions in Rio de Janeiro (1970), Paris (1971), Bonn (1976), and Switzerland (1980), invitations he was forced to decline. Only in 1984 was he allowed to serve as a juror in Warsaw.¹⁶⁸

Kopelent also began losing touch with current trends in music. Although the local music festivals, the Week of New Music and the Prague Spring continued, the featured music's innovative quality dropped off, and the works were no longer avant-garde.¹⁶⁹ Kopelent says he was still occasionally able to attend the Warsaw Autumn festival, but he was "too sunk in personal problems and the harsh situation of [his] country" to keep up with Western European avant-garde music.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁵ Pantůček, 21.

¹⁶⁶ Röhring, 401.

¹⁶⁷ Leuchtman, 232.

¹⁶⁸ Matzner.

¹⁶⁹ Miloš Jůzl, "Music and the Totalitarian Regime in Czechoslovakia," *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 27, no. 1 (1996): 47.

¹⁷⁰ Tereza Havelková, "Lone Knight: Interview with Marek Kopelent," *Czech Music* 3 (2002): 2.

Another challenge Kopelent faced was his religion—he has been a devout Catholic since his early days attending church services St. Jacob’s. Unlike in Poland, the Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia was not a powerful parallel ideological institution. During the fifties, the government essentially controlled the Church, and any communications from the Vatican in Rome had to go through the Office for Church Affairs.¹⁷¹ During the period of reform, the Office took less part in “Church Affairs,” and a new head was appointed; in 1970, the old head (Karel Hruža) returned, and in 1971 a new pro-regime clerical association (*Pacem in Terris*) was set up. In subsequent years, the government also used coercive repression in order to remove the Church from the political and social scene; a number of priests (somewhere between one hundred and five hundred out of 3,500) were arrested or banned from preaching. Others died of natural causes and simply were not replaced.¹⁷² Meanwhile, a media campaign begun in 1971 ridiculed and attacked the clergy for both personal and ideological reasons, and the Catholic publishing house *Caritas* was prohibited from publishing anything but calendars.¹⁷³ For Kopelent, the gradual siphoning off of the Catholic Church meant that his religious works were only approved for performance and publication after all religious references were removed from the titles. For example, his 1972–3 piece *Das Schweisstuch der Veronika* [The Veil of Veronica], about a veil allegedly imprinted with the face of Jesus, had to be renamed *Sonata for Eleven String Instruments*. Similarly, his

¹⁷¹ Vladimir V. Kusin, *From Dubček to Charter 77: A Study of “Normalization” in Czechoslovakia, 1969–1978* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1978), 107.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 219.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 218, 221.

1981 piece *Legenda “De Passioni St. Adalberti Martyris”* about the martyrdom of St. Adalbert, supposedly responsible for the Christianization of Prussia in the tenth century, had to be published simply under the name *Legenda*.¹⁷⁴ Such changes may seem trivial, but for a composer who received commissions from religious institutions (as in the case of Ziegler in Germany), they were devastating.

III. Introversion and Irony

During the 1970s and 80s, Kopelent experienced what is often called “inner emigration.” Kopelent himself used the term in a 1990 interview with German musicologist Horst Leuchtman, less than a year after the Velvet Revolution. In the broader context of this interview, Kopelent does not bring up his “inner emigration” to justify inaction during Normalization, but to answer the question whether composition was a form of escapism. He replies that he did experience a “flight inward,” or “inner emigration,” but his music, on the other hand, ran the other direction: towards gags, irony, and sarcasm.¹⁷⁵ As far as introversion, even in the sixties, before Normalization began, his works contained a sense of introspection. For example, of his String Quartet No. 4, a one-movement piece completed in 1967, he wrote:

It is an introverted piece that was written less for the public than for a listening individual, who through it might be able to escape the daily conflicts, tensions, pressing advertisements, and numbing of the human soul.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁴ Leuchtman, 230.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 231.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 231. “Es ist ein introvertiertes Stück, das weniger für ein Publikum, als für ein zuhörendes Individuum geschrieben worden ist, dem hierdurch ermöglicht werden soll,

The quartet is slow-moving, composed mostly of sustained tones, which makes it feel meditative and personal—almost melancholy. In addition, Kopelent contrasts the upper reaches of the violin (it begins and ends on a B6) with the lower register of the cello, an effect that also appears in the works of Shostakovich and can be associated with a sense of isolation or separateness. For example, Mark Mazullo, in his work on Shostakovich's 24 Preludes and Fugues describes the effect as “a unique soundscape that evokes the idea of two separate worlds, often with a chasm lying between.”¹⁷⁷

Likewise, before Normalization, Kopelent displayed a penchant toward the comic, which would later develop into a sense of irony. For example, in 1967 he also composed the cycle *Praštěné písničky pro dětský sbor na vlastní texty* [Dotty Ditties for Children's Choir on his Own Texts]. Although composing for children's choir was common in Czechoslovakia, most song cycles were set to literary or propagandistic texts. In *Dotty Ditties*, Kopelent not only designated his songs “dotty,” but also set them to his own *písničky*—ditties—rather than ideological or literary poetry. It is as if a composer had created a song cycle out of jump-rope rhymes.

During the seventies, both the sense of melancholy and the sense of incongruity became more pronounced as Kopelent felt the need to “[cope] with the pressure of a totalitarian regime.”¹⁷⁸ He began to insert personal symbolism into his pieces by a

den täglichen Konflikten, Spannungen, anpreisenden Reklamen und einer Betäubung der menschlichen Seele zu entfliehen.”

¹⁷⁷ Mark Mazullo, *Shostakovich's Preludes and Fugues: Contexts, Style, Performance* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 77.

¹⁷⁸ Havelková, 3.

process that he called *intarsis*, resulting in a more structured and narrative approach to composition. “The symbols are the bearers of a hidden content that is often ironic, reflecting my relation to power.”¹⁷⁹

One piece that demonstrates *intarsis* is the oboe concerto commissioned for the Aspen Music Festival, *A Few Minutes with an Oboist* (1972). In her work *Irony, Satire, Parody and the Grotesque in the Music of Shostakovich*, Esti Sheinberg proposes six possible musical characteristics that convey irony:

1. Stylistic incongruities within one governing style
2. Stylistic discontinuities within one governing style
3. Incongruities with available information about the composer’s set of convictions, beliefs, values, or about his personal characteristics
4. Incongruities based on meta-stylistic norms, e.g. rendering a feeling of “too high,” “too fast,” “too many repetitions,” etc., not when measured relative to a certain style or topic, but *per se*
5. Shifts between levels of musical discourse
6. Juxtapositions of more than one stylistic or topical context, none of which could be regarded as “governing”.¹⁸⁰

A Few Minutes with an Oboist is ironic in the sense that it is full of stylistic incongruities for the conventional genre on which it is based. The title of the piece itself is unusual; it is one of Kopelent’s two works with an English title. Kopelent explains this in the liner notes to the 2008 recording produced as a supplement to the *Czech Music Quarterly* journal: “When I was fired from my job after the Soviet invasion I set about studying

¹⁷⁹ Ibid. Most likely Kopelent is referring to *intarsia*, a method of inlaying wood or stone to create a mosaic-like picture.

¹⁸⁰ Esti Sheinberg, *Irony, Satire, Parody and the Grotesque in the Music of Shostakovich* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2000), 64.

English. I particularly enjoyed the expression ‘a few’ so I used it in the title of the work.”¹⁸¹

In *A Few Minutes*, Kopelent explores the idea of a solo concerto: a single player thrown into relief by a more or less conventional orchestra. The concerto opens with an “explosive” oboe solo in the upper reaches of the instrument, “rendering,” as Sheinberg says, “a feeling of ‘too high’.”¹⁸²

¹⁸¹ Unknown Author, “Notes to the 1960s Generation,” a supplement to *Czech Music 1* (2008), accessed October 19, 2015, <http://www.czech-music.net/cs/cd-series-2>.

¹⁸² Sheinberg, 64. When Sheinberg calls something “too fast” or “too high” *per se*, she means relative to human physiology. For example, something could be too fast compared to the human heart-beat, or too high compared to the normal human vocal range. As an example, she mentions Mozart’s aria for the Queen of the Night, “Der Hölle Rache” from *Die Zauberflöte*. Even an untrained listener will know that the aria goes beyond the range for a normal human voice. In instrumental music, I propose a relation to the ear instead: the normal human ear can only hear a certain range of frequencies, and the closer a pitch gets to the top of that range, the more it tends to sound “too high.”

Figure 16: Marek Kopelent, *A Few Minutes with an Oboist*, opening oboe solo.¹⁸³

When the orchestra—a chamber group—in *A Few Minutes* enters, it is hardly conventional. The work is scored for trumpet, electric guitar, guitar, mandolin/banjo, harp, prepared piano, two percussionists (playing xylophone, castanets, maracas, and claves; wood blocks, guiro, shaker, temple blocks, and bass drum), violin, and string bass.

¹⁸³ Marek Kopelent, *A Few Minutes with an Oboist: Concerto Galante für Oboe und Kammerensemble* (original publication Cologne: Musikverlage Hans Gerig, 1973. Assigned to Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1980), 1.

KLAVIER PIANO

The image shows a musical score for piano preparations. At the top, it is labeled "KLAVIER PIANO". Below this, there is a staff with notes and various symbols (circles, squares, diamonds) indicating where to place preparation materials. A dashed line indicates a specific distance from the damper felt. Below the staff, there is a legend titled "Preparationsmittel Prepared with" with the following items:





-  8 Metall-Dübel
8 metal pins
-  17 Plastik-Dübel
17 plastik pins
-  Holz
wood
-  19, max. - 1,5 (cm) Distanz des Dübels von den Filzen der Dämpfung
Pins to be placed ... cm away from the damper felt

Figure 17: Marek Kopelent, *A Few Minutes with an Oboist*, chart for piano preparations.¹⁸⁴

The plucked instruments and the prepared piano are grouped together and often play in hocket-style, creating a folk-like, almost eerie, sound, reminiscent of instruments in the zither family. In fact, they are instructed to play with “Zither tones” at rehearsal figure B. Folk-influenced music was encouraged and lauded as the future of Czech music, but the electric guitar was the signature instrument of rock groups. At the time of *A Few Minutes*’ composition, the so-called Trial of the Plastic People, in which Czech rock

¹⁸⁴ Kopelent, *A Few Minutes with an Oboist*, i.

bands were prosecuted, had not yet occurred, but cross-fertilization of rock and classical realms would hardly have been applauded.

