

edition project are utilisable not only at the level of musicology but also in practical performance terms, which has not been commonplace in the case of complete editions in general. The piano reduction was created in 2012 by the composer Otomar Kvěch, yet its final form was the result of revisions which, in accordance with the prepared score with critical comments, were carried out by Markéta Kratochvílová. The German libretto was thoroughly edited by Jarmila Gabrielová, who also refined its translation, as well as stage directions. The edition of *Alfred* is made up of introductory commentaries in Czech, English and German; the piano reduction itself, which forms the bulk of the publication; and the German libretto, together with a Czech translation, at the end of the volume. Jarmila Gabrielová refers to the English version of the text in the booklet to the CD capturing the opera's concert performance at the Dvořák Prague festival. The piano reduction is elaborated in truly dexterous and lucid terms. Moreover, Kvěch has maintained in the score notes pertaining to the orchestra instrumentation, which provide valuable and vital information for the performing singers. The notation itself is very well arranged and legible, with the one and only difficulty being the choice of a larger format of noteheads against the staff, thus resulting in their not being totally clear in places of a thicker typeface on ledger lines, since they rather blend with them upon a cursory glance. The collaboration between Czech Radio and the Department of Music History of the Institute of Ethnology has also positively manifested itself in the overall quality of the editing work. Whereas the sheet music published by Czech Radio often suffers from backlogs and errors, the edition of *Alfred* is an exemplary, attentively made publication. Coming across as rather mysterious is the missing imprint though. Now we can only hope that the piano reduction will be followed by a publication of the critical score of Dvořák's *Alfred*, which is of great significance for the performers (it would be fully sufficient to have the actual parts available for rental). Yet the edition alone is a momentous achievement, one that some 110 years after Dvořák's death has served to fill in the blank space in the operatic oeuvre of the globally most frequently performed Czech composer, thus erasing part of our debt towards his legacy. The rigorous execution of the edition indicates that we have good reason indeed to believe that the next volumes of the *NDE* will be approached in a similarly meticulous way.

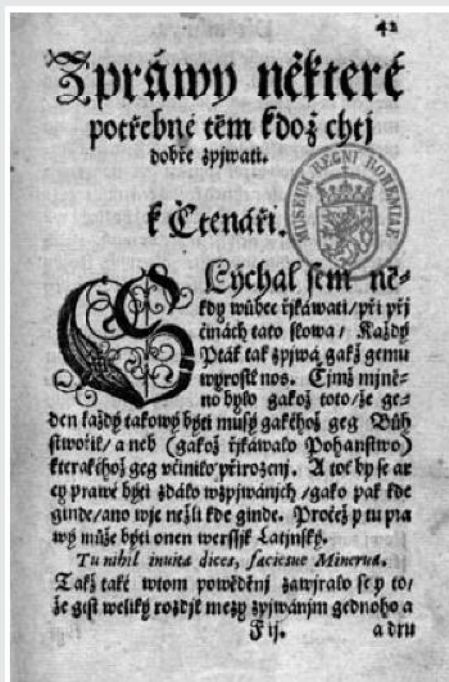
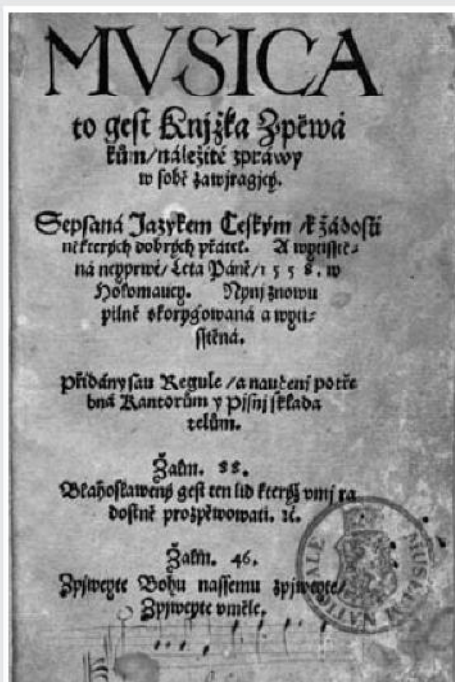
FACSIMILE EDITION OF THE FIRST CZECH THEORETICAL TREATISE ON MUSIC

Jan Blahoslav: *Musica*.

A Facsimile of the 1569 Edition (Ivančice: Jednota bratrská / Unity of the Brethren), according to a copy maintained at the library of the National Museum in Prague (mark 27 F 23). Prepared for publishing by Petr Daněk and Jiří K. Kroupa, KLP – Koniasch Latin Press, 2016, 99 folios + 56 pp, ISBN 978-80-87773-37-6

The 70th anniversary of the Prague Spring international music festival was commemorated by its organisers in the best possible way – in collaboration with the Association for Central European Cultural Studies and the National Museum in Prague, they embraced the initiative suggested by the distinguished Czech musicologist Petr Daněk and supported the facsimile edition of the first Czech compendium on the theory of music. The Prague Spring thus endorsed the deep roots of musical culture and made accessible a work that is yet to be afforded the position in musicology and general history of culture it so richly deserves.

