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From Communism To Democracy: Choral Music Education In Czechoslovakia (1948 – 1992) And The Czech Republic (1993 – 2011) as Experienced by Four Prominent Czech Musicians

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Music

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FROM COMMUNISM TO DEMOCRACY:
CHORAL MUSIC EDUCATION IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA (1948 – 1992)
AND THE CZECH REPUBLIC (1993 – 2011) AS EXPERIENCED BY
FOUR PROMINENT CZECH MUSICIANS

(Thesis format: Monograph)

by

Jakub Martinec

Graduate Program in Music Education

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

The School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
The University of Western Ontario
London, Ontario, Canada

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Abstract

The Czech Republic has experienced a rich history of singing over many centuries that helped to promote a spirit of national and ethnic identity, culture, and pride. Singing has long been valued because it helped bond people together during difficult times, including during the years of communism. In this thesis, I provide a brief historical overview of music education in the Czech Lands (now Czech Republic) to show how choral music education, as a central part of the curriculum for centuries in this territory, influenced the development of Czech nationalism. The main focus is on choral music education practices and perceptions during the dramatic political changes that occurred during and after communist domination in the latter half of the twentieth century until 2011. The collapse of the Eastern Bloc and the growing dissatisfaction of the population with the economic and political situation in the country resulted in the Velvet Revolution led by unarmed students marching and singing in the streets, which ultimately led to the end of communist rule in Czechoslovakia. This thesis provides an historical and narrative account of the education system and more specifically, choral music education. The study draws heavily on the personal testimonies of four prominent Czech choral music educators who lived and worked during the communist regime, and through the transition to democracy and now during the capitalist economic system. These individuals were interviewed for their personal and professional knowledge of, and insights into, social, political, or economic factors that influenced choral music education in the Czech Lands. The conclusion of this dissertation is not that communism or democracy is necessarily better for Czech choral music education. With the onset of democracy, globalization, technological advances, and goals of individualism and capitalism, people have access to

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other, far more powerful and far-reaching means to communicate—not just locally, but globally. Singing no longer holds a pivotal & central place, and radical changes in structures are necessary if the choral art is to regain its former prominence. Attention to teacher education practices, and innovative pedagogies & repertoire that educate singing teachers to empower their students will be required to ensure there is quality choral music education in generations to come.

Keywords: Czechoslovakia, Czech Republic, music education, choral music education, choirs, communism, democracy

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Chapter 1:

Introduction and Methodology

Historically, music education, and especially choral singing, has held a unique place in the educational system of the Czech Republic (formerly Czechoslovakia). Since the first church schools were established in the 6th Century, music always held a place as one of the paramount subject disciplines, a description of which is outlined in Chapter Two. While the history of the Czech lands has been turbulent, two of the most interesting times have been the periods beginning in 1948, when Czechoslovakia first came under the domination of the Soviet Union, and then after 1989, when the Velvet Revolution provided the catalyst for the transition from communism to democracy that led to the dissolution of the union between the Czechs and Slovaks. In 1993, Czechoslovakia peacefully divided into two independent countries: the Czech Republic and Slovakia. This study of the history of choral music education in the Czech Republic and former Czechoslovakia deals with the historical era between 1948 and 2011—the latter was the year in which the first Czech president of modern history, the poet Vaclav Havel (b. 1936-2011), died. Ultimately, and while of necessity, this study commences with an examination of choral music education within Czechoslovakia following World War II and leading up to the dissolution of the country in 1993, its primary purpose is to generate a picture of choral music education in the Czech lands between 1948 and 2011 so as to better understand how it was influenced by, while also being implicated in, national and regional politics and events.

To set the thesis in context, it is important to note that the researcher (b. 1979) is a Czech national who grew up under the communist regime and received his initial music

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education as a singer in children's choirs during that period. In 1998, he was appointed choral conductor of a boys' choir in Hradec Kralove and, from 2006 to 2010, when this choir school became publicly funded as a private music school, he served as assistant headmaster there. In 2010, he founded the Czech Boys Choir which has gained a successful international reputation through invited tours and festivals. Thus, the study is more than merely an attempt to document the history of choral singing in what is today the Czech Republic, although it is that too. The study is also a personal quest for an understanding of the Czech choral music education experience and its development during those tumultuous years and how it shaped the researcher's own perceptions and ideas—as well as those of other choral directors, musicians and the Czech public in general—about, for example, national identity and the purposes and places of choral music in education and society. The research draws upon archival and other evidentiary material to document where possible, for example, the roles of specific people and institutions, as well as national, regional, and global politics and events in the forming of education policy affecting choral music education. However, and because the historical record on choral singing and education in the Czech lands and now Republic remains far from complete, this study also draws on the personal testimonies of four prominent Czech choral music educators who lived and worked under the communist regime and through the transition to democracy and a capitalist economic system. These individuals were interviewed for their personal and professional knowledge of, and insights into, social, political, or economic factors that influenced choral music education in the Czech Lands following World War II. This brings us to the problems of perspective and bias in historical research.

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According to Cox (2002) and other historians (e.g., Zinn, 1990; Nash, Crabtree & Dunn, 1998), historical research inevitably involves perspective inasmuch as researchers must choose ‘facts’ from among a mass of often conflicting information, and “any chosen emphasis supports (whether the historian means to or not) some kind of interest, whether economic or political or racial or national or sexual (Zinn, 2003, p. 8). Thus it is important that the researcher acknowledges his own interests and biases at the outset of this study, which may be shared by the abovementioned choral directors and musicians who are to be interviewed. As is explained in more detail in the methodology section of this introductory chapter, historical research can never be completely objective (Zinn, 1990). For example, much of the extant literature relating to the history of choral music education in what is now the Czech Republic was written and published under the communist regime and was accordingly subject to government control and sometimes censorship (Cysařová, 1999). This study seeks to provide a more balanced and complete understanding of past practice by potentially correcting or countering political propaganda and ideology underlying the existing historical record that may until now and for obvious political reasons have gone unchallenged. The goal is to potentially give voice to Czech choral musicians and directors who previously were subjected to political and military domination by Soviet controlled-governments. This highlights the importance of seeking eyewitness accounts from individual Czech choral directors, musicians or composers who lived through the communist era and to the present and who can provide needed insights into historical developments affecting choral music education in the Czech lands.

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Research Questions

As implied but not yet explicitly stated, this work is divided into two historical parts: music education during communism (1948 – 1989); and, music education from 1989 to 2011, the period of time when the Czech Republic transitioned to democracy and a capitalist system as it became reoriented to the western world. This dissertation employs historical inquiry to provide an in-depth account of Czech choral music education during these two periods. As one means of accomplishing this task, the researcher also investigated and compared contemporary developments in other countries in the Eastern bloc and the Western world. The aim of this dissertation however, is not to directly compare the situation in the Czech lands with other countries. Rather, it is to outline the situation for Czechs in the former Czechoslovakia and then in the Czech Republic using information from other parts of the former Soviet Union and elsewhere to identify commonalities that may help readers better understand the Czech political dilemma and choral music experience, while also, owing to different political experiences under communism, highlighting some of its uniqueness.

It is also important here, however, to examine several traditional clichés and political tensions, which persist in contemporary Czech society that often frame political debates in the former Soviet Union. The first one automatically generalizes the communist period as a period when there was premeditated and intentional confusion and misinformation provided to the populace to keep them in line. The second cliché has arisen due to the current political, economic, and social development in the Czech Republic and Europe, and highlights and romanticizes the advantages of the former communist system. Alternatively, the third cliché similarly paints democracy as a natural

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good while overlooking its many challenges and difficulties with respect to, for example, problems of social and economic inequality and privatization of public institutions. The dissertation attempts to locate the history of choral music education within the Czech lands between 1948 and 2011 within that larger political framework involving the abovementioned tensions and problems relating to communism, democratization, neoliberal globalization, and European re-integration as the country transitioned from communism to democracy.

The primary research question is: *What was the state of choral music education in the Czech lands from 1948 to 1989, and from 1989 to 2011?* Several sub-questions, as noted below, provide direction to the research while also prompting responses from interviewees with respect to the primary question:

Communist Influences & Perspectives:

1. How did communism impact/influence choral music education in the Czech Republic?
2. Specifically, what were the impacts of government policy on choral music education for children and on children's choirs which were founded during communist times?
3. What differences were evident in children's choral music education during and after communism?
4. What impacts did the isolation of choral directors and teachers from the outside world have on choral music education for children?

Music Education in Post-communist Times:

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5. How did music education change after 1989 when Czechoslovakia switched its attention and then orientation to the Western countries and the United States?
6. What impact did democratization, neo-liberalism, European re-integration and capitalism have on music education in general and choral music education in particular?

To respond to these questions, the researcher:

- i) provides an historical overview of the development of choral music education prior to 1948;
- ii) provides definitions and descriptions of the theories behind the terms named above;
- iii) reviews and critiques the academic literature concerning Czech music education during this period, referring to archival documents concerning Czech history of music education; government policy and other relevant documents and archives are also to be examined, as are those of musical and educational institutions that played important roles in the shaping of Czech choral music education and practice for children;
- iv) focuses on the influences of media on music education, how their reports coincided with reality, and how that ‘reality’ was perceived by the public; and,
- v) explores the memories and experiences of four influential music educators who lived through these periods to provide eyewitness accounts and needed perspective.

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The diversity of these methods served to triangulate the conclusions as analysed in the data.

In summary, although this study is primarily about very recent history, the hope is that it will lay a foundation for future study and expansion of this topic. The transition from life under communism to democracy and capitalism in the Czech Republic remains a stark experience for the older population. However, for the younger generations, it is only through texts, the media, and word of mouth that they perceive the situation. In fact, with the recent elections of the Communist Party to several regional governments, it may be that some of the younger generation see only a few of the positive aspects of the past, while failing to realize its many problems and harsh political conditions. This study may potentially help to address that deficit in understanding of the past while also helping younger generations, and specifically choral music educators, directors and musicians generally, to be more knowledgeable of the past and thus better able to make informed decisions.

Literature Review: Sources for Czech History of Music Education

To better understand the context of Czech education in 1948, it is necessary to consult various sources that document and examine the history of Czech education and music education in general prior to that point (a more detailed, but still brief, history of Czech education and music education to 1948 follows in Chapter Two). Kádner's (1912) *A Brief History of Pedagogy and Education* describes the history of pedagogy and education from earliest recorded times and covers the education of the Greeks, Romans and early Christians. Emphasis is placed on Czech philosopher John Amos Comenius and the school reforms of Austrian empress Maria Theresa and her son Joseph II. Kádner

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calls Comenius, who lived in the late 16th and early 17th centuries, the "teacher of nations" because his conceptual treatise *The Great Didactic* addressed the fundamental aims of education, its content, principles, and methods and proposed an organizational structure for the education of children. His work influenced not only Czech music education, but also music education across Central Europe. Maria Theresa and Joseph II, according to Kádner, also made significant contributions to the transformation and development of the Czech education system. Maria Theresa, in 1774, issued the General Order for Schools, which was the first major political intervention into public education resulting in compulsory schooling. While Maria Theresa's reforms were mainly in the area of basic education, Joseph II continued with these reforms, especially in the training of new teachers for schools and universities. Kádner devoted his work not only to the history of pedagogy, but he also mapped the current state of education in the Czech lands in his time. His comprehensive publication about Czech education *Development of the Education System of Today* (1929) reflects on both the past and present of education in the Czech lands. The greatest benefit of this publication is the list of sources and references which are thematically organized. An overview of the literature about arts schools offers dozens of publications both in Czech and in German.