In addition to the non-standard scoring, Kopelent shifts between levels of musical discourse as he explores the “exhibitionism of the soloist” inherent in the genre.¹⁸⁵ The solo part contains two marked cadenzas, one just before rehearsal figure D and one at rehearsal figure G, as well as other cadenza-like passages. The cadenza before rehearsal figure D is short. It is followed by an echo in the violin and string bass a half step lower, labeled *ironico*. The cadenza at rehearsal figure G is labeled *à la “Kozatschok”* [in the manner of a Cossack Dance], and lasts four systems. The oboe is joined by percussion (woodblocks and temple blocks) and pizzicato bass, while the other players may clap. The passage is in A minor, the only tonal portion of the concerto. Kopelent says he chose to insert the Cossack Dance because

At the end of the 1960s people in Western Europe used to dance it at parties at a time when for us in Czechoslovakia it symbolized the Soviet occupation after 1968. (That was another reason why the work couldn't be performed in this country.)¹⁸⁶

The performance also involves theatrical gestures. It is sprinkled with a series of “chivalrous clichés,” in which the conductor bows to different instrument groups.¹⁸⁷ Each bow is preceded by the same motif, played by the oboe:

¹⁸⁵ “Notes to the 1960s Generation.”

¹⁸⁶ “Notes to the 1960s Generation.”

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*



Figure 18: Marek Kopelent, *A Few Minutes with an Oboist*, “Bow” motive.¹⁸⁸

The conductor first bows to the harpist (rehearsal figure B), then to the violinists (rehearsal figure D), and then to the percussionists (rehearsal figure F). After each bow, the appointed group plays a seemingly hesitant solo before being joined by the other players. Finally, almost at the end of the piece, “an awkward moment occurs,” says Kopelent, “when it is the conductor’s own turn” (rehearsal figure M).¹⁸⁹

A bow to the conductor, the conductor, slightly embarrassed, because he himself can’t be a soloist, returns the bow to the oboist, the oboist makes a gesture and a bow to both the conductor and the whole ensemble / everything fluently and briefly /¹⁹⁰

In addition to the comic confusion of the conductor’s bow, the ritualized and almost courtly politeness is offset by the strident and jarring tone taken by the oboe throughout the composition (chromatic passages in the C6 range, large dissonant leaps, and extended techniques producing square-wave like sounds): the ceremony is a mockery.¹⁹¹ But perhaps it is something more lighthearted; at the end of the concerto, all

¹⁸⁸ Kopelent, *A Few Minutes with an Oboist*, 2.

¹⁸⁹ “Notes to the 1960s Generation.”

¹⁹⁰ Marek Kopelent, *A Few Minutes with an Oboist*, performance notes, 2.

¹⁹¹ Perhaps this is a reflection of the Czechs’ highly ritualized kowtowing to official Communism in the May Day parades and so on, and the contrasting private attitude of irony and detachment.

the players except the oboist (who is holding F# 6) take up noisemakers (suggestions include jingle-bells and children's toys) and play "with great appetite" until the end. The percussionists, playing xylophone (optional) and click-clack, finish with a flourish, leaving the listener feeling that perhaps he or she has just witnessed some big joke. Kopelent describes the composition as "colorful and playful."¹⁹²

A Few Minutes with an Oboist is not only notable for its subversive gags, it is also an exploration of unconventional ways to produce sounds on a wind instrument, including by means of multiphonics. Information about such extended techniques was not really available to Czech composers, and Kopelent says he "learned about them from the notes in the score of a wind quintet by the Polish composer Witold Szalonek."¹⁹³ Instructions for thirteen different numbered multiphonic techniques are included in the notes to the work, and only the numbers are given in the score. Interestingly, the numbers are always in order; Kopelent does not mix and match.

Besides multiphonics, the oboe plays glissandi in which the contour is more important than the specific pitches, notated as below.

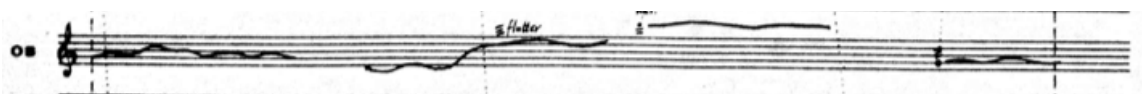


Figure 19: Marek Kopelent, *A Few Minutes with an Oboist*, indeterminate glissandi.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹² "Notes to the 1960s Generation."

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Kopelent, *A Few Minutes with an Oboist*, 25. As in the string quartet, the vertical dashed lines seem to indicate relative time.

Other techniques include playing as high as possible (notated with a small upward arrow), and playing quarter-tones, perhaps in a nod to his senior composer and colleague Alois Hába (1893–1973).

The supporting chamber ensemble also uses some extended techniques; the violin and bass play sliding glissandi, and the plucked instruments are sometimes played with the nails. At rehearsal figure H, the harpist is instructed to slide a sheet of paper between the strings. At rehearsal figure N, the oboist fingers the keys of specific pitches without blowing and is instructed “to let more and more often sound the accidentally arising tones;” the trumpet is given the same instruction, offset by four “beats.”

Although *A Few Minutes* was commissioned in 1972 for the Aspen Music Festival, in the end it was not performed: the festival itself was cancelled for financial reasons. Instead, the concerto received its premiere at the Witten Days for New Chamber Music in West Germany in 1974, with oboist Lothar Faber.¹⁹⁵ Two subsequent performances occurred during the eighties in the United Kingdom and at the Warsaw Autumn festival, but the Czech premiere did not occur until 2004, with Czech oboist Vilém Veverka.¹⁹⁶

IV. After the Fall of the Wall

After the Czech premiere of *A Few Minutes*, Kopelent conducted an interview with Veverka for the journal *Czech Music*, and their conversation is very telling. It reveals the way the Communist regime channeled information and the way Czech music

¹⁹⁵ “Notes to the 1960s Generation.”

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

professors continued to propagate the misinformation even after the Velvet Revolution, and it also reveals Kopelent's feelings about such dissimulation. In the interview, Kopelent had led the conversation to the question of education in modernist music at HAMU, and Veverka had told him:

When I was defending my diploma dissertation on the new technical possibilities of the oboe, I was told everyone knew what I was writing about, that it was already known here in the 1960s, but since the public had no interest in it, people stopped trying to do it.¹⁹⁷

Reading the interview, one can almost feel Kopelent exploding with indignation as he responds:

They said everything had been played here? Berio's *Sequenza VII* for solo oboe is from the end of the 1960s. So what kind of answer was that?

Veverka: I was told it had just vanished. They said the public didn't want to listen to this music and we are no pioneers...

Kopelent: That's unbelievable. To be hiding the fact that during the repressive "normalization" period such music was forbidden, and that it wasn't the public but the regime that didn't want it. And this is the sort of thing teachers are supposed to say to young musicians!¹⁹⁸

In his interviews with musicians and musicologists, Kopelent doesn't state his political views *per se*, but his disdain for the Communist regime is always apparent. In addition, after the Velvet Revolution, Kopelent served as a music expert for the Office of the President of the Republic, Václav Havel. Havel was well known because of his involvement in the Charter 77 movement, but it is doubtful that he would have known

¹⁹⁷ Marek Kopelent, "A Few Minutes with an Oboist: An Interview with Vilém Veverka," *Czech Music* 4 (2004): 18.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

who Kopelent was, unless they had had contact prior to the revolution. At the very least, it appears that Kopelent did not sign the so-called Anti-Charter in 1977.¹⁹⁹

Unfortunately, even after 1989 Kopelent still suffers from the lingering disinterest in modernist music in his country. In addition, his priorities changed. As someone who had spent his youth in an oppressive regime, he felt that freedom should not be taken for granted, and that one should not be afraid of civic commitment; in response to his new freedom, he began to fill his time with civic responsibilities, which has limited his time for composition.²⁰⁰ As well as working as a music expert for Havel, he became a professor of composition at HAMU in 1991.²⁰¹ From 1995–96, he served as a member of the Ministry of Culture board for the Czech Philharmonic.²⁰² He has also taught composition courses in the town of Český Krumlov, a town in the southern Czech Republic, inviting distinguished guest lecturers such as Russian-born composer Sofia Gubaidulina.²⁰³ It was partly for these activities that Kopelent received the Classic Prize in 1999, but also for his personal dissent throughout Normalization: instead of writing music according to an approved format, he wrote the music he wanted to write, which was ultimately a greater contribution to Czech musical culture than some collection of symphonies and cantatas serving the Czechoslovakian government's agenda.

¹⁹⁹ Jůzl, 47.

²⁰⁰ Havelková, "Lone Knight," 4.

²⁰¹ Havelková, "Portrait," 4.

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Havelková, "Lone Knight," 2.

CHAPTER 5: A WHISTLE FROM BROOKLYN: THE CASE OF PETR KOTÍK

In the autumn of 1969, while Kopelent was studying at the German Academy of Arts in West Berlin, Prague city officials banned another composer and his ensemble from traveling to West Berlin to participate in a concert series. This series was to feature British composer Cornelius Cardew's London-based experimental improvisation group, AMM, along with the banned ensemble, QUaX, led by flautist-composer Petr Kotík. The travel ban was just the beginning of Normalization in Czechoslovakia, and for Kotík, it was the last straw. "I realized I was already too old to deal with problems like bans on travel abroad and so on, and I realized that the most important thing for me was to have peace and quiet to be able to work ... living in Czechoslovakia did not offer this kind of environment, so I had to get out."²⁰⁴ Unlike Kopelent, who chose to return to Czechoslovakia after his year in West Berlin, Kotík "voted with his feet" and left the country.

I. Early Life and Influences

Unlike Kopelent, Kotík never knew free Czechoslovakia. Born in Prague in 1942, Petr grew up in an artistic household: his father, Jan, was a painter, as was his grandfather Pravoslav.²⁰⁵ Kotík's parents often took him to Czech Philharmonic concerts (which

²⁰⁴ Petr Bakla, "Petr Kotík: As a Composer, I've Always Been a Loner," *Czech Music 2* (2011): 5–6.

²⁰⁵ "Petr Kotík," Musicbase.cz, last accessed September 26, 2015, <http://www.musicbase.cz/composers/483-kotik-petr/>.

would have featured music from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries), and at age fourteen he began to play the flute.



Figure 20: Jan Kotík, *Lide s Deštníky* [People with Umbrellas].²⁰⁶

Almost immediately thereafter, he enrolled in flute studies at the Prague Conservatory, where he studied for the next six years.²⁰⁷ In 1960, he also began to study composition privately with composers Vladimír Šrámek (1923–2004) and Jan Rychlík (1916–1964). From the outset, Kotík was interested in new compositional processes. Rychlík was a jazz drummer, and he introduced Kotík to the mathematical concept of a Markov chain, a

²⁰⁶ Sophistica Gallery, last accessed September 26, 2015, <http://sophisticagallery.cz/kotik-jan-1916-2002/jan-kotik-lide-s-destniky/>.