Jan Blahoslav (1523–1571) was one of the major figures of 16th-century Czech culture. His life was connected with the Unity of the Brethren, a Bohemian religious denomination who linked up to the teachings of the Christian reformist Jan Hus. After completing his studies at the brotherhood's schools in Moravia, Jan Blahoslav went abroad so as further his education in Goldberg, Wittenberg and Basel, where he became acquainted with the ideas of humanism and the Reformation movement. A man of letters and a scholar, throughout his life he wrote texts in Czech with the aim to extend the knowledge of the Unity of the Brethren members. His legacy ranges from brief essays, discourses, religiously



educational and moralising articles and commentaries, to several significant works, and was rounded off with a translation of the New Testament into Czech (1564). Blahoslav also had a keen interest in music. Moreover, he edited two Czech hymn-books: the Šamotuly (1561) and the Ivančice (1564), in connection with the preparation of which he penned the very first theoretical treatise on music in Czech, titled *Musica*. The first edition, published in Olomouc in 1558, has not been preserved in its entirety. The second, completed and extended, edition dates from 1569 and was issued by the Unity of Brethren's printing office in Ivančice, and has been preserved in two copies (Prague, Wrocław). This year, the Prague copy was published as a facsimile, supplemented by a study in Czech and English.

When, half a century ago, in 1966, Josef Janáček issued his biography of Jan Blahoslav (1523–1571), he included among the extracts from his works the conclusion, in which the Czech humanist emphasises the necessity of rudimentary theoretical knowledge for spontaneous composition of songs and music in general. The short, yet characteristic, text revealed that Blahoslav did not only stress the importance of being musically proficient, he also bore in mind that music and its availability were of significance for a broad humanist education, a principle peculiar to the mature Unity of Brethren, which would be given an ingenious programme form by Blahoslav's successor Jan Ámos Komenský. In addition to the religious and ethical aspects, in his text Blahoslav accentuated the communicative function and psychological role of music and, in the wider sense, language itself. What is more, he wrote in an airy, effortless poetic style, which markedly differed from the then commonplace primitively versed texts in Latin.

Petr Daněk worked with a set of sources and literature ampler than that Janáček had at hand for his biography, with their analysis in the footnotes constituting approximately half of the text. Daněk's explication of Blahoslav's *Musica* is not extensive, yet it is very thorough in its condensed form. He defines Blahoslav as being "more a linguist and hymnographer than a theologian", and shows how he got to music through the endeavour to put across in the Unity of Brethren universal education on the basis



of the seven free arts. Daněk relates Blahoslav's active interest in music to his participation in the preparation of the Šamotulsky Hymn-Book (Songs in Praise of God, 1561), referring to the first edition of *Musica* (Olomouc, 1558) as being the earliest attempt at describing the contemporary system of musicology in Czech. Similar was the case of Blahoslav's *Gramatika česká* (Czech Grammar), which he put together when working on the Czech translation of the New Testament. Daněk brands *Musica* as a predecessor to a major hymn-book, intended for practical needs. Although admitting that Blahoslav drew upon the Latin treatises written by the leading scholars of the time, Daněk points out that the work is truly exceptional on a European scale, as it was published in a minor language, not in Latin or German, the latter of which had asserted itself. In effect, Blahoslav inspired another author, concealed under the cryptonym Jan Josquin, to write a similar work (1561), to which he himself soon responded by embarking on the second edition of his *Musica* (Ivančice, 1569), an extended and improved publication, making use of and generalising the experience from the preparation of the Ivančice Hymn-Book (Sacred Evangelistic Songs, 1564).

Petr Daněk has appositely analysed and assessed the oldest music-theory textbook in Czech preserved in its entirety. He gives a detailed formal description of the two editions and, based on adroit juxtaposition of their contents, compares their thematic and linguistic levels. He evaluates Blahoslav's entire hymnological and hymnographic work, and, referring to the research carried out by the musicologist Otakar Hostinský, highlights the fact that Blahoslav was "most likely the first in history to have used the notation to record the intonation, the pronunciation of human speech". Furthermore, he focuses on the sources of Blahoslav's inspiration and his relationship to the Latin terminology of the time. Daněk also specifies the social outreach of Blahoslav's music, which amid the denominationally divided society, was primarily intended for the members of the Unity of the Brethren itself.

The Blahoslav text appears only in Czech, yet the accompanying study has been translated into English, owing to which his writings have now become available to foreign historians and musicologists too. The elegant book, whose design is reminiscent of the 16th-century original, may thus play a relevant role in incorporating the overlooked aspects of Czech humanism into the wider European cultural tradition.