For the purposes of this research, one must also consider the German literature, because in the 18th and 19th century, the Czech Lands were under the control of Germans. The main language of Charles University in Prague was German at that time and the Czech people lived in a Germanized culture. The German context is also significant especially to understanding Czech positioning prior to the communist era. After World War II, Germany was divided into two parts: West Germany, which was independent and

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democratic, and East Germany, which was socialist/communist and part of the Soviet Union. All of East Germany's social systems, including education, were similar to those of Czechoslovakia. *Die Sozialistische Schule* (Frenzel, 1960) deals with the German socialist education system, as do publications by Hartung (1964), including *Zu einigen Grundfragen der Methodik des Musikunterrichts in sozialistischen Schule*.

Beside Kádner, there are two other major sources for the history of Czech music education that inform the research in this thesis. *The History of Music Education in the Czech lands and Slovakia* (Gregor & Sedlický, 1990) deals separately with the Czech lands and Slovakia. The Czech section is divided into eleven periods, from the earliest beginnings to 1989. The descriptions of the 19th and 20th centuries are highly detailed, and the final chapter provides a historical timeline and a summary and evaluation of the historical developments. The authors also provide developmental tables, such as overviews of the curriculum, music lesson plans, the number of lessons and hours devoted to music education in schools, and an overview of the development of music education in the Czech lands. In their preface, Gregor & Sedlický state:

The Czechoslovak historiography of music and music pedagogy does not exist as a complex study. There are only a few music education chapters and fragments in the Czech and Slovak music history books. Towards the 19th and 20th century, the historical research is missing although in these centuries many pedagogical and didactic issues arose in the Czech and Slovak school and external world. It is important to monitor not only the development of music education and the pedagogies (singing and music), but to note also the societal interests of music

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education, teaching methods, curricula, textbooks, songbooks, musical production for children and growth musically cultural level of our people. (p. 5)

A second significant source is *The Development of Music Education in Czech Schools* (Kovařík, 1960), a 1955 thesis by Charles University student Vladimír Kovařík which was subsequently published as a textbook for use by university students. This text plays an important role in organizing and understanding the historical developments relating to the early beginnings of the communist period. The book includes valuable attachments which contain interesting musical sources that relate to the history of music education. Also of importance is the final chapter of the book, which deals with the current view of music education at the time of its creation (i.e., in the mid 20th century) and brings also a comparative perspective. As Kovařík notes:

Capitalism has a special relationship to music. At a time when the Czech bourgeoisie had a progressive cultural development in the Czech National Revival—an awareness of the great social significance of music arose. Social singing helped greatly to expand revivalist ideas and unite people to fight against the impending foreign bourgeoisie This, however, does not indicate a bourgeois musical maturity of the nation. On the contrary, capitalism creates a world of difference between a handful of music experts and large sections of the people, who had no access to the music education. Our socialistic society condemned bourgeois views of music and education and created conditions for the development of music in terms of its democratization. (pp. 105-106)

Besides reviewing and, where appropriate, critiquing the educational literature, a critical source was an investigation into curriculum documents and other materials from the

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Ministry of Education, contributions from various educational conferences that focused on music education, and brochures and almanacs of individual schools, orchestras and choirs. Finally, because some of the persons who were instrumental in the formation and implementation of music education during the years of this study are still alive, interviews were held with them to triangulate the findings in this thesis. Also the conference articles and interviews revealed and helped fill some of the information gaps in the history of Czech choral music education during the two historical periods under study.

Similar Studies

A search of various sources relating to music education in other former Soviet states found no documents devoted to the same specific topic of choral music education for children. However, Bute's (2010) dissertation on the history of music education in Romania proved informative as a comparator. Bute's work focused on the challenges of democratization, globalization, and European integration for music education in Romania. When comparing the two countries (the Czech Republic and Romania), we can conclude that communism impacted both lands extensively, although each country in different ways. Czechoslovakia was dominated more intensively by the Soviet Union while Romania for a variety of reasons that are too complex to explain here remained somewhat more independent. After 1989, however, both countries turned their focus to the Western world, although because Romanian culture differed more from Western culture, Romanians found European re-integration more difficult to accomplish than did the Czechs. Changes in education occurred more quickly in the Czech Republic.

Research Methodology

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Historical inquiry was selected as the most appropriate research approach for this study for the obvious reason that it is concerned with the past. Historical research is a process of systematic description and review of previous events or a combination of events in order to report on what happened in the past (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1993; Kelley, 1998). As was suggested previously, however, historical research involves more than just collecting and reporting of ‘the facts’—it also involves interpretation. Historians must interpret ‘facts’ through their own understandings that have been shaped by their own backgrounds and training. Thus, and although Špiláčková (2012) states that “the objective of historical research is to ascertain and describe history of any area of human activity, subject or event by means of scientific processes” (p.23, researcher’s translation), that research is much more complicated and fraught with difficulty than novice researchers might suppose. Nor, as was already explained in the introduction to this study with regard to the importance of acknowledging perspective in historical research, is it a purely objective and scientific process, although the scientific obsession with careful, systematic and sequential collection of information remains useful and arguably necessary to successful research. It is just that increasingly since the sociological and postmodern turn in the musicology literature in the 1980s and 1990s, historians have been exercising a greater and healthy skepticism than in the past with regard to ‘factual’ claims and matters of ‘truth.’ As Woodford (in press) explains, today’s musicologists acknowledge that so-called ‘facts’ are often subject to interpretation, and further, that factual claims have in the past been used as tools of oppression. This is one of the primary reasons why those claims should be subjected to careful scrutiny and not

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just be taken for granted as objective truth. All this requires some elaboration and explanation, which follow.

Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun (2011) formulated five purposes of historical research.

Educational researchers may undertake historical studies:

to make people aware of what has happened in the past so they may learn from past failures and successes, to learn how things were done in the past to see if they might be applicable to present-day problems and concerns, to assist in prediction, to test hypotheses concerning relationships or trends and to understand present educational practices and policies more fully. (pp. 535-536)

Historians use 'facts' to reconstruct and interpret the events; they aim to discover and illuminate complex nuances of personality, culture, and beliefs, which influenced the past and affect the present. In historical research, various interpretations of events are also compared. Bauer (2006) discusses the treatment of historical 'facts,' specifically looking at how they were collected and interpreted in the past. Every ideology has a unique influence on history and society, especially when the ideology is popular. Consider, for example, how people in democratic countries refer to the 'free world,' which insinuates a positive and preferred connotation. Bauer examines several examples in Czech history of the influences of ideology on historical interpretation and understanding, including religious traditions that evolved from the time of St. Wenceslaus (who is considered the patron saint of the Czech lands) such as the Hussite revolution (a controversial religious reform movement that was at various times either glorified or cursed) and also from the National Revival (the revival of the Czech language after waves of Germanization) to

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show how those events were interpreted differently by various authors and at different times. As Bauer explains,

It wasn't mostly about the deliberate distortion of history, but the influence of ideology. The honesty of historians and every other scientist is no guarantee of absolute objectivity. They are only human and cannot "jump out" from their personality and their attitude. (pp. 21-22)

Bauer's comment reminds us that each researcher looks at situations through his or her own lens and this is a critical component of studying lived experience that must be recognized and cannot be ignored.

According to Hendl (2008), the objectives of historical research are to: a) answer certain questions; b) detect unknown contexts; c) describe relationships between past and present; d) record and evaluate the actions of individuals, groups and institutions; e) design, implement or evaluate theory in interpreting events; and f) contribute to the understanding of the culture in which we live or which is for us foreign (p.133). Further, and whereas much qualitative research describes and examines the phenomena of the present, historical research describes what happened in the past and its impact on the present. Silverman (2001) observes that sensitivity to historical 'facts' is important in historical inquiry and maintains that it is necessary to examine the relevant historical data right at the stage when we begin to formulate a research question. The present has its roots in the past, and no matter what the method of inquiry, every research method must be thorough (Hendl, 2008). Historical research is based on thorough gathering, analyzing and interpreting the documents of the past, and this attention to detail may help to clarify the roots, resources or causes of current phenomena. As such, historical research helps

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the researcher to better understand human behavior and thinking by dispelling the myth that the present exists in isolation from the past (Tuchman, 1994).

The literature provides a number of descriptions of the phases of historical research that can work to provide clarity during data collection. Špiláčková (2012) outlines the phases of stages of historical research in terms of

defining the research issue, formulating research questions or hypotheses;
ascertaining the state of the issue under study in secondary sources; identifying and localizing relevant materials of primary character; applying a research technique relevant to the topic of historical research; and, evaluating the historical research, interpreting and publishing the findings. (p.27)

Frankel, Wallen & Hyun (2011) similarly identify four basic steps to historical research in education as involving

defining the problem or question to be investigated (including the formulation of hypotheses if appropriate), locating relevant sources of historical information, summarizing and evaluating the information obtained from these sources, and presenting and interpreting this information as it relates to the problem or question that originated the study. (p. 536)

All of the abovementioned descriptions and theories show that this method is suitable for investigating the selected topic. Perhaps the most important things that can be gleaned from the literature on historical methodology is that the research is not based on mere collecting and copying of sources and information, but also on their interpretation coupled with evaluation with respect to their validity. Researchers must necessarily interpret information, but in order to do that they must also judge the truthfulness or

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validity of the documents that have been collected or the statements made in order to identify underlying ideological assumptions, prejudices, or, possibly, malicious intent. All of this is crucial to understanding choral music education in the Czech lands during the time of communism and during the period of transition to a nascent democracy and capitalist economy. This idea of validity, however, bears a little more elaboration.

The strength of historical method in implementing this project is that several primary sources were readily accessible. However, there were several problems with their validity and relevance. Some materials, which were created during the communist regime were ideologically influenced or deliberately truncated or modified by censors, if the original authors dared to print honestly. In the context of the study, we must also note that in the Czech territory some historical sources were impossible to locate, and that what is found in previous research and literature may be ideologically loaded, particularly when we talk about the communist period. But this admonition also applies to sources produced under the present democratic capitalist system. Some sources may also be conflicting and the data may be incomplete. Most importantly, key information may be missing. While these are important limitations to consider, there is no known research methodology that does not have similar constraints. More is said shortly about this problem of validity with reference to two types of criticism, labeled external and internal criticism, with reference to document analysis.

Reichel (2009) suggests that historical method is similar to biographical method in that it involves reconstructing past events, social norms, relationships, institutions, or systems to create a narrative of the life of country, place, or institution etc. while also attempting, where possible, to establish causal links among them. It aims to cover the

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continuous development of phenomena and processes. Hendl (2008) provides a list of potential instruments for historical inquiry, including: “*documents* from the past; *numerical records* that contain statistical data; *oral statements* from witnesses; and, *objects* whose physical or visual characteristics can provide information about the past” (p.135). Similarly, Frankel, Wallen & Hyun (2011) classify historical research into four basic categories: documents, numerical records, oral statements, and relics.