²⁰⁷ S.E.M. Ensemble, “Petr Kotík,” last edited September 3, 2014, <http://www.semensemble.org/about/petr-kotik/>.

process Kotík continues to use in his compositions to this day.²⁰⁸ Šrámek, on the other hand, experimented with the capabilities of the tape recorder, a luxury item Kotík happened to own, which led to a creative partnership between the two musicians.²⁰⁹ Unlike Rychlík, Šrámek was not impressed with Kotík's strict compositional methods. Kotík said, "When I first showed him my compositional method, he screamed at me: 'You don't compose like this! This is no way to compose music!'"²¹⁰ Nevertheless, under Šrámek's tutelage, Kotík worked on creating both tape music and music based on graphic elements.²¹¹

Kotík says during the 1960s he would have liked to attend the International Summer Courses for New Music in Darmstadt, Germany where many avant-garde composers from Europe and the United States gathered and had their newest works performed, but was unable to obtain an exit visa.²¹² Nevertheless, due to fortuitous circumstances, he was able to meet composers who had been active in Darmstadt in Prague. For example, when driving from Warsaw back to Venice in 1961, the Italian avant-garde composers Luigi Nono and Giacomo Manzoni stopped at Jan Kotík's studio in Prague one night. Jan immediately called his son, and Petr rushed to the studio to meet

²⁰⁸ Petr Kotík, in discussion with the author, October 11, 2014. A Markov chain is a computational process in which the (N + 1)th event in a series is independent (and ignorant) of the Nth event. Iannis Xenakis also used Markov chains in his music.

²⁰⁹ Victor Pantůček, "Some Experimental Trends in Post-War Czech Music," *Czech Music* 1 (2008): 22.

²¹⁰ Bakla, 4.

²¹¹ Pantůček, 22.

²¹² Bakla, 4.

the two musicians.²¹³ Like the Kotíks, Nono, a leading figure of the European avant-garde, came from a family of visual artists. He was a member of the Italian Communist Party, and would later set music to the texts of Fidel Castro, Che Guevara, Karl Marx, Rosa Luxemburg, Bertolt Brecht, and Malcolm X. He was a friend of Jan Kotík, who always avoided the Socialist Realist aesthetic in his art, and became a mentor to Petr, showing the complex relationship of political theory and practice in Czechoslovakia.²¹⁴ Many Czechs who opposed Soviet ideology in practice still embraced aspects of socialist theory.

Not long after his meeting with Nono, Kotík founded *Musica Viva Pragensis* with help from two of his teachers. His association with the group ended in 1964, after his piece *Music for Three in Memory of Jan Rychlík* (who had recently passed away) was received poorly at a performance in Warsaw: A third of the audience got up and walked out, and the official functionaries stormed backstage to berate the music, “almost with physical violence,” for representing Czechoslovakia with such terrible music.²¹⁵ Despite this incident, Kotík was permitted to leave Czechoslovakia to attend the Music Academy in Vienna, where he studied counterpoint, harmony, and dodecaphony with Karl Schiske (1916–1969) and Hans Jelinek (1901–1969), a student of Arnold Schoenberg and Alban Berg. He also studied electronic music with Friedrich Cerha (b. 1926), who is perhaps

²¹³ Petr Kotík, in discussion with the author, May 1, 2015.

²¹⁴ “Jan Kotík: Prints, Works on Paper and Paintings from 1940–1970,” Jiří Svestka Gallery, last accessed September 26, 2015, <http://www.jirisvestka.com/exhibition-detail/jan-kotik-prints--works-on-paper-and-paintings-from-1940-70>.

²¹⁵ Kotík, October 11, 2014. Kotík says he exacerbated the situation by taking a leaf out of Iannis Xenakis’s book and putting his hands in his pockets as if he didn’t care.

best known for orchestrating the third act of Berg's last and unfinished opera *Lulu*.²¹⁶ During this time, Kotík's compositional processes became less rigid, and he began to make intuitive changes to the chance processes he used. His first major piece in the new intuitive style was *Spontano* for piano and nine wind instruments, composed during the spring and summer of 1964.²¹⁷

The same summer, Kotík also met the iconic experimental American composer John Cage. Kotík had been fascinated by Cage before coming to Vienna, but he had never seen a Cage score and did not know much about his music.²¹⁸ During his first year in Vienna, however, Kotík was informed by Cerha that Cage was coming to town and that he was invited to perform a work by Cage at the Museum des 20. Jahrhunderts. On June 24, 1964, Cerha, Kotík, pianist David Tudor, and two other musicians played a three-hour, percussion-only version of Cage's indeterminate orchestral work *Atlas Eclipticalis* (1960–62), a sonification of a star map by Slovakian Antonín Bečvař, with dance performance by the Merce Cunningham Dance Company.²¹⁹ On September 22, Kotík arranged for Cage to perform his *Concert for Piano and Orchestra* in Prague, in the Park of Culture. The concert included dance by the Cunningham Dance Company and

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ Pantůček, 22.

²¹⁸ Tereza Havelková, "Petr Kotík's Umbilical Cord," *Czech Music* 1 (2003): 9.

²¹⁹ Ibid.; Paul van Emmerik, ed. "A John Cage Compendium," last modified January 4, 2015, <http://cagecomp.home.xs4all.nl/>.

sets by Robert Rauschenberg and the music was performed by the members of Musica Viva Pragensis and David Tudor.²²⁰

Kotík's association with Musica Viva Pragensis ended when he returned from Vienna at the end of his studies and found that Marek Kopelent had taken over its direction. By that time, he was no longer interested in the avant-garde trends this ensemble followed. He then founded a second music group, the QUaX Ensemble.²²¹ This ensemble, whose name was derived by chance, consisted of five or six players who pursued American and British experimental trends.²²²

Like Kopelent, Kotík received commissions from outside the Iron Curtain. For example, in 1966, Kotík created a live electronic piece, *Kontrabandt*, and a four-channel tape piece, *PIUP*, for the Electronic Music Studio of the West German Radio in Cologne.²²³ QUaX premiered *Kontrabandt* in West Germany in 1967, and was permitted to travel to the Netherlands for concerts in Rotterdam, the Hague, and Amsterdam.²²⁴

²²⁰ Havelková, 9; Emmerik.

²²¹ Bakla, 4. Perhaps this was a case of sour grapes, as it seems that Musica Viva Pragensis was equally uninterested in Kotík's return.

²²² Petr Kotík, in an email to the author, October 18, 2014. He added, "The capitals and lower case letters were just made up, because someone told us that there was a Nazi movie 'Quax the Fearless Pilot', so I didn't want it to look like a name."

²²³ Petr Kotík, "Petr Kotík: Biography/Chronology" (unpublished manuscript, last modified July 13, 2015), Microsoft Word file. Petr Kotík's private archive.

²²⁴ Ibid.

II. A Land of Opportunity

Unfortunately, the advent of Normalization brought an end to free travel in Europe; in the same year that Kotík was forbidden to travel to West Berlin, his father was granted a fellowship from the German Academy of the Arts in West Berlin and then deprived of his Czech citizenship.²²⁵ Kotík realized that he could not compose and continue to build his international reputation in such a repressive environment. Simultaneous with this realization, he received an invitation from two American composers, Lejaren Hiller and Lukas Foss. They asked him to join the Center of the Creative and Performing Arts (CCPA) at the State University of New York in Buffalo, and he took advantage of the opportunity and moved to New York.²²⁶ He initially found the work of the CCPA disappointing. “‘I was doing more interesting things in Prague,’ I told my new friends right after I arrived.”²²⁷ This disappointment led to the founding of a new ensemble, the S.E.M. Ensemble, in 1970. The initials S.E.M. do not stand for words, but are simply the middle letters of the word *ensemble* with periods added for effect.²²⁸ The ensemble was open to any skilled musicians who were interested and varied in size and instrumentation.

²²⁵ “Jan Kotík: Prints, Works on Paper and Paintings from 1940–1970.”

²²⁶ S.E.M. Ensemble, “Petr Kotík.” Foss, a pianist, composer, and conductor founded the Center for Creative and Performing Arts in 1963. Hiller, a multimedia artist and composer of computer music, joined Foss when he took up a position on the composition faculty at SUNY Buffalo in 1968, after collaborating with John Cage on *HPSCHD* (1968).

²²⁷ Bakla, 6.

²²⁸ Kotík, October 18, 2014.

Since World War II, Prague had become progressively less cosmopolitan, and the communities of forward-looking artists continuously shrunk. During the German occupation, most of the Jewish population, including such talented composers as Pavel Haas, Gideon Klein, Hans Krása, and Erwin Schulhoff, was destroyed or left. During the early years of Communism, most of the German population also emigrated, leading to closure of such institutions as the German Opera House in Prague. Nevertheless, during the 1950s and 1960s Kotík worked to maintain international connections wherever he could. When he moved to the United States, his ability to make connections and work with other like-minded composers suddenly exploded. Over the next twenty years, Kotík went on a series of tours, sometimes solo and sometimes with the S.E.M. Ensemble, that Kopelent could only have dreamed of: concerts with S.E.M. in Cologne, Aachen, Düren, Berlin, and Geneva in 1972; numerous performances in America and Europe of the music of Marcel Duchamp in 1974; a solo concert tour of South America in 1978; an Italian tour with S.E.M. in 1980; a European tour with American composer-accordionist Pauline Oliveros in 1985; solo and ensemble concerts in West Germany, Rotterdam, and Prague in 1988.²²⁹ All these only provide a sample of Kotík's activity; almost every year of what would have been isolation under Normalization had he stayed in Prague, he took at least one international tour.

Perhaps more important than the ability to travel, was the influence of the so-called New York School of composers on Kotík: John Cage, Morton Feldman, Earle

²²⁹ Kotík, "Petr Kotík: Biography/Chronology."

Brown, Christian Wolff, and David Tudor. Because of Kotík's experience with Cage in Vienna, he was able to work closely with Cage in America until Cage's death in 1992.²³⁰

For this reason, Kotík considers himself something of an authority on Cage. He believes that Cage's music is not nearly as open to interpretation as some performers think. Instead, he says, Cage's music was written (as all music is, to some extent) for someone who already knows the performance practice, namely Tudor. Kotík gives the example of a performance of Cage's *Variations IV*, a piece that is both theater and music. Kotík was not happy with how his collaborator, composer and trumpeter Ben Neill realized the piece, so he called Cage, who invited them over to look at the piece together. "I thought it would take a few minutes, but in the end we were there for two hours," says Kotík, "it turned out everything had been thought out with complete precision."²³¹ When Tudor stopped working closely with Cage, Kotík feels that he became his heir. Kotík believes he knows when Cage's instructions ought to be interpreted literally, and when he can change things around without destroying the intent of the work. For example, Kotík often conducts orchestral works that Cage intended to be conductorless and believes that if Cage were still around, he would agree with the choice.²³² This choice partly came about because of an incident that took place during a performance of Cage's large-scale work *Song Books* (1970). The performance took place at the 1975 June in Buffalo festival, which was directed by Feldman. Cage insisted that there be no rehearsals of

²³⁰ Havelková, 11. In fact, when Kotík immigrated to America and had problems with immigration, Cage was one of the people who wrote him a letter of support.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, 10.

