

Twenty-seventh FORFEST 2016

XXVIIth Festival FORFEST in CZECH REPUBLIC is an International Festival of Contemporary Arts with the spiritual orientation. This year FORFEST was held again in four cities: Kroměříž, Olomouc, Prague, Bratislava, however, all major events were placed within eleven days in Kroměříž (17.6 - 28.6 2016).

At the festival 2016 numerous leading Czech and foreign institutions participated, as well as the art associations, composers, and artists from twelve European countries, overseas, Africa, and Asia (Germany, France, Macedonia, Italy, Serbia, Croatia, Austria, Slovak Republic, Czech Republic, USA, South Korea, and Uganda). This year, the festival won again the personal patronage of the Minister of Culture Mr. Mgr. Daniel Herman and other institutions (Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports of the Czech Commission for UNESCO, Archbishopric Olomouc, Mgr. J. Němec the Mayor of Kroměříž). Program of the Festival contained 27 main events including 20 concerts, 3 listener's concerts, three exhibitions, and the weekly Composer's Master Classes for young composers with the international participation.

In previous years, the concerts of the festivals brought mainly the world and Czech premieres of the works from the last two decades of the 20th and 21st centuries. This year we heard the premieres of the authors from Moravian, Czech, German, Slovak, American, Italian, English, Serbian, Argentine, Uganda countries and the works of the 20th century-B. Martinů, L. Janáček, A. Schönberg, A. Webern). The program was focused on the celebration of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of the Czech significant author Ivana Loudová, the well-known Austrian composer Friedrich Cerha (90<sup>th</sup> anniversary), and the Slovak Professor Ladislav Kupkovič (80), who lived after 1968 longer in Germany, and suddenly passed away on June 15, 2016.

The festival began with the stylish introduction of works by renowned French composer Nicolas Zourabichvili in Garden Atelier. There were presented two versions of his Messe de Saint-Georges from 1976, and later revised version from 2008, the works of highly complex and expressive nature.

The opening concert at the Kroměříž Archbishop's Palace belonged to young enthusiastic Slovak musicians Quasars Ensemble - it was their fourth performance at this festival. The contribution of this 12-members chamber ensemble consisted of the compositions by Witold Lutoslawski – very elegant and then popular North-Poland "Dance Preludes" from 1959, his first creative period. Full of fun and rhythmical drive was "The Kitchen Revue" (1927) with a joyful tango by Bohuslav Martinů, succeeded by three Slovak composers. The well-known music theorist, party official under the communist period, Oto Ferenczy, his "Concertino" for 10 instruments from 1948/1974 was inspired by Bartok's musical language, but sounded traditionally, sometimes with a symphonic dynamics, and final "whirling" folk celebration. Two works of other Slovak artists of a younger generation we heard in the Czech premieres. The composition "51" by Božko Milakovič was composed for seven instruments using microintervals, at a slow pace, captured the qualities of timbre. "Organismo" by Ivan Buffa – the conductor of Quasars Ensemble – was highly energetic and full of stunning incandescence expression. The instrumental lines were individual independent and dynamically tense in the thick sound-theme structures. The work was performed with a great interpretative erudition, revealing maturation of this young author.

The festival Forfest cooperates longer period with the Slovak music and art scenes, which has considerable importance for Slovakia. This year it was the exhibition of the Slovak painter and Germanist Dr. Elsa Siváková - her soft-toned paintings showed a cross section of her creation: portraits, nudes, still lives, and landscapes. It was the figure painting, which dominated in her artistic endeavor, the shape with tightly closed contours.

The exhibition block was completed with the exhibition of a young Czech sculptor and theoretician Jan Buchta, whose small objects styled with great aesthetic sense, and could be seen during the festival week in the spacious foyer of the Assembly Hall at Archbishop's Chateau.