Documents are written or printed materials that have been produced in one form or another sometime in the past, *numerical records* include any type of numerical data in printed or handwritten form, *oral statements* include any form of statement spoken by someone, *relics* are any objects whose physical or visual characteristics can provide some information about the past. (p. 553)

They also classify data into primary and secondary sources:

A *primary source* is one prepared by an individual who was a participant in or a direct witness to the event that is being described. A secondary source is a document prepared by an individual who was not a direct witness to an event but who obtained his or her description of the event from someone else. (p. 553)

As was the case with the present study of the history of choral music education in the Czech lands between 1948 and 2011, for studies of recent history, one can use *oral history*—records of, and personal interviews with, people who were directly or indirectly participants of an historic event. Hendl (2008) suggests that personal accounts provide a valuable source of information on many historical topics, which help us to understand the causes and motives of events. The concern, however, is that the strength of the interview is dependent on the memory, experience and interpretations of individuals. Such

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interviews are narrative and can be biased, depending on the time interval after the event or due to selective memory. When processing the chosen topic, and whether interpreting events in the communist era or the more recent past, we have to consider the question of what renowned narrative researcher, Roger Simon (2011), calls the “collective memory.” He describes the September 11, 2001 attack on the World Trade Centre:

This experience has become part of the image repertoires and affectively and diversely invested narratives of dispersed people who remain mostly unknown to each other. To conceptualize this vast plurality of recalled images, narratives, and affects as a specific “collective memory” is to define such as the conjoint remembrance of a particular event by people without overlapping histories and without a shared place or project. (p. 1)

He notes also that there are divergent perspectives concerning collective memory.

Anyone pursuing the study of the various ways past events are made present in people’s lives and held in social significance will be confronted by an expanding literature with a confusing, contradictory set of conceptualizations as to its core phenomena. These disagreements are more than a matter of the mis-alignment of terminology. Admittedly, there is general agreement with the argument that memory is not just an isolated cognitive operation but rather personal recollections are immersed in collective narratives often reinforced in group rituals and commemorations. (p. 2)

Memory, however, is only one piece of data collection in historical inquiry. The literature notes that historical methodology is typically based on the analysis of documents. Mühlpachr (2010) distinguishes between two types of analysis, namely

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document analysis and content analysis. According to Mühlpachr, if we really examine the individual documents and their contents, it is a document analysis. These documents can be various educational documents, chronicles, and other printed sources. Content analysis is a broader term and in that it goes beyond direct analysis of individual documents in isolation to identify major themes that emerge from the literature, public media (e.g., the internet), or other bodies of information. Mühlpachr states that content analysis is widely used to develop the theoretical part of the research, such as happened in the present study in which the researcher examined a multitude of documents and other sources for information to identify broad themes that bear further investigation or interpretation. Given this reliance on documents for relevant information, it is vital that the researcher practice what Frankel, Wallen & Hyun (2011) refers to as *external and internal criticism*. The former “refers to the genuineness of the documents a researcher uses in a historical study,” while the latter “refers to the accuracy of the contents of a document.” Whereas external criticism has to do with the authenticity of a document, internal criticism has to do with what the document says (p. 553).

The dissertation is based on all of the above mentioned sources, including documents, numerical tables, oral statements, media reports, and artifacts (objects/relics). It is important to reiterate that the essence of historical methodology is to be found thorough analysis and interpretation of the results. However, the collection of data itself brings its own ethical issues to the fore, and particularly with respect to the planned interviews of four prominent Czech musicians and choral music educators in the current study.

Ethical Issues

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Cresswell (2003) points out that “in addition to conceptualizing the writing process for a proposal, researchers need to anticipate the ethical issues that may arise during their studies” (p. 62). The researcher must expect there to be ethical issues in all stages of the research project, even in the research problem statement, in the purpose statement and research questions, as well as in data collection.

Before writing the proposal, it is useful to consider the ethical issues that can be anticipated and described in the proposal. These issues relate to all phases of the research process. With consideration for participants, research sites, and potential readers, studies can be designed that contain ethical practices. (p. 68)

Besides obtaining ethical approval from the University Research Ethics Board (see Appendix 1), the researcher needed to be aware of ethical processes in the Czech Republic, although there is some overlap between the two regulatory systems. Because the research was done about the situation of music education in the Czech Republic, the researcher was using Czech sources primarily. The Czech Republic has its own legislation and directives regarding research ethics of which the researcher needed to be cognizant and compliant (Tyl, 2004). Of particular relevance to the current study are the Protection of Privacy in the Civil Code (§ 11 to 17 of Act No. 40/1964 Coll.); Act on Protection of Personal Data (Act No. 101/2000 Coll.); Copyright Act (Act No. 121/2000); and the Law on Archives (Act No. 343/1992). The first two pieces of legislation dictate the personal rights of surveyed persons. It notes that all people under study must be told how they will be affected by the research and notified of potential consequences. Personal and sensitive data must be protected. Since the historical inquiry approach deals mainly with historical sources, the last two laws also must be considered.

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The Law on Archives (Act No. 343/1992 Coll.) dictates how archival documents are to be used and those that can be used, which include written, video, audio and other records, that are generated from the activity of state bodies, municipalities and other legal persons, and from the activities of individuals (§ 2, para. 1 and 2). Any person may inspect the records which are stored in the archives, however, archived artifacts under 30 years old can be viewed only with the consent of the director or head of the archives (§ 11, paragraph 1). Consent for access to archival documents less than 30 years old will not be granted if national security is compromised or the rights and interests of legally protected persons are affected. For the same reasons, the access to other archival materials can be also denied (§ 11, paragraph 2). The Copyright Law (Law No. 21/2000 Coll.) dictates what can be copied. According to § 2, 6 and § 3, paragraph 1-3 there is no limit to copying daily news, legal and administrative texts, local chronicles, popular culture and political speeches delivered during official meetings.

For the current project, some archival documents were not available for copying or quoting. In order to discuss communist history, the author contacted the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes, which was helpful with dealing with the ethical issues. This institution, which is located in Prague, was founded by the Government of the Czech Republic to assist with scientific research and investigation of totalitarian regimes in Czechoslovakia, including both the communist and Nazi regimes. It deals with the interpretation of Czech history and provides access to archives and data. Drozenová (2011) discusses one of the ethical problems of historical sources with which the researcher had to deal. After 1948, Marxist-Leninism was the ruling ideology for 40 years; this led to widespread repression in scientific communities. Marxist ideologies

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gradually weakened in the natural sciences, but social science disciplines, and especially philosophy, were under a lot of political control and were consequently not able to flourish during the communist period (Drozenová, 2011).

Another potential ethical dilemma relates to the ‘researcher’s lens’ that was noted earlier in this chapter. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) point out that such research always involves telling someone else’s story, and the researcher needed to be aware that all historical accounts are biased, albeit not necessarily purposely. The story-teller’s interpretation and background experience is always present, thus there is no such thing as a report that provides the absolute truth. Rather, the report is something constructed by the researcher based on the information gathered, which can never be considered complete. In this case, even though the researcher investigated the documents and other sources, including the aforementioned interviews, as accurately as possible, the completed document is, in a sense, a reflection of his own lived experience and he must be careful in the analysis and telling not to distort the accounts of others involved in the study.

Interviews

Following the collection and analysis of historical documents and artifacts, interviews formed an important part of this research because the voices of those who lived and taught during this period provide a human face and perspective on the story to be told. In this research, the actual stories of choral directors who lived through the period of this study add a powerful and intensely personal contribution to this research. With respect to interviews, the researcher a) presents an overview from the literature about the use of interview in historical inquiry; b) introduces preminent choral music

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educators and one composer/music educator, who agreed not only to participate in this study, but also to be identified; and, c) describes what their lives were like during World War II and afterwards. The four are composer/music educator Marek Kopelent (b. 1932), and choral music educators, Jiří Chvála (b. 1933), Blanka Kulínská (b. 1935), and Jiří Skopal (b. 1947)

Using personal accounts in historical inquiry. Hendl (2008) suggests that personal accounts provide a valuable source of information on many historical topics, which help us to understand the causes and motives of events. The concern, however, is that the strength of the interview is dependent on the memory, experience, and interpretations of individuals. As already suggested, such interviews are narrative and can be biased, depending on the time interval after the event or due to selective memory.

Because each of the four personalities has worked in a slightly different environment and deals with a range of activities in music education ranging from teaching in public and private schools, universities, and community-based music education organization, the author's aim was to obtain as much accurate information as possible to triangulate with the information obtained from print sources. The interview protocol was approved through the University of Western Ontario Research Ethics Board. Each person was given the option to use a pseudonym; however, all of them asked that they be identified and their real names are used in this study. It is important to point out, that because the Czech Republic is a small country, the senior music educators are well-known to the entire community, and only about a dozen aging music educators who fit the criteria of having lived and worked during communist times are still alive, their identities would be difficult to anonymize.

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Hendl (2008) points out that conducting an interview is both an art and science, and at the same time, requires skill, sensitivity, concentration, interpersonal understanding, and discipline. Creswell (2003) describes several types of interviews, such as free, structured or semi-structured or narrative. For this study, the author used a semi-structured format, which according to Reichel (2009, p 111-112), is characterized by having a prepared set of guiding questions and topics. However, there is no need to use these questions in a strictly defined order and the interviewer may even modify the wording of questions or ask additional questions in order to follow the flow of thought of interviewees when discussing certain aspects. The flexibility offered by the semi-structured interview seems appropriate to create a natural discussion bond between the interviewer and informant. Reichl also recommends that the semi-structured interview can take place in a variety of formal or less formal environments, such as an office, café, and so on. In this study, the four interviews was held in a cafe, in one person's home, the remaining two at the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague.

Using a semi-structured format as noted above, the following guiding questions provided an opportunity to set the stage for gathering information about being a musician/music educator/creator during and after Communist times. As it was anticipated, interviewees began by responding to these questions, and then with probing, included other topics they deemed appropriate. The opening discussion allowed the researcher to record the person's biographic information including their name, year of birth, place of birth, and educational accomplishments.

Guiding Questions:

1. I invite you to describe your life history as part of this interview. If there are aspects

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that you do not want to discuss, or not have recorded, please let me know and I will not record them.

2. Can you describe your recollections of childhood, including your own personal musical training and education?
3. What was your life like before WWII?
4. Describe your life as a musician/student/educator during WWII.
5. How did your life change at the beginning of, and then during the communist period?
6. How did your work as a musician/music educator change at the beginning of, and then during the communist period?
7. Was there any impact on your life and work after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in August, 1968? Can you describe this?
8. Describe how your life and work changed in 1989 and then during democratization?
9. How have things changed from 1989 to the present - for you as a musician/educator/composer? For your family? For Czech people? For Czech society?
10. How would you compare Czech music education from communist times to the present?
11. As you reflect back on your career in music, what were the best times? Why? What were the worst? Why?
12. What are the lessons you have learned about yourself during your life? About music education?
13. What contributions to music education do you feel you have made?
14. What do you still want to accomplish for Czech music education?
15. What are the lessons you have learned that you would share with new Czech music

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educators?

These questions provided a foundation for discussions with each of the prominent Czech choral music educators interviewed. The following introduces each musician and provides a brief biography to set the stage for the content in the following chapters.