²³² *Ibid.*, 11.

Song Books, and Kotík says, “At that time, I never questioned the validity of any of Cage’s suggestions.”²³³ Unfortunately for Kotík, the singer Julius Eastman (who had recently left the S.E.M. Ensemble disgruntled but had been asked to return for *Song Books*) decided to sabotage the performance, causing a scandal: Where Cage’s instructions in the score read “Give a lecture,” Eastman chose to undress a male student (a female student was also present but did not permit herself to be undressed) and make sexual gestures.²³⁴ Kotík relates:

After the concert Cage came up to the podium and said, “What was that supposed to mean?” And I said, “I didn’t know what was going to happen, because we had no rehearsals.” And he turned to me and said, “But you’re the leader of the ensemble!” And I realized—not immediately, it took me a while—that actually he was right. That if I sign myself as the music director of the S.E.M. Ensemble, then I’ve [sic] responsible for what the ensemble does there. I can’t excuse myself on the grounds that the composer has some stupid directions that we should or shouldn’t rehearse, and ideas on what we should or shouldn’t do.²³⁵

Despite this incident, Kotík remained close to Cage and enjoyed a level of collaboration that would not have been possible had he remained in Czechoslovakia.

²³³ Petr Kotík and Walter Zimmerman, “On Performing Feldman’s ‘For Philip Guston’: A Conversation by Petr Kotík and Walter Zimmerman,” last accessed July 25, 2015. <http://www.cnvill.net/mfkotik.htm>

²³⁴ Ryan Dohoney, “John Cage, Julius Eastman, and the Homosexual Ego,” in *Tomorrow is the Question: New Directions in Experimental Music Studies*, edited by Benjamin Piekut, 39–62 (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2014), 39. Composer, pianist, and singer Julius Eastman was a man, according to Dohoney, in whom “musical experimentalism and experimental forms of gay life...converged.” He was a member of the CCPA and the S.E.M. Ensemble. His life ended tragically as he became addicted to drugs, eventually ended up on the streets, and died without public notice.

²³⁵ Havelková, 11.

When Cage died in 1992, Kotík arranged a tribute concert of *Atlas Eclipticalis* (the piece that had been his first experience of Cage in Vienna), with Tudor at the piano.²³⁶



Figure 21: Petr Kotík and John Cage, 1992.²³⁷

As far as Cage’s influence on Kotík’s compositional style, Kotík is careful to distinguish between *influence* and *imitation*. He does not imitate Cage; for example, he eschews the idea of a conductorless orchestra. On the other hand, he was profoundly influenced by Cage in the sense that Cage gave *confirmation* to what Kotík was already doing. Kotík says,

To do independent work and concern yourself with ideas that no one has had before isn’t just hard, but involves a whole scale of insecurities and confusions ... but when you discover that someone else is taking the same direction, it’s a kind

²³⁶ S.E.M. Ensemble, “Petr Kotík.”

²³⁷ “Beyond Cage: Petr Kotík, Ursula Oppens, & Christian Wolff,” Clocktower Radio, last accessed October 7, 2014, <http://clocktower.org/show/beyond-cage>.

of confirmation of the rightness of your own work, and that can have an incredible influence on a person.²³⁸

Had Kotík stayed in Czechoslovakia, it is doubtful he would have received that kind of confirmation.

Besides working closely with Cage, Kotík also worked with Feldman, although the fiasco at the June in Buffalo festival caused a rift in their relationship. Kotík says, “Up to this performance, Feldman and I were very close and often collaborated, but after June 1975, we rarely spoke.”²³⁹ Kotík had in fact been playing Feldman’s music since the foundation of QUaX in the 1960s. He began corresponding with Feldman in 1966, and the two met in 1969 after Kotík had settled in New York. In 1971, Feldman came to SUNY Buffalo as a professor of composition, and the two saw each other often. Feldman’s 1973 piece *Instruments* (later *Instruments I*) was commissioned by Kotík for the S.E.M. Ensemble.²⁴⁰ In the summer of 1987, Kotík sought to heal the rift by commissioning another piece from Feldman. He called up Cage to get Feldman’s phone number, and learned that Feldman was very sick and would be unlikely to be able to fulfill the commission. Nevertheless, Kotík called Feldman. “When I called Feldman, he was rather surprised to hear my voice. The short talk we had sounded as if there has never been any problem between us, his voice had an almost an upbeat tone.”²⁴¹ A few months

²³⁸ Havelková, 11.

²³⁹ Kotík and Zimmermann, “On Performing Feldman’s ‘For Philip Guston’: A Conversation by Petr Kotík and Walter Zimmerman,” last accessed July 25, 2015, <http://www.cnvill.net/mfkotik.htm>.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

later, Feldman died of pancreatic cancer, the commission unfulfilled. The S.E.M. Ensemble had planned to premiere the Feldman piece in February 1988 at the Paula Cooper Gallery in New York City, so instead they chose a piece from Feldman's late works, *For Philip Guston*, for flute, percussion, and piano.²⁴² Kotík and the S.E.M. Ensemble performed the piece again in 1995, and upon the suggestion of Paula Cooper, recorded it.²⁴³

Other composers Kotík has worked with include Pauline Oliveros, Earle Brown, and Christian Wolff—the S.E.M. Ensemble has premiered almost all of Wolff's compositions.²⁴⁴ Perhaps less well known as a composer, Marcel Duchamp also fascinated Kotík. He spent the year of 1974 researching and performing his compositions. Duchamp's musical output is small—during the years from 1912–1915, he experimented with composition and created three works. The first, *Erratum Musical*, is for three voices, the second, *La mariée mise à nu par ses célibataires* [The Bride Stripped Bare], is for a mechanical instrument with only a description of the compositional process. The third, *Musical Sculpture*, is simply a note suggesting a “happening.”²⁴⁵ In 1976, Kotík and the S.E.M. Ensemble produced an LP recording of these three works for the Multipla label,

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ S.E.M. Ensemble, “Petr Kotík.”

²⁴⁵ “The Music of Marcel Duchamp,” Dada-companion.com, last accessed September 26, 2015, <http://www.dada-companion.com/duchamp/music.php>.

Milan, and in 1987 a new CD edition was recorded for the Renee Block Edition, Berlin.²⁴⁶

Kotík's important American (or non-Czech) influences were not limited to composers, however. For example, since the S.E.M. Ensemble was a fluid group with members playing a variety of instruments, Kotík was able to consider new compositional possibilities. Because of Kotík's prior affiliation with SUNY Buffalo and his proximity to Juilliard, he has been able to work with many highly skilled musicians. In 1971, Kotík first began composing for voice because Eastman joined the ensemble.²⁴⁷ Unlike other composers of the time, such as Philip Glass and Steve Reich—not to mention Cage, Kotík was not interested in composing for the voice without a text. While browsing through a bookstore in Albany, New York, he happened upon a book of lectures by Gertrude Stein, and realized that he had found the text he had been seeking.²⁴⁸ The resulting composition was *There is Singularly Nothing* (1971–3), which used excerpts from Stein's lectures.

²⁴⁶ Kotík, "Petr Kotík: Biography/Chronology."

²⁴⁷ Bakla, 8.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.



Figure 22: Petr Kotík, *There is Singularly Nothing*, opening to No. 4.²⁴⁹

There is Singularly Nothing is a series of twenty-two solos for unspecified instruments (nos. 1–3, 10–18) and voice (nos. 4–9, 19–22) that could be transposed and combined into ensembles ad libitum.²⁵⁰ Stein, who “rejected the linear, time-oriented writing characteristic of the nineteenth century for a spatial, process-oriented, specifically twentieth-century literature,” provided an ideal inspiration for the indeterminate structure of Kotík’s compositions.²⁵¹

III. Music about Music

Part of the reason Kotík is attracted to Stein’s texts, which attempt to “reduce language to abstraction and still use it in a way that had meaning to anyone beyond

²⁴⁹ Petr Kotík, *There is Singularly Nothing* (New York: Srajer Publishers, 1973, additional parts 1995), No. 4, 3.

²⁵⁰ Petr Kotík, “Petr Kotík: List of Selected Compositions,” unpublished manuscript, last modified July 13 2015, Microsoft Word file, Petr Kotík’s private archive. Nos. 19–22 were added to the original composition in 1995.

²⁵¹ “Gertrude Stein,” Poetryfoundation.org, last accessed September 26, 2015, <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/gertrude-stein#poet>.

herself,” is his own philosophy of music.²⁵² Unlike Kopelent, who responded to pressures from the regime by trying to imbue his music with irony and symbolism (“intarsis”), Kotík does not believe that mere pitches and rhythms can have semantic value. Because of this, he chose texts such as Stein’s that aimed at ambiguity, and did not call for particular pitches or rhythms to emphasize the words’ particular meaning. In other words, even when Kotík uses texts, he chooses texts that do not lend themselves to the temptation of tone painting. In Czechoslovakia, this non-hermeneutic approach to text setting probably would have been excoriated as “academic experiments and unemotional constructions” (just the sort of composition the artist Milan Bächorek, for instance, avoided).²⁵³ Kotík is even more adamant about the non-narrative quality of his instrumental works. Although he does not entirely try to minimize his “ego” in his music as Cage did, the music is not *about* him, his feelings, or his circumstances. A true masterpiece, says Kotík (again drawing on ideas from Stein), is not about its creator but about its subject.²⁵⁴

In terms of sound production, Kotík says he does not differentiate between “standard” and “extended” techniques, but does tend toward conventional technique because of his desire to simplify.²⁵⁵ His simplification of style coincided somewhat with his immigration to America, but it wasn’t because of it. If anything, it is the other way

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ “Milan Bächorek,” last accessed September 9, 2015, <http://www.musicbase.cz/composers/15-bachorek-milan/>.

²⁵⁴ Petr Kotík, in discussion with the author, July 11, 2015.