Listening an author's concert of Rudolf Růžička from Brno (the capital of Moravia), brought detailed insight into his oeuvre. He is an internationally acclaimed author - the doyen of the Czech electro acoustic music. From his recordings with the Greek and Latin titles, we have heard already the suggestive, purely instrumental "Tibia" (which won the first prize at the Paris Competition) for Soprano Saxophone with the accompaniment of electro - acoustic sounds, based on the computer compositional program, allowing the melodic and rhythmic practices of his own style. The other

impressive work "Rosa sepulcreti" for baritone and synthesizer on the text by J. Neruda (in Latin translation by Dr. Šprinc), moved us with a deep expression of tragedy. As the first we heard the composition "Cantata ae ae ae" for mixed choir on the Latin text by John Doe, then "ai ai Cantata" for mezzo-soprano, baritone, chamber choir, and electro acoustic sounds. Also "Anna" with recited text with electro acoustic music, was written on the Latin text by Jan Novák (who was the composer and poet, writing in Latin). Prof. Růžička also made the compositions on many ancient Greek texts and names like "Ejrené" (Peace) and "Ode to Aphrodite" for soprano and harp on the text of Sappho. Also, there was introduced his recording, an excerpt from his "Concertino" for harp and electro - acoustic sounds which was a nice composition. For the city of Bratislava, the author dedicated an electronic composition "Posoniensia" (it was introduced years ago in Bratislava in the Slovak Radio studio EA).

The extraordinary organ project "Michna as an inspirator of the contemporary organ music" by internationally known Professor Jaroslav Tůma was held in Olomouc Cathedral of Sv. Wenceslas on the themes of famous Baroque composer Adam Václav Michna from Otradovice. Large range of improvisational music with the organist of high erudition and knowledge of different styles was divided into 13-silent portions with historical names. In each section, a short quote appeared from the cycle "Czech Lute" followed by different musical improvisations. The first three improvisations culminated in a massive sound of organ. The central parts belonged to more contemplative music in mid-tempo with contrasting parts, somewhere in the style of César Franck, and Brahms. Final improvisation of the "last great romantic" organist in the Olomouc Cathedral confirmed his high instrumental and musical level.

After many years, Ruth Forsbach, an outstanding German organist, visited again the festival. She has, inter alia, great merits in promoting the Czech music in Europe, and significantly helped at the beginning of the Evangelical Conservatory in Kroměříž. Her project "Aspects of the German Organ Music 1985 – 2015" featured the music of five authors from Northern Westphalia. Since the beginning the organist captured us with a choral meditation on the Passion story of Mary Magdalene by the deceased Henning Frederichs. Her thoughtful performance of harmonious choral piece was pure spiritual hedonism in Trauermarsch of "Life of St. Francis" by Lutz-Werner Hesse. The organist introduced for us the unknown composers: "Fabula rasa" by Jurg Baur, "Fünf Intonationen aus Concerto Spirituale" (Sixth Angel-Kaddish for Luigi Nono) by Oskar Gottlieb Blarr, and final perfectly intensified "Sonata, Op. 78" from the year 2015 by Stefan Heuck (the author was personally present). This program testifies about her great vision as soloist...

In the famous Middle European Picture Gallery of Kroměříž Chateau, there was introduced with a humorous interpretation, but also with deep depiction of songs by leading Czech soprano singer Kristina Valoušková. She appeared with the reliable flutist Lenka Kozderková and guitarist Olga Sochorová in works of Ivana Loudová (Songs on Morgenstern), Petr Eben (Songs for lute on medieval poetry), German composer Paul Dessau (Fünf Lieder nach Worten von Eva Strittmatter) from 1969, Peter Graham - Poslední večer básníka Si Kchanga / Last evening of the poet Si Kchang / and Michael Levinas – Froissement d'aïlles. It was really an intimate soiré.

Local musical life in Kroměříž today boasts with an array of performers who live there permanently: besides already known names as conductor Tomáš Netopil, the pianist Karel Košárek, also a Petrof Piano Trio appeared this year: Martina Schulmeisterová, Jan Schulmeister, Kamil Žvak. The Trio played with passion the Piano trio by Ondřej Kukul entitled "Fight with the Fall" and "Kreutzer Sonata" by Leoš Janáček in the arrangement of Miloš Štědroň.