1. *Marek Kopelent (b. 1932).*

A highly respected and decorated Czech choral and instrumental music composer, Marek Kopelent is quite open about how he suffered under communist-imposed restrictions and prohibitions (Matzner, 2009). He is known for his incidental music and instructive and recitative songs for children (Matzner, 2009). Like other outstanding composers of his time, Kopelent was banned from composing for over 20 years and his works were not allowed to be performed in Czechoslovakia. In fact, most of his works were premiered abroad without him ever having the opportunity to hear them. Kopelent was chosen to be part of this study because the researcher felt that his perspective as a famous Czech composer who was persecuted during communist times would provide important data for the study.

Kopelent was born in Prague in 1932. His mother, a French teacher who loved French literature, had a great influence on him with respect to an appreciation for French culture. Prior to World War II, Kopelent attended a French nursery school in Prague. In Grade One, the school was closed after Hitler invaded the city, so he was sent to a school in the Pankrác district of Prague; he began his high school education in a gymnasium in the Michle district of Prague, but after the revolution in 1945, he was moved to a French gymnasium in Dejvice within Prague. However, with the onset of the communist takeover in 1948, and three months before his graduation, Kopelent suffered a bitter blow

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as the French school was closed. The Communist Party banned French teaching and the teachers were forced to leave the country.

Both of his parents were from the generation in the Czech lands that lived under the first Czech president, T.G. Masaryk. Kopelent's father loved music and literature, and his childhood life was steeped in culture, which had a significant influence on him. At age 14, he started studying piano and harmony, later vocal counterpoint and composition. In 1950 he auditioned for the Academy for Performing Arts in Prague. Like his classmates who had studied at the French school, he recalled that his previous education at the French school resulted in a negative experience during his university auditions. Kopelent was accepted into the Academy, not to the regular program, but to the preparatory class at the conservatory. After a year in the preparatory school, he auditioned again and was finally accepted. Kopelent recalls that his first music education experiences in basic schools were based on singing folk songs; and, during his life as a composer, he was heavily influenced by this experience.

Upon graduation from the Academy, Kopelent was not awarded a "red" diploma, which was a symbol for students with best marks, because of political reasons. This was his first recollection of encountering the strength of communist power. This influence persisted when even after graduation he was unable to find a job. While it was common in other fields for graduates to receive allocated positions, artists, under communism, were "private entrepreneurs." Finally, in 1955, he secured a position with the influential state publishers of literature, music and art; in 1960, the Music Scores Department was transferred from this company to Supraphon, the biggest Czechoslovakian gramophone recording company. Kopelent worked in these two companies for 15 years and was fired

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for political reasons. More details about his termination and the politics involved are provided in later chapters.

In 1965, while still working in the publishing company, Kopelant became the artistic director of the influential chamber ensemble, *Musica Viva Pragensis*. As he recounts the experience, however, although hired as its artistic director, he was actually its chief administrator. The ensemble rose to prominence in Prague, and was allowed to travel abroad. As a result, Kopelant's reputation as a composer also grew abroad to parallel the number of international engagements for the ensemble. Kopelant noted that the communist regime allowed the ensemble to travel abroad because it was earning money and financially supporting *Pragokonzert*, the only production and concert management company in Czechoslovakia, through assessed fees.

Following the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, the country existed in a condition called 'normalization.' This term refers to the period from 1968 to 1989 when the developing democratization process in Czechoslovakia was frozen and most of its outcomes were destroyed. This 20-year period is seen as a time of the recovery of Neo-Stalinism, and a gradual dulling of political resistance (Mach, 2013). This period affected many people, and especially Kopelant. In 1969, he won a scholarship at the *Deutsche Akademie* and a position in West Berlin. However, after his return to Czechoslovakia, he was fired from *Supraphon*, and then expelled from the Union of Composers. Performances of his compositions were subsequently banned for the next 20 years.

By 1976, Kopelant had found a job as an accompanist for the dance department of the music school in Prague and worked there for 15 years until 1991, two years after the Velvet Revolution. He was then hired for a very brief period as a music expert in the

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Office of the President for Václav Havel and later named a Professor of Music at the Prague Academy of Music in 1991. In spite of his difficulties with the communist regime, however, he was celebrated outside his own country and that same year was made a *Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres* by the French government. On the occasion of the 94th anniversary of the Czechoslovak Republic in 2012, he received the Medal of Merit from the President of the Czech Republic, Vaclav Klaus.

For this research Kopelent's contribution are especially significant in the chapters devoted to the years after 1968, when he was working at the Music School, and after the Velvet Revolution, when he became Professor at the Prague Academy of Arts. As is explained later, he was the only one of the four interviewees who noted publicly that he suffered under the communist regime.

2. Jiří Chvála (b. 1933)

Conductor and choirmaster, Jiří Chvála, is renowned as the conductor of the Prague Philharmonic Choir and also the famous Kühn children's choir in Prague. The Kühn Children's Choir may be the most highly regarded of the Czech children's choirs and has performed in almost all European countries and participated in major music festivals. Chvála has been a juror of Czech and international competitions and, since the fall of communism, has been invited to teach in Prague, Tokyo, Osaka, Nagoya, Singapore, and Ottawa (Hanák, 2006).

Chvála, born in 1933 in Moraveč, grew up in a family of teachers; his father taught at a gymnasium and was a great musician. He had three siblings, and was a gifted and natural musician as a child and taught himself to play the violin. When he was six years old, he began to play the piano. After he graduated from the gymnasium, he was

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uncertain as to which path he should follow, but his interest in music led him to study conducting, although he had little experience. Although he felt somewhat nervous about leaving his village and going to the large city, he travelled to Prague where he was accepted into the preparation course of the Prague conservatory. After a year, he auditioned again and was accepted to the Academy of Performing Arts. Chvála's story is similar to what happened to Kopelent in that he was only offered admission to the preparatory class; however, Chvála saw this as a natural progression because he had come from a small town and felt he did not have the necessary musical education prerequisites.

At the Academy, he studied conducting and singing with Jan Kühn (1891 – 1958), who had just begun teaching there, and became assistant conductor to Kühn's Czech Choir. After Kühn's death in 1978, Chvála stayed on as assistant to Kühn's successor, Josef Veselka, who was responsible for the professionalization of the Czech choir.

Upon graduation, Chvála was hired at the Academy as an accompanist and teacher, and later was appointed an Associate Professor there. Another milestone in his life occurred in 1967, when he was named artistic director of the Kühn Children's Choir. He stayed in this position as an artistic director throughout the rest of the communist period and continuing to the present day, and he remains on the faculty of the Prague Academy. After the Velvet Revolution, Chvála received the Frantisek Lýsek Award presented to the best choirmaster of children's choirs by the Union of Czech choirs and, in 2013, he received a medal from the Ministry of Education Artis Bohemiae Amicis for promoting Czech music at home and abroad.

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For this research Chvála's professional experience is important because he worked all his life as a choirmaster and teacher in Prague, which was the centre of the Czech musical world. His presence in Prague, Chvála believed, provided more professional opportunities and leadership possibilities compared to other cities in Czechoslovakia. As 'Praguer,' he was able to gain greater insight into Czech cultural life; for this research his views are useful as a comparator with other persons' comments and perspectives on the state of choral music education.

3. Blanka Kulínská-Bicanová (b. 1935)

The third Czech music educator to be interviewed was Blanka Kulínská, the co-director of the Czech Radio Children's Choir from 1952 to 1973, who then founded Bambini di Praga in 1973 with her husband. She and her late husband, Bohumil Kulínský Sr., were two of the most influential Czech choral conductors in the field of choral music and music education during the past half century. With Bambini di Praga, they toured internationally both during the communist period and after the Velvet Revolution (Poláček, 2011). Her life story and experiences resemble those of Jiří Chvála.

Blanka Kulínská-Bicanová was born in 1935 in Chlaponice, a village 100 km south of Prague. When she was 4 years old, her father, who was in the army, moved the entire family to the capital city, Prague. In 1944, when Bicanová was nine years old, she was accepted into the Prague Philharmonic Children's Choir, conducted by the aforementioned Jan Kühn. As mentioned above, Kühn was influential and highly respected in the field of Czech children choral singing and founder of the Prague Philharmonic Children's Choir. However, the choir was interrupted in the spring of 1945 during the Prague uprising against the Germans, which marked the end of the World War

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II. After the liberation, the Children's Choir of Czechoslovak Radio was founded, and Bicanová and her sister received an invitation to audition for the choir. The auditions were led by Zdeněk Stárek, assistant of Alois Hába and both were accepted. (As an interesting aside, Hába was an important personality in Czech music who engaged in micro-intervallic music using a quarter-tone scale and participated in the design and construction of music instruments that could play these micro-interval tonal range. He was known for composing the quarter-tone opera "Mother"). Blanka Kulínská-Bicanová was one of only a few children in the Czechoslovak Radio choir who had sung before. At the first rehearsal, the children learned from Hába that the new choirmaster would be Bohumil Kulínský from Ostrava, who later became Kulínská's husband.

Kulínská recalls that the first tour in which she participated as a singer was to Sweden in 1948. This tour was organized to support Czechoslovakian children affected by the war. The Swedish government at the time was committed to helping Czechoslovakian children recover from their war-time experience. The choir was highly successful in Sweden, and as Kulínská remembered, the critics raved about the works of Czech composers, especially Jaroslav Křička, who was very popular in Sweden at that time. Because Kulínská loved working with young children, she started to work with a training choir as a teacher and choirmaster at age 15. When she was 19, she married Kulínský.

Kulínská recalled that before World War II, Hába was the head of the State school radio program. Every day he would give a live broadcast to all schools at 10:00 a.m. She loved the program and when in Grade Eight, she became one of the radio singers. Even later, when she was working for Czech Radio, these broadcasts were still popular in

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Prague. However, the radio broadcast ended with the expansion of television throughout the Czech territory.

In 1966, Kulínská began her studies at the Pedagogical Faculty of Charles University in Prague in the field of aesthetics, philosophy, and pedagogy while also privately studying singing and piano. Later, in 1971, she completed her doctoral thesis on children's choral works by contemporary composers. She led the boys' division of the Men's Choir of Prague Symphony Orchestra from 1972 to 1977 and worked with her husband with the children's choir of the Czechoslovak Radio. In 1973, political issues related to the fact that they were not members of the Communist Party led to their involuntary termination with Czechoslovak Radio. The radio management changed the locks on the rehearsal room and were about to appoint a new choirmaster. However, most of the children left the choir with Kulínský and Kulínská, who immediately formed a new choir called Bambini di Praga. Kulínská remembers that it was her idea to give the new choir an Italian name – Bambini di Praga, meaning The Children from Prague.

Bambini di Praga had no difficulty touring abroad during communist times and their tours were organized by Czechoslovakian state management Pragokonzert. Kulínská recalled that they did not have problems with communist regime because the choir brought money to Pragokonzert from abroad.

In 1977, Kulínský's son Bohumil was also named a Bambini di Praga choirmaster with his parents, until his father's death in 1988, when the choir was led by Kulínská and her son. After the Velvet Revolution they founded a highly successful private choir school as part of the choir. Although Bambini di Praga was a renowned choral organization in the Czech Republic, its reputation was destroyed in 2004, when her son,

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Kulínský, was arrested for abusing children in the choir. The choir subsequently ceased all activity in 2011. In 2012, Kulínská received a prestigious award for lifetime artistic contribution to the development of children's choir from the Czech Music Council.