²⁵⁵ Bakla, 5.

around: European music of the 1960s and 1970s tended toward increasing complexity, whereas Kotík looked to composers such as Cage, Feldman, and La Monte Young.²⁵⁶

One area in which these composers influenced Kotík was the idea of using chance as a compositional element, especially through the use of found graphs. For example, while he was teaching at SUNY Buffalo in 1971, he came across a box of discarded graphs from a lab rat experiment comparing alcohol consumption to reaction time and decided to use this material in his compositional process. He asked for the box, took it home, and used the graphs to create melodies. These provided inspiration for the melodic contour of *There is Singularly Nothing. Many Many Women*, a six-hour work for choir and orchestra on a text by Stein was also based on these “drunken rat graphs.”²⁵⁷

In some ways, *Many Many Women* is exemplary of Kotík’s work during the sixties and seventies; in other ways, it is unique. Like *There is Singularly Nothing*, it is a setting of a Stein text. Unlike *There Is Singularly Nothing*, *Many Many Women* is a setting of a novella rather than a lecture, and Kotík set the entire work rather than selections. Kotík also usually composes pieces out of order, as ideas come to him, but for *Many Many Women*, he began at the beginning and composed straight through to the end. Whereas *There is Singularly Nothing* was merely inspired by the graphs, *Many Many Women* was really a sonification of scientific data, similar to Cage’s sonification of a star map in *Atlas Eclipticalis*. Kotík took the discarded graphs, picked a point to represent

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ Kyle Gann, “Drunk Rat Melodies,” *The Village Voice* 43, no. 23 (1998): 140.

middle C, and translated each point on the graphs into a note on the staff.²⁵⁸ Usually, when Kotík employs visual materials, he does not just take the results and write them down. Instead, his compositional process involves the interaction between chance and intuitive editing, which involves taste-based alterations of the pitches. For *Many Many Women*, however, he followed the graphs exactly.²⁵⁹ After transcribing as much of the scientific graphs as he needed to set the novella, Kotík harmonized the resulting undulating melody in perfect fifths.²⁶⁰

²⁵⁸ Kotík, in discussion with the author, July 13, 2015. He still has the graphs, and brought them out to show me exactly how he created *Many Many Women*.

²⁵⁹ Kotík describes his usual compositional process as a game: “Chance operations I use have a direction and are partially controlled. I then take the result and proceed to work on my own. The way I compose could be called a game. It’s a kind of dialogue between the results of my method and my reaction to it, intuitively correcting, editing and introducing other elements in a quasi-improvised way. This result can be further processed by the method, which can set off a chain of more intuitive interventions. It’s like moving a piece on the chessboard—a predictable move leads to an unpredictable reaction, which requires further action, etc.” See Bakla, 14.

²⁶⁰ The score is handwritten in pen, because he knew he would not be making any changes to the notes.

Petr Kotik *Many Many Women* 1-4
Gertrude Stein text
Section 1

1 A-ny one is one hav-ing been that one. A-ny one is such
a one. A-ny one hav-ing been that one is
one re-mem-be-ring Some-thing of such a thing, is one re-mem-be-ring
hav-ing been that one. Each one hav-ing been
one is being one hav-ing been that one. Each one hav-ing
been one is re-mem-be-ring some-thing of this thing, is re-mem-be-ring
some-thing of hav-ing been that one. Each one is one.
Each one has been one. Each one being one, each one hav-ing
been one is re-mem-be-ring some-thing of that thing. Each one
is one. Each one has been one. Each one is re-
mem-be-ring that thing. Each one is one.
Each one has been one. That is some-thing that a-ny one

DARCHMENT

Figure 23: Petr Kotik, *Many Many Women*, page 1.²⁶¹

²⁶¹ Petr Kotik, *Many Many Women* (New York: Srajer Publishers, 1978), 1.

Because of the parallel motion, reviewers such as Kyle Gann of the *Village Voice* and Bernard Holland of the *New York Times* have described Kotík’s style from this period as “Gregorian chant in random keys” and “straight from the 14th century.”²⁶² Kotík says his music has nothing to do with medieval organum, however, and is not meant to evoke the past. Rather, he says he became fascinated with the sound of the octave as he sang along at rehearsals to help the singers keep their pitches, and from there he began to also explore the sound of fourths and fifths.²⁶³ The similarity can be seen as convergent evolution: both Kotík and many fourteenth century composers followed a similar path of interest in different intervals under vastly different circumstances.

Many Many Women is scored for voices, flutes, trumpets, and trombones. As a flautist, Kotík is drawn toward using flutes in his composition, as well as other wind instruments. The piece could be realized with other instruments, strings, for example, but if that were the case the strings would have to play with wind-like phrasing.²⁶⁴

Like most of Kotík’s pieces from the sixties and seventies, *Many Many Women* does not have a general score. Instead, the piece is divided into 173 sections, which have specified instruments. The entire text of the novella is set across these sections, but for the instrumental sections, the text is “silent.” The instructions for playing are as follows:

²⁶² Gann, 140; Bernard Holland, “Now, Now, Just Swallow the Medicine,” *New York Times*, May 17, 1997, 13.

²⁶³ Petr Kotík, in discussion with the author, July 11, 2015.

²⁶⁴ Kotík, July 13, 2015.

performance instructions

The form of this composition is open -

- a) it has no distinct beginning or ending
- b) it does not have a set duration - any number of sections can be performed
- c) although each pair performs their selected sections in order (from lower to higher section numbers), there is no set order for entrances and therefore, each performance proceeds differently: densities, overlapping, solos and silences appear unpredictably.

There are 173 sections. There is no general score, the composition is horizontal, sections following from number 1 through 173.

Performers are grouped in pairs: up to 3 pairs of singers, and 3 pairs of instruments.

Minimum of four musicians must perform: one pair of singers and one pair of instruments.

The 173 sections are divided among musicians, each pair should have more or less the same amount of material. The pitches could be performed as written, or in any transposition. A transposition must be applied to the entire section, not just to a part of it.

To prepare a performance, each pair must practice separately and work out all the details in advance of tutti rehearsals.

Figure 24: Petr Kotík, *Many Many Women*, performance instructions.²⁶⁵

The different parts are then unified together by a pulse. A complete performance of all the parts lasts about six hours, but shorter performances are possible.

Music of extended duration was another idea Kotík had had in Czechoslovakia but did not receive encouragement for until moving to America. In the United States, Feldman, and minimalist composers such as La Monte Young, Terry Riley, and Philip Glass all composed works of extended length. Kotík says,

The biggest complaint I always heard was that my music was too long and my colleagues expected me to correct that with the next piece, which they expected to be shorter. But my next piece was always longer and very soon a lot of people lost patience with me and got very annoyed.²⁶⁶

²⁶⁵ Petr Kotík, “*Many Many Women* Performance Instructions” (unpublished manuscript, last modified July 13, 2015), Microsoft Word file. Petr Kotík’s private archive.

²⁶⁶ Petr Dorůžka, “Between the New and the Old World: A Talk with Petr Kotík in Prague,” *Musicworks* 50 (1991): 31.

Indeed, one of the complaints about his *Music for Three* performance in Warsaw in 1964 was that it was too long—it lasted thirteen minutes.²⁶⁷ Kotík says that the length of his pieces might be related to their minimalism, which he defines as “music done with restricted material.” The more restricted the material, he says, the longer the work.²⁶⁸ Perhaps the most extreme example of this was Young and Marian Zazeela’s Dream House installations, which involved light displays accompanied by drone music of extended duration.

Many Many Women, with its modernist elements and lack of popular or folk influences, would not have been officially published or officially performed back in Communist Czechoslovakia, where there was little civil society. In Czechoslovakia, every public performance was either State sponsored or underground. Thus, every performance was in some sense “political”—either consenting or dissenting. In America, however, Kotík was able to self-publish and perform his music in privately owned public venues without condoning or condemning the United States’ government.

IV. Ordinary People (Or, the Politics of Apolitical Music)

Meanwhile, back in Czechoslovakia, QUaX had dissolved after one last performance in Cologne in 1970.²⁶⁹ Because of travel restrictions, Kotík himself was not

²⁶⁷ Miroslav Pudlák, “Interview with Petr Kotík,” *Czech Music* 5 (1997): 2.

²⁶⁸ Dorůžka, 31. Although Kotík does not like attaching terms to music, he concedes that the term “minimalism” might stand the test of time.

²⁶⁹ Kotík, October 18, 2014.

able to return to Czechoslovakia until 1977. His father lived in East Germany, and whenever he visited him he made a point of visiting Czechoslovakia for a day or two. For the people behind the Iron Curtain, he says, the most important thing was visits from the outside, so whenever he visited, he would make a point to bring music, recordings, and books.²⁷⁰ In 1979, he brought the S.E.M. Ensemble for an underground performance of *Many Many Women*. An underground performance meant no advertising and no ticket sales. If someone had decided the performance was dangerous, the participants could have been arrested, but Kotík says he never experienced that.²⁷¹ He returned to perform again in 1982, this time without the ensemble, invited by Karel Šrп and his Jazz Section (which had not yet been officially disbanded).²⁷²

In 1988, Kotík wanted to compose a piece with spoken text and decided on the letters written from prison by the playwright (and soon to be Czech president) Vaclav Havel. Despite its author, the choice of text was not meant to be subversive, dissident, or even political. Rather, Kotík chose the text much in the same way he chose *There is Singularly Nothing*: He was looking for a text with the right feel, and found it in Havel's letters to his wife. Prior to coming across Havel's texts, Kotík had been collecting clippings from newspapers, hoping to create a collage of unrelated texts with various moods. He found this ready-made in Havel's letters, which discuss topics ranging from

²⁷⁰ Kotík, October 11, 2014.

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² Ibid.

lists of supplies needed in prison to introspective pondering about his ability to write.²⁷³ Havel gave the texts themselves to Kotík in Prague during one of Kotík’s visits, and Kotík took them out of the country—he did not mention them to the authorities, and he was not searched.²⁷⁴

Letters to Olga, the resulting composition, was performed in excerpts at the Witten Festival in Germany (for which it had been commissioned), and again at the Paula Cooper Gallery in New York in 1989, but was not performed in Prague until January of 1990, after the Velvet Revolution had begun. As with Normalization, the Revolution was a process, so the concert was kept secret and touted as a lecture called “A Whistle from Brooklyn.”²⁷⁵ Unlike *Many Many Women*, *Letters to Olga* is not based on graphs. Rather, it is based on an idea Kotík had while watching fireflies in upstate New York: he wanted to sonically capture the pointillism and random movement of the bugs. From 1986–88, Kotík worked on a composition in this style entitled *Wilsie Bridge*, and the style seemed right for *Letters* as well.²⁷⁶

Scored for two flutes, two trumpets, two electric guitars, electric bass guitar and two narrators (five narrators in an earlier version), *Letters to Olga* almost sounds like jazz. The narrators begin simultaneously reading two different passages from Havel’s letters, and six minutes into the reading the ensemble joins. Unlike Kopelent, who

²⁷³ Kotík, May 1, 2015.

²⁷⁴ Kotík, October 11, 2014.

²⁷⁵ Kotík, “Petr Kotík: Biography/Chronology.”

²⁷⁶ Kotík, July 13, 2015.

chooses instruments for their symbolic or ironic value, Kotík doesn't believe that particular instruments have meaning any more than particular pitches or rhythms. Thus, in *Letters to Olga* he uses electric guitars for their sound qualities and not for their connotations.²⁷⁷ This accords with his philosophy that music is about music—not politics.