The Brno artist, Marie Plotěná, exhibited her poetic paintings and drawings with musical themes in the Library of Kroměříž. Her drawings were wise, made with artistic wit and political aphorism.

The concert of international competition MUSICA NOVA, organized by the Society for electro acoustic music, introduced some substantial personalities of junior world scene – the composition "Metal" by Belgian Stun Govaere, the very engaging work "Neshamah" (Breath) by Spanish author Joao Pedro Olivieri, followed by the composition "Inharmonic Fantasy no. 4" by Hubert Howe (USA), and the fourth "Translucency" by Japanese author Haruka Hirayama showed the ways of developing this area further in many ways. The last composition was "Small Imprints" by the Czech composer Michal Rataj, who introduced several times on Forfest his captivating spatial compositions. Despite of the fact that Forfest is primarily an author's festival, the attention is paid also to domestic and foreign interpretation art. The home cello duo Jiří Hošek and Dominika Hošková - Weis, deals with particularly interpretation of Jewish music, songs, melodies and demanding works for their instrument. From Jewish authors we had privilege to hear still unknown David Popper "Suite For Two Violoncellos" (Prayer-Plea, and virtuosic Jewish Song), and a prayer for the Day of Atonement by Max Bruch as well

as Ernest Bloch's Suite "From Jewish Life". Jewish melodies in a stylish adaptation by Jiří Hošek for two cellos were performed in the second part of the romantic concert played with vitality and nice tone.

Festival music marathon continued by the Czechoslovak chamber duo - Pavel Burda CZ - violin, Zuzana Berešová, SK – piano, on the occasion of the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Slovak composer Ladislav Kupkovič, the former founder (1963) and conductor of a radical progressive instrumental Bratislava ensemble "Music of Today". Unfortunately his concert turned into a posthumous tribute to this author who died a few days before the concert. It is certainly interesting to ask why this author of an innovative, almost shocking composition ("Meat of the Cross" performed with a huge Asian gong and striking of knives, etc.), changed his orientation? He renounced his sonorism in favor of tonal harmony and traditional compositions. The Sonatas from 1991 – 1999, "Theme and 13 Variations", "Armenian Songs From Garin" (1989), "Double March", "Compliment", "Talisman", indicated the fact, that the author's intention to turn was serious. The artists played with enthusiasm. "Souvenir" (very effective virtuoso piece for violin) reminded us on the style of Fritz Kreisler and the early 20th century Art Nouveau period.

Italian guitar ensemble Quartetto Apeiron introduced with great success Czech premieres of four authors. The first two works showed the fine level of compositional language of renowned American composer Daniel Kessner also in Czechia. His "Reverberance" was a Choral with beautiful melody in clusters in triple pianissimos, and in "Suite for Four Guitars" we appreciated his rhythmic innovation, sound intelligence, pulsating horizontality with sensitively placed "random" accents, deeply hidden poetry and painterly gently lead development in Nuage, and breathtaking moments in the last piece Allegro leggiero. It was one of the festival's peaks. Italian composer Ada Gentile, in "Rarefatte aggregazioni", in a new grouping of sounds, sounded out the fret board with trills and decent knocks on wood, possessing a wide and disciplined dynamic range. Miloslav Miletič, a Serbian author, who studied in Prague, left his previous musical language and turned to more traditional music in "Burdon Suite" – a pleasant music with an exemplary harmony. For the ensemble of four guitarists exists today only a few compositions. Desmond Clarke from United Kingdom dedicated his meditative and rhythmically challenging composition "Music for Miniature Landscapes" to this guitar arrangement.

The project "F.O.R.F.E.S.T" of a young creative author duo of Daniela Andršová (vocals) and Peter Vaculovič (viola + electronics) had the wit and imaginativeness of inspiration. The resulting shape is a kind of multimedia event with multiple parts in direct entries of violas and critical video-view on the harassing noise of supermarkets.