Kulínská was chosen to be part of this dissertation for two reasons. She was the founding director of one of the most renowned Czechoslovakian (and later Czech) children's choirs; and secondly she provides a woman's perspective in her description of choral music education during communist times. It is important to note that neither Czechoslovakia nor the Czech Republic had any sort of gender balance in terms of notable choral music educators. Thus her female perspective is both relevant and worthy of inclusion.

4. *Jiří Skopal (b. 1947)*

The final interviewee, Jiří Skopal currently works as a conductor, music educator and concert organizer in the city of Hradec Kralove, a city with a population of about 100,000, located 120 kilometers from Prague. He was appointed Professor at the College of Education (later University of Hradec Králové) in 1974 and then served as Head of the Department of Music from 1986 to 1990. In 1977, he assumed directorship of the Children's Choir Jitro (hereafter simply referred to as Jitro), which under his direction, toured extensively throughout Europe, Asia, and the United States. In 1982, he also founded the Boni Pueri Boys' Choir and restored a tradition of boys' choir singing in the Czech territory that had waned in the beginning of the 20th century (Poláček, 2010). It is important to note that the researcher sang in both Jitro and Boni Pueri throughout his childhood and teenage years, and Skopal was his choral conductor.

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Skopal was born in Velké Losiny, Czechoslovakia and grew up in the village of Zvole, as an only child. Because his father was the head teacher (or school principal), he lived right in the school building. His father was also a musician, and conductor of the Choral Society of North Moravian Teachers. He also led a children's choir and, as a scientist, he worked on music education research methods. He served as a member of juries and committees of several local and national choral competitions, and stood out as an excellent pianist. He arranged for his son to study the violin and the accordion. At 12 years of age, the young Skopal began studying the clarinet, and one year later he began playing in the school orchestra. While he grew up immersed in music, it never occurred to him that he would pursue music as a career in the future because at that time he was much more interested in sports. However, he realized that he loved playing clarinet, especially jazz. At 18, he went to Palacký University in Olomouc, but the only options for him were teaching mathematics or music. He chose music and soon became assistant choirmaster of the university choir. Growing up, he had attended a number of choral concerts, including the Olomouc Children's Choir, other local choirs, and a men's choir, and he fell in love with choral music. Unbeknownst to him at the time, his university education study was in fact his foundation and preparation to start his own choir. During his first teaching position in Postřelmov (near his birthplace), he created a choir of 150 children that in its second year won first place in a prestigious competition. After several years, he took several conducting courses and applied to teach at Olomouc University as a teacher. However, because he was not a member of Communist Party at that time, he could not be hired. He was accepted then to Hradec Králové University, where he was auditioned by Bohumil Kulínský, husband of Blanka Kulínská.

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Skopal joined the Faculty of Education, University of Hradec Králové in 1974, and from 1986 to 1990 he was named Head of the Department of Music. His doctoral research was devoted to the field of music perception and music psychology. In 1977, he assumed leadership of the Jitro children's choir and, with his wife Květoslava Skopalová, founded the boys choir Boni Pueri in Hradec Králové in 1982.

Although Skopal is 10 years younger than the other interview subjects, he was chosen for this study to provide a somewhat different perspective from the other interviewees. The researcher predicted that Skopal's description of events from a perspective from outside of Prague during the period of study could serve as a counterpoint to Chvála and Kulínská, who both worked in the capital city.

The previous brief descriptions of the musical lives of the four musicians interviewed for this study provide important background information for the study and to give readers an overview of music education practices in the Czech lands as described by individuals intimately involved in music education during the two periods of study in this thesis; they provide a cultural and political perspective to the educational and political events that impacted Czech choral music education. The following table provides a summary overview of the life events of the four persons interviewed according to the time periods described in the following chapters.

Table 1: A summary overview of the life events of Kopelent, Chvála, Kulínská and Skopal.

Time	Kopelent	Chvála	Kulínská	Skopal
before WWII	1932 — born in Prague 1938 — entered school	1933 — born in Moraveč	1935 — born in Chlaponice	
1939 WWII	1939 — moved to different school	1939 — entered school	1941 — entered school	

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			1944 — accepted to Prague Philharmonic Children's Choir	
1945 After WWII	1945 — continued studying at Gymnasium		1945 — accepted to Children's Choir of Czechoslovak Radio	1947 — born at Velké Losiny
1948 Onset of communism	1950 — accepted to preparation course for Prague Academy 1951 — accepted to Prague Academy 1955 — graduated from Prague Academy, started working at Music Scores Department as editor 1960 — Departmental transfer to Supraphon company 1965 — became artistic director of Musica Viva Pragensis	1952 — accepted to preparation course for Prague Academy 1953 — accepted to Prague Academy 1957 — graduated from Prague Academy 1958 — continued teaching there 1959 — became second choirmaster of Kühn's Children's Choir 1967 — became artistic director of KCC	1950 — started working with the training choir 1950 — started studying at Gymnasium 1954 — graduated at Gymnasium 1954 — married Bohumil Kulínský 1966 — studied at Pedagogical faculty of Charles University	1953 — entered school 1965 — started studying at Pedagogical faculty of University of Olomouc
1968 After Soviet invasion	1969 — scholarship at Deutsche Akademie 1970 — fired from Supraphon 1976 — working as accompanist at Music School in Prague	1975 — habilitation at Prague Academy 1984 — awarded with Medal to Year of Czech Music 1986 — named as professor at Prague Academy	1971 — graduated at Charles University as PhDr. 1973 — fired from the Czechoslovak Radio and Radion Children's Choir, starting new choir Bambini di Praga	1969 — graduated at University 1973 — graduated as PhDr. at Charles University 1974 — started teaching at Hradec Kralove University 1977 — started working with Jitro Children's Choir 1982 — habilitated at Charles University (CSc.) 1982 — started new boys choir in Hradec Kralove

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1989 After Velvet Revolution	1991 — music expert for president Václav Havel office 1991 — Professor of Music at Prague Academy 2012 — received Medal of Merit	1996 — Award of Frantisek Lysek 2003 — Medal of the Ministry of Education	1992 — started private choir school 2010 — received from the Czech Music Council an award for lifetime artistic contribution to the development of children's choral singing	1991 — habilitated (doc.) 1994 — named professor 2000 — received an award for outstanding contribution to culture Primus Inter Pares 2004 — became president of the Hradec Králové festival of choral singing
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Overview of the Study

This study recounts the aspects of the story of Czech choral music in the Czech lands from 1948 to 2011 by weaving historical information and artifacts with information from the interviews. Each serves to fill gaps, and to generally expand upon the historical record to explain who was involved, what happened, when, where and why. The thesis is divided into chapters according to significant historical periods and events. The following provides a brief overview of the next chapters in the dissertation.

In order to understand the cultural significance of singing and music education in the Czech context, it is important to understand the historical foundations of Czech music. Chapter Two briefly reviews the literature on the histories of education and music education in the Czech lands with an emphasis on political events and social and cultural changes that influenced them from the earliest recorded times to the culmination of World War II when the Soviet occupation began.

The third chapter begins to weave a narrative of the story(s) of choral music education in the Czech lands from 1948 to 1968 combining chronology with topics. This 20 year period can be characterized as a progression from the hard and fast rules of

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communism to a gradual relaxation and releasing of power. During this period, the social situation in Czechoslovakia improved with more freedom of expression and better quality of life. It was the time when Blanka Kulínská started working with the children's choir of Czech Radio, and Marek Kopelent graduated from the Academy of Performing Arts to begin his career as a composer.

Chapter Four is devoted to the momentous year, 1968, when the Warsaw Pact Army reinvaded the Czech territories and re-established the strict rules and consolidation of communist power, resulting in even greater oppression for the Czech population. As will be explained, many people in the Czech intelligentsia, including musicians and composers, lost their jobs over the next 20 years and many others went into exile. The interviews with Skopal, Kulínská, and Chvála shed light on the experience of choral music educators during this troubling and sometimes dangerous period, providing voice and insight into the historical documents and artifacts of this period.

The fifth chapter, focusing on the years from 1969 to 1989, describes the period immediately following the events of 1968 and is called the period of normalization. Politically, it was a period of restriction and human rights abuses. In 1977, representatives from various professions, including poet Vaclav Havel (who later became president), wrote a public statement entitled *Charter 77* defending the rights and freedoms of Czech citizens. At the same time, Kulínská & Kulínský established the well-known children's choir, Bamini di Praga. Skopal took over the children's choir Jitro and founded the Boni Pueri Boys Choir, while Chvála led the Kühn Children's Choir. All of these choirs have earned international recognition. Kopelent was forced to become an

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accompanist at a primary music school. The findings in this chapter are both controversial and interesting.

The years from 1989 to 1992 are covered in the sixth chapter. In November 1989, the Velvet Revolution resulted in the fall of the communist regime and the election of poet Vaclav Havel as President of Czechoslovakia. This was the beginning of the transition from socialism to democracy in Czechoslovakia. Dramatic political and social change also affected music education, however, much of that took years to occur. The end of 1992 marked the peaceful division of Czechoslovakia into two independent countries, the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

Chapter Seven covers the independent Czech Republic from 1993 to 2011. This period was a time of great reform and included the introduction of a curriculum framework for the entire educational system. Choirs as extracurricular activities were required for schools to obtain legal status, and some became private schools and others, non-profit organizations. Music education also had to compete with a growing range of other activities for children and to cope with a declining interest in music education.

In the eighth chapter, the researcher provides a summary, discussion, and analysis of the findings and data. The final chapter summarizes and provides conclusions and recommendations for future research.

This first chapter has provided an introduction and rationale, an overview of the study, its purpose(s), research questions, as well as outlining the methodology and parameters, including ethical considerations. The next chapter establishes the geographical, cultural, political and historical context and framework for the study while

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also helping readers to understand the uniqueness of choral singing and music education to the Czech experience.

Chapter 2:

A Brief History of Czech Education and Music Education to 1948

Although the study proper begins in 1948, a brief overview of the history of music education in the Czech Lands¹ is necessary to provide important background information and to put the findings about music education from 1948 to 2011 into proper context. In this chapter, the researcher focuses on the development of Czech music education since the 6th Century, when education, under the auspices of the Roman Catholic Church, began formally in medieval Europe. While some researchers go further back to the ancient cultures to look at informal education, my objective for this chapter, while not being judgmental of that work, is to create a brief overview of Czech education that includes the formal knowledge we have of education. For this chapter, the history of music education is divided into seven time periods that characterize the development of formal music education in the Czech Lands. Those periods are: 1) education in the Middle Ages; 2) Hussitism and Jan Amos Comenius (16th to 17th Century); 3) what Czech's refer to as the Dark Ages (16th to 18th Century); 4) Capitalism and the Czech National Revival (18th to 19th Century); 5) Independent Czechoslovakia (early 20th Century); 6) World War II (1939 to 1945); and 7) the period from the WWII to the onset of communism (1945 to 1948).