²⁷⁷ Kotík, July 13, 2015. He chuckled when I told him *Letters* sounded like jazz, but said the likeness was unintentional.

LETTERS TO OLGA

SECTION A (at 6'00")

The image displays a musical score for 'LETTERS TO OLGA SECTION A (at 6'00")'. The score is arranged in a transposed key of C. It features five staves: Flute 1/2, Trumpet in Bb 1/2, Guitar 1, Guitar 2, and Bass Guitar. The music is written in 4/4 time. The first system (measures 1-4) shows the Flute and Trumpet playing a melodic line, while the guitars provide harmonic support. The second system (measures 5-8) continues the melodic development. The third system (measures 9-12) features a more complex harmonic texture with sustained chords in the guitars and bass. A dashed line is present between the Flute/Trumpet and Guitar 1 staves in the first two systems, and between the Guitar 1 and Guitar 2 staves in the second system.

Figure 25: Petr Kotik, *Letters to Olga*, page 1.²⁷⁸

²⁷⁸ Petr Kotik, *Letters to Olga* (New York: Srajer Publishers, 1991), 1.

Whether or not music can truly be apolitical was a question that troubled ideologues on both sides of the Iron Curtain since the publication of the Prague Manifesto in 1948. In Soviet-controlled countries such as Czechoslovakia, where the State was legally the sole patron of the arts, all new music or music performances were either state sponsored or “underground.” Thus, though Kotík was not trying to make a political statement through his underground concerts in Czechoslovakia or his choice of Havel’s text, he still aligned himself with the dissidents against the government, had lines been drawn—that is, if one of his concerts *had* been raided, saying “My music is apolitical” wouldn’t have prevented his arrest.

In the United States, the case was less clear-cut. From 1950–1967, the Central Intelligence Agency had covertly run an organization called the Congress for Cultural Freedom, funding and promoting many supposedly “apolitical” artists in Europe, including Stravinsky.²⁷⁹ The very fact that music could be composed that was not for propaganda purposes became propaganda. This angered Pierre Boulez, who accused Nicholas Nabokov, the organizer of the music festivals in Europe funded by the United States government during the fifties, of “manipulating young composers by offering large prizes ... It would be more honest, he said, to give them hand-outs, rather than go through with the charade.”²⁸⁰ Even when government sponsorship wasn’t directly

²⁷⁹ The CIA’s involvement is chronicled in Frances Stonor Saunders’ book *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters* (New York: The New Press, 2000). Mark Carrol’s book *Music and Ideology in Cold War Europe* specifically details the music festival *L’Oeuvre du XXe siècle* in 1950.

²⁸⁰ Stonor Saunders, 224.

involved, some wanted to extend the definition of “politics” “beyond the specific actions of governments and the impact of these actions on individuals and institutions to include the reverse: how individuals influence each other and, by extension, institutions and governments.”²⁸¹ In addition, especially during the fifties, much of the vocabulary used in musical discourse echoed political terminology—words like “freedom” and “autonomy” were used as battle cries both by avant-garde musicians and politicians. Modernist music was said to be free *from* tradition and stifling conventions and free *to* experiment, explore, and even develop secret languages (such as Kopelent’s “intarsis”). In integral serialism, each musical element (pitch, rhythm, timbre, etc.) was said to have gained “autonomy.” These qualities, because of their political and anti-Soviet connotations were judged to be *a priori* good.²⁸²

Nevertheless, by the 1970s, the CIA’s extensive cultural campaign in Europe had tapered off, and political and artistic rhetoric became less attached.²⁸³ This allowed for less politically charged modernist music, and I believe that in this sense Kotík sees himself as a composer of apolitical music. He does not use the rhetoric of “freedom” or “autonomy” in his description of his compositions, but prefers to describe them as “intuitive.” Perhaps this is what Czech musicologist Victor Pantůček meant when he said,

²⁸¹ Anne C. Shreffler, “Ideologies of Serialism: Stravinsky’s Threni and the Congress for Cultural Freedom,” in *Music and the Aesthetics of Modernity*, edited by Karol Berger and Anthony Newcomb (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 219. This broad definition of politics is influenced by Critical Realism, a philosophical paradigm that sees reality as shaped by a series of power struggles, privilege, and oppression. In this view, art is to be judged less by the creator’s intent and more by its reception and use.

²⁸² *Ibid.*, 221.

²⁸³ Perhaps the cultural campaign diminished because the scientific competition between the two superpowers increased.

“The authenticity of the art work is the most characteristic element of [Kotík’s] music.”²⁸⁴ Kotík’s music is composed according to his own tastes and conscience rather than to comply with external regulation or expectation. As Jonathan Bolton says, Kotík “reconciles ... [his] private convictions and ... public behavior.”²⁸⁵

In 1976, Kotík received a National Endowment for the Arts grant to compose *Many Many Women*, but for the most part Kotík promotes and publishes his own music (under the label Srajer Publishers) and raises funds for the S.E.M. Ensemble himself.²⁸⁶ In addition, Kotík’s travels to Czechoslovakia and East Germany were self-motivated rather than government sponsored. In a way, Kotík seems to be the classic “Ordinary Person” referenced by Jonathan Bolton: he merely wants to create and perform his music without restrictive external regulations.

²⁸⁴ Pantůček, 22.

²⁸⁵ Jonathan Bolton, *Worlds of Dissent: Charter 77, the Plastic People of the Universe, and Czech Culture under Communism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 2.

²⁸⁶ Kotík, “Petr Kotík: Biography/Chronology.”

CHAPTER 6: EPILOGUE

I. Kopelent and Kotík: Comparing Situations

At the very beginning of this thesis, I quoted Milan Kundera, the Czech author who immigrated to France in 1975, and I want to return to his words as I conclude. As he develops the question of small nationhood, he writes,

Secluded behind their inaccessible languages, the small European nations (their life, their history, their culture) are very ill known; people think, naturally enough, that this is the principal handicap to international recognition of their art. But it is the reverse: what handicaps their art is that everything and everyone (critics, historians, compatriots as well as foreigners) hooks the art onto the great national family portrait photo and will not let it get away.²⁸⁷

Both Kotík and Kopelent allude to this problem. Talking of the inbred nature of the Czech musical scene, Kotík asked, “Can you imagine the New York or Berlin Philharmonic with only Americans or only Germans?” Kopelent described the public disinterest in art music a “very Czech situation.”²⁸⁸ During Normalization, Czech composers suffered from a dual limitation: not only were they only permitted to work for one repressive patron, the State, they were also constantly being fitted into the narrative of specifically *Czech* music, which was still oriented around the works of Smetana. When Kotík immigrated to America, a whole new world opened up before him. In the United States he wasn’t a *Czech* composer; he was simply a composer. Kopelent, by choosing to remain in Czechoslovakia, also chose to remain a *Czech* composer, and as a Czech

²⁸⁷ Milan Kundera, *Testaments Betrayed*, translated by Linda Asher (New York: Harper Collins, 1995), 193.

²⁸⁸ Kotík, July 7, 2015; Tereza Havelková, “Marek Kopelent – Portrait,” *Czech Music* 6 (2000): 4.

composer under Normalization was further forced into the category of *inferior* (i.e. not Party supported) Czech composer.

Another problem that Kopelent faced in a small Communist country and that Kotík could avoid in the much larger United States was the lack of artistic community. Czechoslovakia officially didn't have a civil society—self-organized institutions that were unconnected to the government—but unofficially there were many “underground” groups and loose associations. In *Worlds of Dissent*, Jonathan Bolton talks about the underground community that grew up around the musicians of the Plastic People of the Universe and other rock music groups; as an “art” musician, Kopelent went underground in a different way. He neither belonged to the official sphere nor to the underground community. Although he was not the only composer using avant-garde or experimental techniques in his compositions, those composers did not band together into a community in the way the younger rock musicians did. Even the members of the Agon Orchestra, that occasional collaboration, saw Kopelent as more of an inspiration than a member.

Kotík, on the other hand, found a community of experimental artists in New York City. Although his composition style often differed from that of Cage or Feldman, he was still a member of the community. In addition, he was able to join the wider community of visual artists, and the S.E.M. Ensemble gave many of their concerts in visual art galleries (such as the Paula Cooper Gallery) before obtaining their own facilities in 1992. When Kotík returned to Czechoslovakia, he connected with existing artistic communities, as when he joined the Jazz Section in 1982.

Kopelent responded to his circumstances by composing music that was intentionally dissenting—if private—by means of irony and symbolism. Kotík, who had

no need to keep his music private, also had no need to imbue it with symbolism. Kotík's acts of dissent occurred when he left Czechoslovakia and when he returned for underground concerts.

II. History's Judgment

Despite all the setbacks faced by Kopelent (and Kotík) in Communist Czechoslovakia, in a way, they have come out on the "right side" of history: While Smetana-imitators were supposedly producing hundreds of State-sanctioned compositions in Czechoslovakia during the fifties and then again during the seventies and eighties, they are now unknown. It is composers like Kopelent and Kotík, as well as other experimental and avant-garde composers who are now being interviewed and promoted by journals such as *Czech Music*.²⁸⁹ In addition, both Kopelent and Kotík now exert an educational influence on young musicians in the Czech Republic: Kopelent teaches composition classes at HAMU and in the town of Český Krumlov, while Kotík founded the Ostrava Center for New Music in 1999 and continues to organize the biannual Ostrava Days summer institute and festival in eastern Czech Republic, modeled on the International Summer Courses for New Music in Darmstadt, Germany launched after WWII.²⁹⁰

²⁸⁹ Other composers who have stood the test of time in the Czech Republic but whose international reputations suffered include Zbyněk Vostřák, Luboš Fišer, Petr Eben, Miloslav Kabeláč and Jan Rychlík.

²⁹⁰ "Ostrava Center for New Music, last accessed October 17, 2015, <http://www.newmusicostrava.cz/en/>; S.E.M. Ensemble, "Petr Kotík," last edited September 3, 2014, <http://www.semensemble.org/about/petr-kotik/>.

Nevertheless, I believe both Kopelent and Kotík deserve more attention and recognition than they have received to date—they should not be painted in a forgotten corner of the oft-forgotten Czech national family portrait, and their significance should be more than mere notes from the Czech musical underground. Instead, they should belong to the international community of artists and their music should belong to the standard repertoire of the late twentieth century.