With the new thematic program participated Brno Miloslav Ištvan Quartet (Alexei Aslamas, Jan Bělohávek, Stanislav Vacek, Štěpán Filípek). The first composition with a wonderful "Quadracium Fidium" belonged to one of the extraordinary personality of Moravian generation, Jan Novák, who was forced to emigrate from his homeland during the era of Communism to Italy and Germany. In the FORFEST program his work was honored more times by his string quartets, that are one of the cornerstones of modern Moravian chamber music, with characteristic earnest, flowing and cantabile melos and post modern harmony. In the premiere of Anton Aslamas "In the Style of the Old Masters" from 2015, ensemble shined, the quartet is ranked today among the leading Czech chamber associations. The work by American John Zorn "Kol Nidre" (1999) was played with full engagement, powerful sound, and attention to detail. The composition was very well appreciated by the audience. Attention deserves the recently signed two works from the 21st century: Ondřej Štochl "Crossroads" (2014) and "Thoughts without Words" (2016), inspired by Shakespeare's "Hamlet" – by Slavomír Hořínek. The last work "Black Country" of Miloslav Ištvan earned deserved applause...

Phenomenal soloist percussionist and globetrotter Czech-German Tomáš Ondrůšek invited to festival his colleagues from Uganda (Ugandian Dancers Band). He is a teacher at Uganda University. His project for Sala Terrena at Kroměříž Castle was inspired by African style. It was success, especially among the younger audiences. With movement and improvisational components, he colorized musical thinking and deliberately blurred the boundary between the European and ethnic world music of today.

International Duo Solipse, which is formed by original Macedonian flutist Elena Stojceska and French guitarist Romain Petiot, shined in lush compositions of the decade internationally renowned Russian Edison Denisov, and the Italian premiere of "Liebes-Lied" for flute and guitar by Massimiliano Messieri (San Marino). Colorful performance of well-known work of Japanese author Tore Takemitsu - "Toward the Sea" for alto flute and guitar sounded next to even more popular Argentine Astor Piazzolla "History of Tango" for flute and guitar, and well known French authors Vincent Airault - "Nocturne Diurno", Philippe Hurel - "Eolia" for solo flute, including award-winning Romanian author from Bucharest Doina Rotaru - "Spiralis" for alto flute and guitar.

Author's listening concert of the Brno composer Pavel Slezák brought his "Symphony No. 7" (Regina Corona Mediatrici), Op. 95th for his 75th birth anniversary.

Eminent American guitarist William Feasley had already several times presented himself at the festival. The last time with an interesting multimedia project of audio-visualization cycle of paintings of his father. This year he played with an fine oboist Emily Tsai from South Korea with a numerous world premieres (5), including the Czech composer Vojtěch Mojžíš / Dreaming Figures / and his work "The Austerlitz Sun", inspired by the history of Napoleonic battle in Austerlitz (Moravian Slavkov), which significantly changed the map of Europe. In the interpretation of Feasley, this composition had an eminent men's vigor. Duo contributed to the performance of the following premiers of middle and older generations with dance esprit and serious tone: (Marcello Ferrari - Italy, Richard Greene, Peter Madlem and Ronald Pearl - USA and Jose Lezcano - Spain).

Listening concert of Ivana Loudová (75h anniversary) summed up in a nutshell synthetic, thoughtful, mature work of a prominent Czech author in a representative selection of "Solo for King David", "Double Concerto for Violin, Percussion and Strings", "Prague Imagination", "The Good Samaritan", "Sinfonia Numerica".

Italian cellist Nicola Baroni, who played in interesting projects in previous years at the festival, devoted his electro-acoustic project "Hyper cello" to the reference of works by Franz Kafka. His performance and innovative dramaturgy deserve recognition. He chose the stories Before the Court, Desire to be Indian, The Trees, etc.) for four parts of interaction with a computerized special program, which was working in real time. Author used a techniques of augmentation, diminution, and other "tricks". Start of individual sections N. Baroni set by an energetic movement of his arm and successively with the bow, making the selection of the real sound of the cello and slightly delayed the beginnings subsequently formed several bands and multiple zones of one audio line music. Forfest is open to experimentation.