Introduction

Geographically, the Czech Republic is surrounded by mountains on all sides in the region of Central Europe, and stretches along three major rivers: the Vltava, Elbe and Morava. Before nationhood in 1992, the Czech Lands were not independent territories but were part of various larger territories or family dynasties in Europe. As early as the

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6th Century, a Slavic tribe settled in the area as the first permanent inhabitants. The areas merged into one territorial unit in the 10th Century during the reign of the Přemyslid family, which lasted until 1306. In 1212, the Golden Bull of Sicily was issued by the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II, who declared that the Czech throne would be hereditary and transfer from father to son within the Royal Family. (See Figure 1 below for a map of the Holy Roman Empire under the control of the Přemyslids. All color marked countries were under their domination.)



Figure 1: Territory under the control of the Přemyslids circa 1301 (Mozzan, 2011)

The reign of the Přemyslids was followed by the Luxembourgs (14th-15th Century), the Jagellons (15th-16th Century), and finally the Habsburgs (16th - early 20th Century).

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Century). Each family dominated a larger area in Europe than is currently recognized as the Czech Lands and these regions changed greatly over the centuries, not only because of wars, but also because of marriages between royal families. The current capital city, Prague, was often a seat of kings and rulers of European empires. However, the importance of Prague as a central city in European politics gradually declined and the throne later moved to Vienna during the reign of the Habsburgs.

Until 1918, the Czech Lands were governed by a monarchy and, at that point, the Czech Lands became a republic, called Czechoslovakia, with its own president. Creation of an independent Republic of Czechoslovakia came about as a result of prolonged efforts of Czech intellectuals to acquire greater rights in the multinational Habsburg monarchy. Since the Czech and Slovak people had a similar Slavic language, it seemed to make sense to create a bigger Czechoslovak state and not two separate countries. The onset of democracy supported the patriotic views of the political leaders of both countries, and with the exception of World War II, the alliance lasted until the end of 1992. In 1993, the Czech Lands separated peacefully from Slovakia, and became an independent state called the Czech Republic. In spite of its control by various other European dynasties, the development of Czech nationalism has been clearly documented (Semotanová 2003) and this sense of nationalistic patriotism had a profound impact on the education of its citizens, including music education. As well, in the historical development of Czech identity, education was significant in contributing to the development of the Czech identity within the European context, especially owing to the advances inspired and directed by such important educational figures as John Amos

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Comenius and Empress Maria Theresa, whose contributions are described in more detail in this chapter.

In order to gain a better understanding of the contributions of these and other people and events in shaping Czech education, and including music education, however, we need to start with a review of education as far back as the early Middle Ages.

Education in the early Middle Ages (4th – 15th Century)

In the European context the beginnings of religious education have been documented since the 4th Century A. D. In 313 A. D., the Edict of Milan marked Christianity as the state religion of the Roman Empire. The number of believers grew rapidly and as the need for priests increased, so too did it become necessary to formally educate priests. Thus monastic and cathedral schools were established—monastic schools for the education of monks, and cathedral schools educated future priests. Just as the influence of the church had a profound impact in Italy, so too did it in the Czech Lands (Kádner, 1912).

Semotanová (2003) explains that although the Czech Lands were a territory through which many tribes passed over the centuries, it was not until the 6th Century that a Slavic tribe finally settled there. However, like in Italy, the beginning of education was connected with the church and music. And singing, especially, was an important part of the liturgy. At this time, the singing was monophonic and is known today as Gregorian Chant (Kovařík, 1960).

The year 863 A. D. was a significant point for Czech religion and education with the arrival of two Slavic missionaries, Brothers Constantine and Methodius, whose task was to proselytize Roman Catholicism to as many people as possible. There were no

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Czech Christians at that time; all religious services were held in Latin—a language that the Slavic people did not understand. These missionaries were successful in converting the Czechs to Christianity in part because they spoke the Slavic language. Constantine even created a special script — the Glagolitic alphabet for this purpose². Kovařík (1960) identifies this as the beginning of formal education in the Czech Lands as Constantine and Methodius taught the Czech people the spiritual songs in their own Slavic language while simultaneously incorporating Roman Gregorian chant in Latin into instruction. The first school identified in which Roman singing was taught was the Latin School in Budeč, founded in the 10th Century. One of the first students at this school was Wenceslas I who later became the Czech patron saint. He loved music and had studied it there. Nejedlý (1904) wrote that Wenceslas later insisted that all people in his household had to learn singing and were to sing psalms as they did their work for him. Perhaps this is one small piece of evidence to demonstrate that the nobility placed significant emphasis on music learning and performance.

Beginning in 973 A.D, when the Prague Bishopric was founded, there were also many cathedral schools established by the Benedictine Order. The most important was the school at the St. Vitus Cathedral at Prague Castle, led by Canon Vit, who began serving at the Cathedral in 1234 and who brought about major reform to music education. Canons held the leading positions in the cathedrals, which meant they were in charge of singing, along with the rest of the details of running the church. Vit eventually delegated the leadership of singing to people in lower positions who were paid for this activity so that there would be better results. It was during this time that the first boys' choir—called Bonifantes (the Good Pupils)—was established in the country, and according to this

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model there were other similar choirs established in the whole country (Kovařík, 1960). Still, even in the 13th Century, the only schools were church schools in which singing was the main subject after Latin. Even in the present day, church schools continue to be the venues for preparing cantors and organists, and it was these schools that laid the foundation of growth for Czech vocal and instrumental music to train future musicians and leaders for the church (Gergor & Sedlický, 1990).

In the 12th and 13th Centuries, the sovereign power of the Premyslides was growing in importance. The Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II, presented Ottokar I, the ruling Přemyslides monarch, with the Golden Bull of Sicily in Basel as a reward for his support in the fight for the imperial crown. The Bull declared that the Czech throne would become hereditary from father to son within the Přemyslides Royal Family, which was an important and significant gesture for future Czech independence and the Czech throne. During the reign of the Přemyslids, villages and towns sprang up, and it was during this time that we see the beginning of the division of society into craftsmen and farmers—craftsmen were concentrated in towns, farmers in villages.

Further impacting the development in the Czech Lands were The Crusades which were expeditionary wars of the Catholic Church blessed by the Pope between the 11th and 13th Century. The Crusades had a significant influence on all of Europe, including the Czech Lands, in terms of travel, trade, and societal growth. As the Crusades travelled through the Czech Lands, Czechs acquired new possibilities for trading, because these people sold, bought, and traded goods from further distances away, which created massive change. Towns became richer as well as centers of economic and political life. However, education was still in the hands of the Church so a need for independent town

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schools became apparent. In some places, the towns tried to take control over the church schools while in other places they established their own independent town schools (Horák & Kratochvíl, 2005).

Further development of education occurred with the establishment of Prague University (now Charles University) in 1348. Music at the University was deemed an important part of the curriculum (*kvadrivia*) along with mathematics, geometry, and astronomy. But music was taught theoretically, as a science, similar to mathematics, and there was no connection with practice. Although the students only learned music theory, there is some evidence that outside of school there was some performance occurring. For example, Kovařík (1960) notes that there are records of student songs created at this time.

After the founding of Charles University, the educational structure in the Czech territory diversified and consisted of church schools, which taught religion, singing, reading, writing, numbers, and liberal arts; elementary schools, which taught in the mother tongues in villages; particulate schools (town schools), that taught reading, writing, religion; Latin grammar schools (these schools later changed into gymnasiums or lyceums); and finally Charles University in Prague, that consisted of a Faculty of Arts that taught the seven liberal arts (grammar, rhetoric, dialectic, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music); and Faculties of Law, Medicine and Theology (Horák & Kratochvíl, 2005).

Although the schools each had unique responsibilities, there were two commonalities, in that singing was taught daily (Kovařík, 1960), and the content was dominated by the Church. However, music teaching was not uniform across each school system. The particulate schools had the most advanced music curriculum as they were

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supervised by the University which sent cantors, the trained music teachers of the time, to these schools. Kovařík, (based on the writing of Winter, 1901), notes that instrumental music was not yet implemented in schools, mainly because the Church did not allow it during the services.

The Impacts of Hussitism and Jan Amos Comenius on Music Education (15th – 16th century)

The turn of the 14th and 15th Century brought several new trends to the Czech Lands, including the principles of the Renaissance and Humanism which originated in Italy. The Ancient Greeks and Romans were considered the most advanced nations of the times with high standards of education, and the Renaissance symbolized a return to the ideals of Ancient Greek and Roman life in art, education, and of course music (Horák & Kratochvíl, 2005). Humanist ideals brought an interest in the human personality, a prerequisite of which is that people exist as individuals and not just as members of society. Thus, humanism marked the beginning of a retreat from religious values (Horák & Kratochvíl, 2005). The direction of humanism together with the culmination of feudalism across Europe widened the divisions between the Church and the nobility, and caused the first protests against the Church. It did not take long before the first protesters tried to reform the Church to be more humanist, to be more oriented to ordinary people (Horák & Kratochvíl, 2005).

The first nationalist Czech religious reformer appeared during the early 15th Century. Czech priest and philosopher Jan Hus took on a reformation of the Church—not dissimilar to Martin Luther who lived later in Germany. Hus spoke sharply against the Church, and for this, he was burned in 1415 in Constance (a town in southwest

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Germany). Hus' followers formed the controversial Christian Hussite movement (later called Hussitism), and for 20 years they plundered the Czech Lands, destroyed churches and fought for freedom and a better life (Horák & Kratochvíl, 2005). They believed in Hus' reformist ideas and literally fought for the reformation of the Church. With respect to education, the Hussites were opposed to the official indoctrination of the Roman Catholic church, which was the main content of education in the schools, and demanded that the Czech language be taught in schools, not Latin. In consequence, and whereas the town schools which taught in Latin began to lose their importance, those in the villages gained in importance because they were already teaching in the vernacular language (Horák & Kratochvíl, 2005).

With regard to music, Hussitism focused on unison choral music while the rest of Europe was immersed in Renaissance polyphony. It almost seemed as if the Czech Lands were suspended in overall musical development (Nejedlý, 1913). However, the positive aspect was that the Hussites contributed to the expansion of music in the entire nation and Czech Hussite songs laid the basis for Czech sacred hymns in later years. Many of those songs were written down and have been preserved in historical hymnbooks as noted in the example below (Nejedlý, 1913).



Figure 2: Chant *Ye are God's Warriors* from the Jistebnice Hymn Book

Another positive development during the Hussite movement was that singing and education became accessible for girls, this had not previously been acceptable in Christian schools.

Gregor & Sedlický (1990) note that after the defeat of the Hussite troops by an army of nobility and Catholics, called the Bohemian League, the Church dominated the Czech lands again. However, a new religious order, based on the Hussite movement, called the Unity of the Brethren sprung up, which served as an alternative to traditional Catholicism. Scholars of this order created hymnbooks which were used in the town

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schools and schools in the country. One member of the Order, Jan Blahoslav, created another book entitled *Musica* for singers in 1558, which was an overview of music theory. A second edition, entitled *Encore*, published in 1569, was the first Czech textbook devoted to singing.