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APPENDIX A

MAREK KOPELANT—SELECTED WORKS FROM 1954–1989

Title	Instruments	Date	Publisher	Premiere	Recording	Time
<i>Satanela</i>	Orchestra (Specific instrumentation unknown)	1954–55	AMU	Unknown	N/A	22'
Overture	2 Fl (1 Picc), 2 Ob, 2 Cl, 2 Bn, 2 Tpt, 4 Hn, 3 Trb, 1 Tba, 12 Vn I, 10 Vn II, 8 Va, 6 Vc, 4 Cb	1954–55	N/A	Unknown	N/A	
<i>Písňe Rozhořčené</i> [Angry Songs]	Bar, Pf	1956	Czech Music Fund	Unknown	N/A	9'
<i>Tři věty pro smyčce</i> [Three Pieces for Strings]	7 Vn I, 6 Vn II, 5 Va, 4 Vc, 4 Cb	1958	N/A	Unknown	N/A	
<i>Chléb a ptáci</i> [Bread and birds]	Alt, Nar, Ch, 2 Fl, 2 Ob, Cl, Bcl, 2 Bn, 4 Tpt, 3 Tbn, 10 Vn, 5 Cb, Timp, Vib, Cel, Pf,	1957–62	Czech Music Fund	Prague, Czechoslovakia, Date unknown	N/A	20'
<i>4 Písňe na Verše Vítězslava Nezvala</i> [Four Songs on Verses by Vítězslava Nezval]	Cch, Pf	1960	N/A	Unknown	N/A	7'
<i>Miniaturní Písňe</i> [Miniature Songs]	Bar, Pf	1960–61	N/A	Unknown	N/A	6'
<i>Nénie s flétnou</i> [Monotonous Tune with Flute]	Fl, 9 female voices, Chamber Orchestra	1960–61	Panton 1967	Unknown	LP: New Czech Compositions, Supraphon, 1965; CD: Musica Nova Bohemica, Supraphon, 2013	5'
<i>Reflexe</i> [Reflections]	Fl, Vn, Vla, Vc	1961–62	N/A	Prague, Czechoslovakia, Date unknown	N/A	

<i>Canto Intimo</i>	Fl, Vib	1963	Edition Modern München	Unknown	LP: Selection of Works by Marek Kopelent, Supraphon, 1968	4'
					CD: Percussion Plus, Rotag, 1995	
<i>Třetí smyčcový kvartet</i> [Third String Quartet]	Vn I and II, Vla, Vc	1963	Universal Edition 1966, Bärenreiter Editio Supraphon Praha 1996	Brno, Czechoslovakia, Date unknown	LP: Selection of Works by Marek Kopelent, Supraphon, 1968;	7'
					Modern String Quartets, Supraphon, 1967	
<i>Matka</i> [Mother]	Fl, Ch	1964	Panton, 1966	Unknown	LP: Selection of Works by Marek Kopelent, Supraphon,	11'
					CD: Moderne Chormusik, Deutsche Grammophon- gesellschaft, 1968	
<i>Hudba pro 5</i> [Music for Five]	Ob, Cl, Bn, Vla, Pf	1964	Musikverlage Hans Gerig 1972 (assigned to Breitkopf & Härtel)	Stockholm, Sweden, 1967	N/A	6'
<i>Pocta Vladimíru Holanovi</i> [A Tribute to Vladimír Holan]	Fl, Ob, Cl, Bn, Hn, Vn, Va, Vc, Cv	1965	N/A	Benátky, Czechoslovakia, Date unknown	N/A	13'

<i>Rozjímání</i> [Contemplation]	Fl (Picc), Ob, 2 Cl, Bn, Tpt, Hn, Tba, Timp, 2 Perc, 12 Vn, 6 Cb	1965–66	Musikverlage Hans Gerig (assigned to Breitkopf & Härtel), Supraphon 1967	Donaueschingen, Germany, 1966	LP: XII. Týden Nové Tvorby Pražských Skladatelů [Today's New Creations of Prague Composers], Supraphon, 1968	14'
<i>Cantus Supplex</i>	12 Vv	1966	Breitkopf & Härtel	Unknown	N/A	12'
<i>Pro Arnošta Wilda</i> [For Arnošt Wilde]	Pf	1966	Breitkopf & Härtel	Unknown	N/A	6'
<i>Snehah</i>	Sop, Alt (tape), Fl, Ob, Cl, Bn, Vn, Vla, Vc, Cb, Perc	1967	Supraphon, 1968	Unknown	LP: Na Nových Cestách [On New Roads], Supraphon, 1971	
<i>Praštěné Písničky</i> [Dotty Ditties]	Cch	1967	N/A	Unknown	N/A	5'
<i>Modlitba Kamene</i> [Prayer of the Stones]	Sop Solo, 3 Mix Ch, Gong, Tamtam	1967	Breitkopf & Härtel	Prague, Czechoslovakia, 1968	N/A	4'
<i>Hallelujah</i>	Org	1967	Breitkopf Härtel, Supraphon	Kassel, Germany, 1969	LP: Týden nové tvorby českých skladatelů 1970 [Today's New Creations of Czech Composers], Supraphon, 1970; CD: Orgelmusik quer durch das 20. Jahrhundert [Organ Music across the 20th Century], Müller & Schade, 1999	8'
<i>Bijou de Bohème</i>	Hpd	1967	Breitkopf & Härtel	Unknown	N/A	3'

<i>Čtvrtý smyčcový kvartet</i> [Fourth String Quartet]	Vn I and II, Vla, Vc	1967	Breitkopf & Härtel, Supraphon	Augsburg, Germany	CD: Mon Amour, Multisonic, 1997; Kopelent, Matys, Vostřák: String Quartets, Supraphon, 2014	8'
<i>Zátiší</i> [Still-Life]	Fl, Ob, Cl, Hn, Tpt, Tbn, Pf, Mar, Str	1968	Breitkopf & Härtel	Donaueschingen, 1968	CD: Zátiší [Still-Life], Praga, 1993 (recorded 1971);	
					Antologie České Hudby [Anthology of Czech Music], Divadelná Ústav, 2004	
<i>Sváry</i> [Quarrels]	Fl (Picc), Ob, Cl (Bcl), Bn, 2 Tpt, 2 Hn, 2 Trb, 1 Tba, 6 Vn, 3 Va, 3 Vc, 2 Cb	1968	Czech Music Fund	Prague, Czechoslovakia, Date unknown	N/A	12'
<i>Bludný Hlas</i> [Errant Voice]	Actress, Fl, Ob, Cl, Bsn, Hn, Perc, Vn, Vla, Vc, Cb, Tape, Light ad lib.	1969	Breitkopf & Härtel	Berlin, Germany, 1970	N/A	16'
<i>Žaloby</i> [Complaints]	Ch, tTpt, Timp (ad lib.)	1969	Breitkopf & Härtel	Hannover, Germany, 1971	N/A	14'
<i>Appassionato</i>	Pf Solo, Picc, 3 Ob, 2 Eh, 3 Eb Cl, 2 Bcl, Tsax, 2 Cbsn, 3 Hn, 3 Tpt, 3 Tbn, 2 Tba, 2 Perc, Hpd, Gtr, Vn, 2 Cb	1970–71	Breitkopf & Härtel	Bratislava, Czechoslovakia, 1971	N/A	22'
<i>Musique Picante</i>	Vn, Dulc (or Pf)	1971	Breitkopf & Härtel	N/A	N/A	8'

<i>Intimissimo</i>	Eh, Cl, Asax, Tpt, Tbn, Perc, Gtr, Prep Pf, 2 Vn, 2 Va, Vc, Cb, Tape (2 Speakers)	1971	Breitkopf & Härtel	Graz, Austria, 1971	LP: Musik Protocoll, ORF, 1971	18'
<i>Ballada</i>	Pf	1971	Breitkopf & Härtel	N/A	CD: Mon Amour, Multisonic, 1997	16'
<i>A Few Minutes with an Oboist</i>	Ob Solo, Tpt, 2 Perc, Hp, Egtr, Mand (Banjo), Prepared Pf, Vn, Cb	1972	Breitkopf & Härtel	Witten, Germany, 1974	CD: The 1960s Generation, Czech Music Information Center, 2008	14'
<i>Black and White Tears</i>	V	1972	Breitkopf & Härtel	Hamburg, Germany, 1975	CD: Marek Kopelent: Black and White Tears, Radioservis, 2012	10'
<i>Syllabes Mouvementées</i> [Syllables on the Move]	Ch (12 Vv)	1972	N/A	N/A	N/A	8'
<i>Žest'ový kvintet</i> [Brass Quintet]	5 Br	1972	Breitkopf & Härtel		CD: Mon Amour, Multisonic, 1997 (recorded 1980)	14'
<i>Sonáta - Veroničina rouška</i> [The Veil of Veronica]	3 Vn I, 3 Vn II, 3 Va, 2 Vc, 1 Cb	1972–73	Breitkopf & Härtel	Witten, Germany, Date unknown	N/A	14'
<i>Vacillat Pes Meus</i> [I Stumble]	Ch	1973	Breitkopf & Härtel	Nuremburg, Germany, 1973	N/A	11'
<i>Rondo– Před příchodem roztomilých katů aneb Troji klanění naději pro pět hráčů na bicí nástroje</i> [Rondo– Before the Arrival of the Charming Executioners or Three Bows to Hope]	5 Perc	1973	Breitkopf & Härtel	Witten, Germany, 1975	N/A	

<i>Ťukáta</i> [Patter]	Hp, Hpd, Dulc (or Egtr)	1974	Breitkopf & Härtel	Stuttgart, Germany, 1974	N/A	6'
<i>Hrátky</i> [Games]	aSax, Fl (A, Picc), 3 Ob, 4 Tpt, 3 Tbn, 3 Tba, Cel, Cimb, Pf, 2 Timp, Egtr, 4 Cb	1974–75	Breitkopf & Härtel	Baden-Baden, Germany, January 1, 1975	N/A	20'
<i>Svítání</i> [Daybreak]	Cch	1975	Czech Music Fund		CD: Concerto Piccolo, Supraphon, 1983	7'
<i>Laudatio Pacis</i> [The Praise of Peace] (with Paul-Heinz Dittrich and Sofia Gubaidulina)	Sop, Alt, Ten, Bass, Nar, Ch, Orchestra (Specific instrumentation unknown)	1975	N/A	N/A	N/A	40'
<i>Libá hudba s lidovým motive</i> [Likable Music with a Folk Motive]	Dulc, 2 Fl, 2 Ob, Eh, 2 Cl, 2 Bn, 1 Tpt, 2 Hn, 1 Tba, 2 Perc, Prepared Pf, 6 Vn, 4 Vla, 3 Vc, 2 Cb	1976	Breitkopf & Härtel	Hannover, Germany, 1979	N/A	14'
<i>Capriccio</i>	Tpt	1976	Breitkopf & Härtel	Location unknown, 1978; Czech premiere 2000	N/A	8'
<i>Triste e Consolante</i>	Wind Quintet (new or early instruments ad lib)	1977	Breitkopf & Härtel	Zagreb, Poland, 1977	N/A	15'
<i>Il canto de li Augei</i>	Sop Solo, 2 Fl (Picc), 2 Ob (Eh), 2 Cl, 2 Bsn, 1 Hn, 2 Tpt, 1 Tbn, 4 Perc, Hp, Str	1977–78	Musikverlage Hans Gerig 1979 (assigned to Breitkopf & Härtel)	Baden-Baden, Germany, 1980	LP, CD: Il canto de li Augei, Supraphon, 1988	16'
<i>Toccata</i>	Vla, Pf	1978	Breitkopf & Härtel	Belgium, date unknown; Czech premiere 1985	CD: Sonáta pro Violu a Klavír [Sonata for Viola and Piano], Artimus, 1998;	12'

