

Four of the Czech groups represented on the sampler sing in English. Most of these are bands drawing on electronic sounds and dance rhythms: Skyline, Khoiba and Ecstasy of Saint Theresa. The last of these, in which the well-known musician and sought-after producer Jan P. Muchow collaborates with singer and actor Kateřina Winterová, has for some years been recognised as a pioneering band in terms of sound and composition. The singer Zuzana Kropáčová from the group S.O.I.L. also writes English lyrics, while her musical concept is based on a fusion of jazz, soul and electronic. One text from Gabriela Vermehlo of the Maraca band is in Portuguese, with the rest in Czech.

In recent years there have been a number of examples of use of other foreign languages on the Czech popular music scene. The singer-songwriter Radůza, for instance loves wandering through Europe with a guitar or an accordion, and finding stories and inspiration on her travels in all sorts of languages. These are then projected into her songs. On our sampler she is represented by a song that is entirely in Czech, but in many others she mixes phrases from other languages into the Czech text. Her album *"Farka"* ["In the Mountain"], for example, includes phrases from five European languages (none of them English). The importance of foreign languages in her case is a matter of the enrichment of the sound, joy from a sense of belonging to more than one region at the same time, to Europe, and to the world community as well as delight in depicting national characters.

We can say of all the bands or individuals represented on this sampler that they are among the fixed stars of Czech pop and it will be worth following their work in future. When we speak of pop here, we do not mean the mainstream, but alternative pop, i.e. a popular music with roots in authentic sub-genres such as rock, jazz, hip hop or world music. Unfortunately, we haven't had space to include many important names. On a next similar sampler, for example, we shall definitely need to include Clarinet Factory with the singer Lenka Dušilová, something from the playful work of the DVA band or something from young Czech jazz. At any rate, seek and you will find!



XX. FESTIVAL FORFEST CZECH REPUBLIC 2009

www.forfest.cz / June 5-28 / Abyss of Time

We have given the jubilee 20th year of the Festival a rather ironic name, because we feel that the period of twenty years invites to certain thoughts of recapitulation. It was – and still is – little full of paradoxes: as we can see the growing spirituality in today's art and life, we also can remember unrealized hopes of the last half of nineties and often unattached position of unclassified art, which remains in permanent danger in the whole contemporary world. Almost thirty years ago (Lukovský) defined no spirituality as an illness of our era. Today's situation is incredibly polarized again: we are facing to omnipresent fundamentalism. Despite of these facts there are some perspectives, which give hope that everything can be different. During the last two decades world art contains visibly growing intensity of spiritual return – it appears in unexpected places and in uncodably described forms, which have not been considered before. These are accompanying signs of turn periods, which always signalized the beginning of great styles in the history of art.

HOW WILL THE FINANCIAL CRISIS AFFECT THE ARTS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC?

All the indications are that the cultural sphere and the "creative industries" altogether will be facing lean times in the coming years, especially as concerns funding. It is therefore high time for us to be asking how the crisis will impact on music and the arts in general in the Czech Republic?

If we are talking about the funding of culture, for several decades now there have been two basic models: the American and the European. The European model is built on the principle of state responsibility for and subsidy of the arts. The American system of support for the arts is based on the tradition of philanthropy – patronage by companies and individual donors. In the USA there is no ministry of culture, for example. In a period of financial crisis, however, private donors become scarcer and less generous. The president of the Kennedy Centre in Washington and well-known crisis manager Michael Kaiser, whose achievements have included saving the Royal Opera House in London from bankruptcy, says of the present situation:

"Nobody has any idea of where this will stop. I have never before seen the level of donations and subsidies fall so rapidly"

(daily Baltimore Sun 23rd November 2008). In the United States the crisis has already destroyed one opera company (in Baltimore) and other institutions are being forced to put off planned premieres (for example the Washington National Opera's costly projected production of Wagner's Ring).

The American model is therefore collapsing and more and more leading cultural managers are calling for state intervention. In an article for the Washington Post (29th December 2008) Kaiser appealed for an immediate state injection of finance for arts organisation. He also appealed for changes in the law and greater tax relief for donors to the arts. In the USA the culture sector provides 5.7 million jobs and has a yearly turnover of 166 milliard dollars, but because the network of cultural organisations is very fragmentary, the bankruptcy of these organisations isn't going to hit the headlines in the same way as the collapse of a big automobile factory. In short, if the state is concerned to save gleaming automobiles, it ought also to save what is hidden under the bonnet – its cultural riches.

The European Way

In Europe the situation is similar, but with the difference that the priority to be given to cultural funding is up to the political decisions of individual governments. As in the USA, the nightmare that haunts organisers and artists is cut-backs on marketing costs on the part of companies – i.e. the sponsors of art. This has a direct impact on artists. The first thing that occurs to us all is that there will be fewer receptions and other social events where artists can make extra money (e.g. to supplement the below-average levels of pay in orchestras). But there will also be a reduction in the overall sums devoted to sponsoring cultural events. This is either because firms will be making genuine economies (in this case spending on promotion and marketing is always the first item to be cut before redundancies become necessary) or because the financial crisis will provide firms with a good excuse to reduce what many