Jan Amos Comenius, another important scholar in the non-Catholic Unity of Brethren movement, was the leader of the educated humanist thinkers, and in present times is called the Teacher of Nations (Gregor & Sedlický, 1990). Comenius pioneered what he considered a perfect system of schools, divided primarily by age, not dissimilar to the current Czech educational system. His divisions were nursery schools, normal schools, and Latin schools and academies. He emphasized singing, starting one of his books with: “Music is the most natural part of us” (cited in Gregor & Sedlický, 1990, p. 14). Comenius believed students should study singing every day in the schools because music was an essential part of general education. Comenius’ contribution to music education can be found especially in his two books, the first of which was *Didactica Magna* (Great Pedagogies) which includes a curriculum of singing for all ages. In nursery school, pupils learned simple hymns and psalms while those in primary school learned to sing all traditional tunes, learned figural music of the Mass, and sang most of the Psalms and songs by memory. He expected the children to become practical and theoretical musicians (Komenský, 1938). His second major publication for kindergarten, entitled *Informatorium*, encouraged singing rhymes and rhythms with children, and playing various, simple instruments such as musical toys, sticks, drums, and so on. He also recommended that they should also be able to sing a melody and in harmony, and that teachers should sing simple Czech tunes and lullabies for them. Children should start

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singing by four years of age and, by their sixth year, they should already know several songs by memory. Comenius also noted that the biggest influence for the child's development was the overall musicality of the family (Komenský, 1938). Kovařík (1960) suggests that during Comenius' time, music education in schools was already quite developed. There is no doubt that Comenius was a pioneer and innovator in the musical education of young children, and in this area, he was ahead of his time.

The Czech Dark Ages (17th – 18th century)

Comenius' death coincided with the onset of what the Czechs call the Dark Ages, which was the period beginning after the Battle of White Mountain in 1620, when the Czech non-Catholic states (members and supporters of Unity of the Brethren) were defeated by the Roman Catholic Church, which had the support of troops from the Holy Roman Empire. The Czech Dark Ages included also the Baroque period. After the Battle of 1620, many Czech non-Catholic scholars and personalities were forced to emigrate to other European countries. Known as the Dark Ages because it marked the time of oppression by the Roman Catholic Church, Kovařík (1960) noted that people felt isolated, because during the baroque period, education was in the hands of Jesuits, who had no interest in the development of Czech education. Instrumental music was now taught in the schools to prepare church musicians, and the University lost its programs to educate the cantors who used to be assigned to the schools. But although the Czech educational system suffered under the government of the Jesuits, music education had the opposite experience. The Jesuits were well aware of the influence that music had on people and they emphasized practical music lessons. In the 18th, Century Jesuit colleges

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were mainly music schools, in which singers and instrumentalists were trained (Kovařík, 1960).

At the beginning of the 17th Century, the Piarist Order, also called the Order of Poor Clerics Regular of the Mother of God of the Pious Schools, came to the Czech Lands from Rome (Kadlec, 2012). The Piarists were responsible for the education of orphaned children. Religion and singing formed the main curriculum, which was taught several times a day. Instrumental music was taught four times a week. It is interesting to note that only tenors were selected as teachers in these schools, and they were often brought in from abroad, usually from Italy. There is also some historical evidence that the students performed school plays and sang operas (Gregor & Sedlický, 1990).

For 200 years until the 19th Century, the city schools, the university, and education in general were controlled by the Jesuits, whose aim was to re-catholicize the Czech population—perhaps in retribution for the Hussite reform movement. Czech culture was banned and non-Catholic books were burned en masse. However, Czech musical culture was preserved in the small villages and rural schools, primarily due to cantors, the teachers, who were not under the influence of Jesuits and their educational system (Gergor & Sedlický, 1990).

Capitalism and the Czech National Revival (18th – 19th century)

Empress Maria Theresa of the Hapsburg Dynasty who ascended to the Czech throne in 1740 until 1780, is also cited by Gregor & Sedlický (1990) as playing an important role in education in the Czech Lands as well as the rest of Europe. Her forefathers, who had ruled the Czech Lands, had allowed education to be controlled by the Jesuits and it was in poor condition at the time of the Empress' accession to the

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throne. As previously mentioned, the Jesuits had no interest in the development of Czech education, their interest was confined to music education which was excellent. So Maria Theresa took on school reform as her primary political issue and placed the school system under state supervision, establishing central school offices. In 1774, she issued a general school law, first in the German and Austrian schools, and three years later in the Czech Lands, stating that it was compulsory for all children to attend school for six years. Her school reforms placed an emphasis on the Germanization of Czech schools so that teaching in city schools took place fundamentally in the German language. Maria Theresa's school system was profoundly different in the large cities and villages. In the villages, the schools were called trivial schools (from latin, *trivialis*, simple). These schools were intended to teach only the simple basics of reading, writing and counting. The main schools were in the cities where, besides teaching students to read, write and count, they also learned history, geography, mathematics and physics. Education was based on the memorization of simple texts and the maintenance of the hierarchy of subjects. It was not important how to teach, but what to teach and in which order (Gregor & Sedlický, 1990).

Gregor & Sedlický (1990) point out that for the first time in the history of education in the Czech Lands music lost its importance as a subject. Music lessons were now an optional subject in the schools and singing was not taught at all. Education changed to embrace mass, compulsory education while suppressing Czech language and music education. In the countryside, music fared somewhat better, because the Czech language and music education were maintained there due to the commitment of the singing teachers, one of whom was Jakub Jan Ryba, a teacher, composer, and music

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theorist. He taught music and translated musical terminology into Czech. Ryba is often referred to as the earliest proponent of the Czech National Revival, which came much later (Gregor & Sedlický, 1990).

There were many private music teachers in Prague at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries, because the teaching of music had been completely stopped owing to Maria Theresa's reforms, as previously mentioned. Those private instructors took over the role of teaching music at the schools. The Prague Conservatory was founded in 1811 and brought together most of the private teachers of that time to educate young composers and musicians, and to educate new members for the Prague theater orchestras. Music conservatories were also established in other cities, such as Kroměříž, and these schools complemented the town/village music school programs (Gregor & Sedlický, 1990).

The 19th Century is noted for the Czech National Revival. As already mentioned, after 1620, the Czech educational system as well as the entire Czech Lands had been subjected to strong Germanization. In the beginning of the 19th Century, many teachers who worked in the Czech countryside came out of the German Theresian School but were conscientious Czech patriots. They believed that the teaching profession could play a significant role in revitalizing Czech culture and were in contact with the Czech revivalists to develop a curriculum of Czech patriotic history, geography, and singing and founded Czech libraries and choirs.

There was a revolutionary atmosphere in Europe in the years 1848 and 1849 that inspired teachers, journalists, and politicians to believe in improved teaching and progressive school reforms. Reforms, such as the mandatory training of teachers, spread throughout Europe, including Germany, France, and even to England. In the Czech

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Lands, there was a realization that there were not enough textbooks in the Czech language that led to the creation of modern education textbooks (Horák & Kratochvíl, 2005). Austria at this time was in economic crisis, and in 1866, the Prussian army overwhelmingly defeated the Austrian army at the Battle at Hradec Kralove. The Austro-Hungarian Compromise occurred one year later, meaning that the Austrian monarchy granted autonomy to Hungary (Semotanová, 2003). For the Czech Lands, this meant the creation of stronger ties to Austria. Before the creation of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Czech officials had hoped that they could gain their autonomy from the Austrian monarchy, but only Hungary was successful in creating its own government. The other Lands gained nothing, and for education it meant that the Czech school system was the same as in Austria.

1869 was an important year for education with the development of new school laws that required eight years of compulsory education for both girls and boys. Most significantly, music education was again named as a compulsory subject, and the first singing curriculum for elementary schools was established by ministerial decree in 1874. As Cmíral (1940) describes it:

the purpose of teaching was to wake up music education and euphony, and to recover patriotic love; to learn to recite the simple, national songs, to recognize the tone as high—low, short—long, strong—weak; to rehearse simple songs in a reasonable range of tone. (p.97)

From 1907 to 1915, the cultural significance of the music, explanations of musical personalities, and the basics of musical forms were added to the curriculum. The situation was quite different in secondary schools where music education was an optional subject

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only (Kovařík, 1960). Starting in the fourth grade, pupils were to learn how to read music and to sing according to musical terms.

An entire thesis could also be written about the significance of the Czech and German private music schools in Prague and other major cities that developed at this point. National statistics report a total of 40 private institutions of music in Bohemia and Moravia in 1861, and this number increased over the next several years (Gregor & Sedlický, 1990). Czech music schools produced many influential and famous Czech composers, including Leoš Janáček (b. 1854-1928) who founded a significant organ school in Brno (1881), as well as other great music teachers in Prague—Bedřich Smetana (b. 1824-1884) and Antonín Dvořák (b. 1841-1904), who later became director of the Conservatory in New York. Many choral associations were established in Prague, Brno, Olomouc, and Kroměříž and the late 19th Century can be described as a blossoming of amateur choral singing. At the end of the 19th Century the first independent concert halls were opened, including the renowned Rudolfinum in Prague in 1855. And, in 1901, the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra was founded and began to organize educational concerts for young people. Many other orchestras in smaller cities followed the Prague example and began to hold similar educational concerts for students (Gergor & Sedlický, 1990).

To understand the development of the Czech Lands after 1900, it is necessary to describe the political situation in early 20th Century Europe. The area which included the Czech Lands grew steadily over the centuries to include a large part of Central and Eastern Europe. Prior to the First World War, the Austro-Hungarian Empire occupied a large portion of Europe—Bohemia, Moravia, Galicia, Austria, Tyrol, Carniola, Hungary, Transylvania, Croatia-Slavonia, Dalmatia, Bosnia, Herzegovina, and a small part of

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northern Italy (see Figure 3). It included many other territories next to the Czech Lands, and each territory wanted independence.



Figure 3: The Ethnic Groups of Austria-Hungary in 1910 (Andrein 2012).

Independent Czechoslovakia

The end of World War I brought about the termination of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Czarist Russia, the German Empire and the Ottoman Empire and the creation of successor states. Austria-Hungary was broken into Czechoslovakia (combining the Czech Lands and Slovakia to the east—a Slavic nation with a similar language to the Czechs), Austria and Hungary as independent nations, and the new states of Poland and Yugoslavia were created. Although Slovakia was closer to Hungary under the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Slovak nation had the same independent tendencies as the Czechs,

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and a similar language, so the creation of the Czechoslovak state was economically and politically the most acceptable option at the time (Horák & Kratochvíl, 2005). The first Czech president of Czechoslovakia was Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk. Figure 4 shows the extent of the first Czechoslovakian state.



Figure 4: Czechoslovakia in 1928-1938 (Panonian 2011).

Education in the newly established country began to grow rapidly and a second Czech university, Masaryk University, was established in Brno in 1919. Charles University established a new Faculty of Science and, in 1922, the Small Education Act was announced which unified education throughout the state. The Act was based on the Austrian system requiring eight years of compulsory school attendance. Simultaneously, a few secondary schools began to spring up around the country. Teachers were calling for higher education as there had been none since the 17th Century when the school system fell under the control of the Jesuits. The state ignored this request, and in 1921, two private colleges of teaching studies were founded in Prague and in Brno (Horák & Kratochvíl, 2005).