					CD: Jan Peruska - Tempers of Contemporary Viola, Artes 2010	
<i>Jitřní chvalo zpěv</i> [Morning Eulogy]	Org	1978	Breitkopf & Härtel	Unknown	CD: Klaus Martin Ziegler und Mechtild Seitz, Kassel Evangelischer Medienverband, 1994;	8'
					Mon Amour, Multisonic, 1997 (recorded 1990)	
<i>Musica Lirica</i>	Fl, Vn, Pf	1978–79	N/A	Unknown	N/A	15'
<i>Musica</i> (A Story of Long, Long Ago That Angels Pass On From Age to Age)	Sop, 2 Actors, Fl, Ob, Hpd	1978–1979	Bärenreiter Verlag Kassel	Unknown	N/A	60'
<i>Furiant</i>	Pf, Vn, Vc	1979	N/A	N/A	N/A	6'
<i>Pátý smyčcový kvartet</i> [Fifth String Quartet]	Vn I, Vn II, Vla, Vc	1979–80	Breitkopf & Härtel	Unknown	CD: Zátíší [Still-Life], Praga, 1993 (recorded 1983)	16'
<i>Nářek Ženy</i> [Woman's Lament]	Actress, 7 Br, Fch (14 Vv), Cch	1980	Czech Music Fund	Unknown	CD: Marek Kopelent: Black and White Tears, Radioservis, 2012	15'
<i>Vrh Kostek</i> [The Casting of the Dice]	4 Nar, Tape	1980	N/A	N/A	N/A	18'
<i>Legenda, "De passione St. Adalberti Martyris"</i>	Nar, Ch, 2 Fl (A, Picc), 2 Ob, 2 Cl, 2 Bn, 2 Tpt, 2 Hn, 2 Tbn, 1 Tba, Sax, 7 Vn I, 6 Vn II, 5 Vla, 5 Vc, 4 Cb, Egtr	1981	Czech Music Fund	Warsaw, Poland, Date unknown; Czech premiere 1991	CD: Zátíší [Still-Life], Praga, 1993 (recorded 1981)	21'

<i>Agnus Dei</i>	Sop Solo, Fl (Picc), Cl, Tbn, 2 Perc, Pf (Harm), Vn, Vla, Vc	1981–83	Breitkopf & Härtel	Nuremberg, Germany, June 27, 1983	CD: Marek Kopelent: Black and White Tears, Radioservis, 2012	20'
<i>Píseň Kratochvilná</i> [Amusing Song]	Ch	1982	N/A	N/A	N/A	4'
<i>Symfonie</i> [Symphony for Orchestra]	3 Fl (3 Picc, Afl), 3 Ob, 3 Cl (Bcl), 3 Bn (Cbn), 4 Tpt, 3 Hn (Crt) 3 Tbn, 1 Tba (Euph or BarTba), 9 Perc, Hp, Pf, Cel, 24 Vn, 10 Vla, 8 Vc, 6 Cb	1982, new version 2000	Breitkopf & Härtel	Basel, Switzerland, 1983	N/A	33'
<i>Zjitřený Zpěv</i> [Excited Song]	Bar, 2 Tpt, 1 Hn, 2 Tbn	1982–83	Czech Music Fund; Bärenreiter	Unknown	CD: Česká Soudobá Hudba [Czech Contemporary Music], Vltava, 1999	10'
<i>Cantus Simplex</i>	Cch	1983	N/A	N/A	N/A	5'
Concertino	Eh Solo, 4 Fl (Picc, Afl), 3 Cl, Bcl, Tpt, 3 Tbn (or Hn, Tpt, 2 Tbn), Bells ad lib., 6 Vn, 2 Vla, 2 Vc, 1 Cb.	1984	Breitkopf & Härtel	Witten, Germany, 1985	CD: Zátíší [Still-Life], Praga, 1993 (recorded 1989)	15'
<i>Pozdravení</i> [Greetings]	3 Fl (Picc), 3 Ob (Eh), 3 Cl, 3 Bsn, 4 Hn, Tpt, Ptpt, Crt, 3 Tbn, Tba, 7 Perc, Hp, Org, 12 Vn I, 5 Vla, 4 Vc, 3 Cb	1984	Breitkopf & Härtel	Warsaw, September 28, 1986	N/A	10'
<i>Regina Lucis</i>	Ch	1985	Breitkopf & Härtel	Kassel, Germany, September 13, 1987	CD: Klaus Martin Ziegler und das Vocalensemble Kassel, Kassel Evangelischer Medienverband, 1994	12'

Courtesy of Michal Matzner, Breitkopf & Härtel, and www.musica.cz.

APPENDIX B

PETR KOTÍK— SELECTED WORKS FROM 1962–1989

Title	Instrumentation	Date	Publisher	Premiere	Recording	Time
<i>Congo</i>	2 Fl, Ob, 2 Cl, 2 Vn, Va, Vc, Cb	1962	Srajer Publishers	Prague, Czechoslovakia, January 18, 1963	N/A*	5'30''
<i>Kontrapunkt II</i>	Alt Fl, EH, Cl, Bsn, Va, Vc	1962–63	Srajer Publishers	Vienna, Austria, October 8, 1963	N/A	11'
<i>Hudba pro tři</i> [Music for 3]	Va, Vc, Cb	1964	Universal Editions	Warsaw, Poland, October 26, 1964	N/A	15'
In memoriam Jan Rychlík						
<i>Spontano</i>	Pf solo, Fl/Picc, Alt Fl, Cl, Basset Hrn, Bsn, Cbsn, Trb, 2 Tba	1964	Srajer Publishers	Buffalo, NY, May 22, 1973	N/A	18'50''
<i>Kontrabandt</i>	live electronic music 2 to 6 performers	1967	Srajer Publishers	Köln, Germany, April 28, 1967	N/A	20'– 60'
<i>Alley</i>	Free instrumentation	1969–70	Srajer Publishers	New York City, March 18, 1971	N/A	~15'
<i>There is Singularly Nothing</i>	Vv solos, Instruments; transposition ad lib.	1971–73, updated 1995	Srajer Publishers	Köln, Germany, January 29, 1972	LP: First Record, Cramps Records 1977	~20'– 2 hrs
<i>John Mary</i>	2 Vv, Instruments; 3 Melodic 1 Perc; transposition ad lib.	1973–74	Srajer Publishers	Witten, Germany, April 27, 1974	N/A	~30'– 2 hrs
<i>If I Told Him</i>	Indeterminate number of voices and instruments	1974–75	Srajer Publishers	Köln, Germany, January 18, 1975	N/A	~30'
<i>Many Many Women</i>	Up to 6 Vv, 6 Instruments (Minimum 2 ea.); transposition ad lib.	1975–78	Srajer Publishers	Buffalo, NY, April 21, 1979	LP: Many Many Women, Labor Records, 1981, Mode Records, 1988;	~30' – 6 hrs
					CD: Many Many Women, Dog With a Bone, 2000	
<i>Drums</i>	Perc ensemble; can be performed simultaneously with other pieces from 1970s	1977–81	Srajer Publishers	Buffalo, NY, January 12, 1980	N/A	indeterminate

<i>Explorations in the Geometry of Thinking</i>	V solo, Vv ensemble (minimum 5); can be combined with <i>Chamber Music</i> or <i>Drums</i>	1978–82	Srajer Publishers	New York City, March 25, 1982	CD: Petr Kotík's S.E.M. Ensemble, Ear-Rational (Berlin), 1989 (excerpt)	30' – 4 hrs
<i>Chamber Music</i>	Free instrumentation	1981–82	Srajer Publishers	New York City, April 10, 1981	N/A	~20'
<i>Commencement</i>	2 Vv; can be combined with other pieces from 1970s	1981	Srajer Publishers	Buffalo, NY, April 4, 1981	N/A	~2 hrs
<i>Apparent Orbit</i> (Earlier title <i>August/October</i>)	Vla or Afl and indeterminate ensemble	1981, later version 1984–85	Srajer Publishers	New York City, March 25, 1982	N/A	20'
<i>Solos and Incidental Harmonies</i>	Fl, Vn, 2 Perc, Br Ensemble	1983–85	Srajer Publishers	Hartford, CT, July 6, 1984	CD: Petr Kotík's S.E.M. Ensemble, Ear-Rational (Berlin), 1989	27'
<i>Integrated Solos I, II, III</i>	Fl (I); Fl, Tamb (II); Fl, Tamb, Tpt (III)	1986–88	Srajer Publishers	New York City, March 24, 1986	CD: Virtuosity with Purpose, Ear-Rational (Berlin), 1990	25'
<i>Wilsie Bridge</i>	2 Fl, 2 Tpt, 2 Kbd, 8 Perc	1986–88	Srajer Publishers	Düsseldorf, Germany, February 1, 1987	CD: Petr Kotík's S.E.M. Ensemble, Ear-Rational (Berlin), 1989	19'
<i>Letters to Olga</i>	5 Nar, 2 Fl, 2 Tpt, 2 Egtr, Ebgr (1 st version); 2 Nar, 2 Fl, 2 Tpt, 2 Egtr, Ebgr (2 nd version)	1989–91	Srajer Publishers	Excerpt (German): Witten, Germany, April 21, 1989;	N/A	50'
				1st Version (English): New York City, May 7, 1991;		
				2nd Version: Endhoven, Holland, May 22, 1992		

Courtesy of Petr Kotík.

*Many of Kotík's compositions have been recorded for his private archive but have not been released on a public label.

APPENDIX C
IRB EXEMPT STATUS



EXEMPTION GRANTED

Sabine Feisst
Music, School of
480/965-3114
Sabine.Feisst@asu.edu

Dear Sabine Feisst:

On 11/24/2014 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title:	Music in Czechoslovakia during the Cold War
Investigator:	Sabine Feisst
IRB ID:	STUDY00001705
Funding:	None
Grant Title:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consent Form Johnson, Category: Consent Form;• Sample Interview Questions, Category: IRB Protocol;• Consent Procedure Johnson, Category: IRB Protocol;• IRB Protocol Johnson, Category: IRB Protocol;

The IRB determined that the protocol is considered exempt pursuant to Federal Regulations 45CFR46 (2) Tests, surveys, interviews, or observation on 11/24/2014.

In conducting this protocol you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

Sincerely,

IRB Administrator