Irena and Vojtěch Havel introduced the Flower Garden project by the premiere cycle with a poetic name "The Bow" - actually the music of silence, inner introspection of an opened soul, more spiritualized "minimal" with low tone ambit (sometimes only six tones), which were forming the right music, aside from all today's styles, tragedy and heroic themes. In formally free suite for alto and tenor viola da gamba and tape soloists combined vocals with musical accompaniment from the band and with decent sounds of Tibetan bowls and bells. They provided a wealth of nuances of chamber, harmonically diatonic tones with rich sound aliquots. Their characteristic technique of playing by straight tone without vibrato on catgut strings was with light baroque bow. In the early days of their action both soloists were inspired by the authentic interpretation of ancient music of the Baroque period. The program "On a Blade of Grass" was based on Japanese poetry accompanied by viola da gamba and cello with the conclusion of "tapering" music. We were transferred to countries of Tibet and silence also by the last composition "You Shy Little Bird" on the poetry of Irena Havel. Forfest gave the chance to introduce other kinds of music, not just the Europe-central.

Austrian pianist Janna Polyzoides of Greek origin regularly performed on the festival during the nineties with Viennese chamber music ensembles. In 2016 she presented a valuable poetic cycle of 42 miniatures by the most famous Austrian composer Friedrich Cerha (90). Regarding her interpretation it was an extraordinary performance. She played in sophisticated way, musically, and sense for detail, pianissimo nuances. In short compositions she created dramatic arc, different moods of Cerrha's miniatures, also almost with masculine dynamic assertiveness. One hour cycle "Slowakische Erinnerungen aus der Kindheit" (1988) - Memories of the childhood in Slovakia (42 Pieces for Piano Solo) captured the experiences of Cerrha from the cities, villages, such as Myjava, Holíč, Senica, folk dance from Pernek, Gajary, Brezová, Gbely, Kúty, Dobrá Voda, Nové Mesto, In Deep Valleys of Trnava, Trenčín, On the River Váh. But also from Moravia - Hodonín, Moravian Elegy, and Western part of Hungary Csethe Castle, Castle Szomolányi. Soloist dedicated her concert also to six compositions of Austrian artist Ivan Eröde originally from Hungary.

Dramaturgical and interpretation highlight of the Festival was the concert of Ensemble Opera Diversa, entitled "Tribute to František Gregor Emmert" - thanks to an outstanding leading and ambitious young conductress Gabriela Tardonova and passionately, almost ecstatic playing of Slovak violinist Milan Paľa. "Meditation on the Revelations of the Risen Lord" is a work of original, harmonious and freely flowing endlessly modulating composition for solo violin. Milan Paľa transformed this composition beyond its emotional zenith. The art of Emmert and Paľa literally stunned in the composition of expressive and overwhelming tree-part book "Jacob's Match" for viola and strings. Paľa here put initial forte with the tempo rubato, and often played on the boarder of sound of the viola, all sections of

musical structure were like eternally flowing in "fractal flowing" form. Emmert wrote unexpected and unconventional endings of compositions. His work for soprano and organ - "Nine Psalms Songs I and II." as well as "Prayer" for organ belongs to spiritual foundation of composer, to his contemplative and intuitive way of composing work. Most beautiful was „Trzy utwory w starym stylu“ for strings by Henryk Mikolaj Górecki with gently lyrical melody and harmony from 80's, when he rejected serialism of his previous era. Similarly, an epitheton of a beautiful, ethereal harmony, we can grant to Moravian author Ondřej Kyas in "Introitus" for string orchestra and to Estonian composer Toivo Tulev in a 13-minute lasting, well-built composition "Cadence II" for strings.

Forfest is gaining more and more interest of foreign composers and enthusiastic performers of excellent level. Forfest must continue in advocating new music composers and those who could not be performed under the communist regime in the former Czechoslovakia.

PhDr. Elena Letňanová  
[letnanova@ba.telecom.sk](mailto:letnanova@ba.telecom.sk)  
Mudroňova 95  
811 04 Bratislava  
Slovenská republika

00421-2- 6280 4323  
Mobil: +421-2-0948 216 075