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A new curriculum for music education in primary schools, developed by music education specialists, was issued in 1915 and remained in use until 1930. It emphasized demand for continuous music learning through singing. Cmíral (1940) described the main requirements as involving musical direction, the need for beautiful singing with distinct pronunciation, intonation, correct accents, rhythmic accuracy, and proper phrasing and recitation. It prescribed exercises for ear training, vocalization, and rhythm. In addition to choral singing, solo singing was also recommended, which in the general educational direction supported a revival of patriotic sentiment. Singing was meant to improve religious beliefs and social sentiments. With respect to methodology, this was an important requirement which was a threefold way of practicing the songs; in the first stage by hearing, in the second stage, according to the notes, and finally, for both, the combination of hearing and notes. Kovařík (1960) notes that, although this curriculum had its advantages, music was only taught one hour per week, whereas previously singing had been taught daily.

Across Czechoslovakia, musical institutions attempted to increase the number of teaching hours. This was achieved in the elementary schools, but not in the secondary schools where music education was an optional subject. But in 1930, music was made compulsory for the first and second years of study. A new curriculum was developed for the primary schools between 1930 and 1933, in which the use of modern technology, such as the gramophone and films, were encouraged. Choral singing was only one part of the curriculum and appreciation of both Czech and European music was given a predominant role in the curriculum. By 1930, there were a total of 69 private and public music schools in Czechoslovakia. The only national music schools were the

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Conservatories in Prague and in Brno, which were nationalized in 1919. Other schools were private.

A critically important element of Czech music education was the development of school choirs in the beginning of 20th century. The creation of quality children's choirs at the same time also led to a wave of interest among Czech composers in children's songs and choral compositions. Such choirs were influenced by the development of the gramophone and the first educational records, as well as by the Czechoslovak Public Radio which was founded in 1923. These recordings, heard over the radio as regular school broadcasts, began in 1931 (Gregor & Sedlický, 1990). However, although there was a gradual growth and development in the period leading up to World War II, all efforts were interrupted by the onset of hostilities in 1939.

Czech Lands during World War II

In 1939, Czechoslovakia was divided. Slovakia declared itself an independent state and the Czech Republic was occupied by Nazi Germany. Czech universities were closed in 1939, secondary schools were significantly reduced, and primary schools were Germanized. The number of hours of German language was increased and many subjects were taught in German. Many secondary school students were deployed to war production as laborers, and music was used for political reasons, to unite people and strengthen the national character, and, for this reason, schools emphasized music (Gregor & Sedlický, 1990). However, the schools faced significant problems as there were few textbooks and teachers. During the war, children's community choirs grew in number, including the Kühn Children's Choir and Singers of Hrabůvka with choirmaster Bohumil Kulínský. Further, almost every major school had its own school choir. Czech Radio

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continued broadcasting educational programs and by the last years of the war, there was an appeal to expand public music schools. However, so many teachers were sent off to work in the German armaments industry that this was impossible (Gergor & Sedlický, 1990). This information forms an important backdrop to the coming chapters. As readers will learn in the following pages and chapters, individuals such as Kühn and Kulínský, and the Czechoslovak Radio, all played large and important roles in the following decades in the field of choral music education.

From the WWII to the onset of communism

The post-war period brought the division of Europe into East and West, and for Czechoslovakia it resulted in an unwilling alliance with the Soviet Union. It should be noted that the Czech lands were liberated by both armies—by the Soviet Army from the east and by the U.S. Army from the West. The Soviet Army liberated most of the Czech territory, and as a result, most of the nation was grateful to the Russians. The negotiations after the war meant that Czechoslovakia, as a country, was restored after the war ended in May 1945, but became part of the eastern bloc. The year 1945 is also connected with the expulsion of German citizens by the Czech government in the border areas as revenge for the injustices to the Czech nation during the War. President Edvard Beneš, who was the second Czechoslovakian president after T. G. Masaryk, signed a series of decrees in which German Lands were seized and allocated to Czechs—decrees still considered controversial, especially by the Germans. The Communist Party was elected in 1946 and communist leaders with the support of the Soviet Socialist Union of Republics very quickly took over the Czech Lands in 1948 (Semotanová, 2003).

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A communist coup took place in Czechoslovakia between February 17 and 25, 1948. Today it is seen as a transition from democracy to totalitarianism, from dissolution of state power to the Soviet bloc, the beginning of the oppression of the population, the cause of economic decline and a huge wave of emigration of the population. However, the communist actions came on gradually and people did not initially sense that something was wrong. In 1945, the people in the Czech lands were happy that World War II had ended and that Hitler had been defeated, because they had suffered greatly.

Immediately after the end of the war in 1945, the Academy of Performing Arts was founded in Prague followed two years later by the Janacek Academy of Performing Arts in Brno. Simultaneously, the length of study at the conservatories (similar to current secondary schools) changed to 5 years, and later to 6 years. Music education in the elementary and secondary schools was allotted two hours per week. The increased development of private music schools that occurred before the War, however, was now suppressed under the influence of the Soviet Union. Private schools were nationalized and were gradually converted to either public music schools or conservatories (Gergor & Sedlický, 1990). At this time, almost every large city in Czechoslovakia had its own public music school which was financially affordable for students.

Summary

This chapter stops at 1948 which marks the beginning of communist rule. In order to understand Czech music education in 1948, however, it is not enough to just summarize the state of school system and music education as it existed in that year; it is equally important to understand the historical and political context, and how they are intertwined. The story told in this chapter has set the stage for music education from 1948

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onward by documenting the rich Czech choral traditions dating back for many centuries as established in formal education by the Roman Catholic Church. Almost by tradition then, even after the decline of the Catholic influence on education, singing and music education have been integral and important parts of education and teaching. However, it is important to recall that there were a few periods when choral singing and music in general did not have the support of society or government and did not develop further. For example, in the 15th century the Hussites, following the religious beliefs of leader Jan Hus, caused stagnation in Czech music with the forced return of unison singing at a time when the rest of European music was becoming more rich and polyphonic. This surely caused a step backwards for all Czech music. However, on the other hand, the National Revival in the late 18th and beginning of 19th century brought a new start to choral singing and propelled the origin and development of numerous choral organizations, many of which still survive today, providing a rich tapestry of artistic tradition and excellence.

Looking back from where we stand now, 1948 can be seen as a pivotal year when the Communist Party won over the democratic parties and took control of the government. From the perspective of contemporaries, it was the natural evolution of the situation after the end of World War II: the division of Europe into Western and Eastern, and for those territories in the east, 40 years of communist rule. The future chapters provide the stories from 1948 to 2011 from a variety of historical resources and personal stories.

Chapter 3:

The Onset of Communist Power 1948-1968

Historical Overview

The twenty-year period from 1948 to 1968 can be characterized as a progression from the hard and fast rules of communism for the first ten years that seemed to choke the entire Czechoslovak country, to a gradual relaxation and releasing of the stronghold of power. During the latter 10-year period, the social situation in Czechoslovakia improved somewhat, with some allowed freedom of expression and better quality of life but ended dramatically in 1968, when the communists re-imposed harsh restrictions on the people. The first part of this chapter provides an overview of the political background from 1948 to just prior to the re-invasion of 1968, and is followed by a description of education, and choral music education at that time, which includes the recollections of the lived experience of the four choral educators introduced in Chapter One during this period.

As noted at the end of the previous chapter, Europe was divided into East and West after World War II, and Czechoslovakia became part of the Communist Bloc, as did the rest of Eastern Europe. Stalin, the Soviet leader, refused to give up territory that he had liberated or was occupied by the Red Army, and the only two countries, where the Soviets were tolerated, were Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia. This occurred in spite of the fact that the occupation was involuntary; however, the Czechs were appreciative that the Soviet army had liberated much of their territory at the end of the war from the Germans. Czechoslovak sympathy was strong also because Russia had not participated in the 1939 Munich Agreement, an event that surrendered Czechoslovakia into German hands when

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the Protectorates of Bohemia and Moravia were created. After World War II, Stalin, the Russian leader waged the National Patriotic War, the purpose of which was to internally unite the Russian nation; however, the outcome was that it devastated the occupied countries not only economically and politically, but also morally and socially. Because the Red Army had played such a vital role in the defeat of Nazism in Eastern Europe, Stalin was able to take advantage of the powerful position of his army, and propagandized tsarist imperialism with communist ideology in an attempt to fill the power vacuum which was created in Europe after the defeat of Germany.

The process of “sovietization” of Eastern Europe followed a similar pattern in all of the Communist Bloc countries: Communists and sympathizers of Moscow controlled key ministries; they focused on controlling the armed forces; and, they used pro-Soviet sentiments to denigrate political opponents and the West. Free elections were held but the atmosphere of intimidation against rivals and dissidents through threats and intimidation ensured that the communists would win a clear majority. The Eastern European countries were gradually transformed into satellites of Moscow.

In Czechoslovakia, during the early post-war years, the people were somewhat supportive of the Communist Party and thus strengthened the Soviet hold on power there (Aubrecht & Kaderka, 2007). At the same time, the Czech Democratic Parties became divided and lost their strength which gave the Communist Party a boost. The Communist Party also had the general support of people from the working class, and in 1946, the Communist Party won an overwhelming majority in free democratic parliamentary elections with more than 40% of the votes (Veber, 2008). Thus, the onset of communist power was completely legitimate, legal, and supported by the people. The newly formed

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government was composed of all the major parties, including the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, the Czechoslovak People's Party, the Democratic Party, the National Socialist Party, the Czechoslovak Social Democratic Party, the Communist Party of Slovakia, and two ministers who sat independently without a party, former Czech president, Jan Masaryk and Ludvik Svoboda. However, the Prime Minister, Klement Gottwald, was a communist and subsequently appointed communist ministers to his major ministries, including the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Trade, and the Ministry of Information. A similar situation existed in the other countries in the Eastern bloc (Poland, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria), and thus, all of the major ministries and power in these countries came under the control of Moscow (Kaplan & Paleček, 2001).

Čapka (2010) explains that in 1947, the Czechoslovak government began to discuss the possibility of adopting the American Marshall Plan, a European Recovery Plan (ERP) designed to help rebuild post-war Europe and to stop the spread of communism. From 1948 to 1952, the United States provided Western Europe approximately 13 billion USD in aid. According to Dejmek and Loužek (2007) the plan was highly acceptable to Czechoslovakia according to a document written by Leopold Chmela, the General Director of the National Bank of Czechoslovakia, who naively believed his country's relationship with the USSR was bilateral and reciprocal:

- a) From a political perspective: Czechoslovakia is tied politically and militarily to the Soviet Union, but has economic freedom and needs the help of Western countries. The Czechoslovakian neighbor is Germany, and West Germany may take advantage of the loan and with its help, Czechoslovakia can take

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over the Balkans, which is our traditional market. If direct cooperation with Balkans is politically untenable for the USA, Czechoslovakia can be the bearer of support to these countries without offending our friendship with Russia. Therefore Czechoslovakia would prevent the creation of two blocs in Europe, which would be particularly dangerous in case of the resurrection of Germany, which will occur in some form.

- b) From an economic perspective: Czechoslovakia provides an economic bridge between the West and East. (Thus the industrialization of Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Poland, Romania, and possibly Austria and Hungary is only possible with either Czechoslovakia or the countries in the west). For the next few years we cannot count on the support of the USSR which would have to restore its industry first. This function of Czechoslovakia not only raises the standard of living at home, but in all Slavic countries and also helps the USSR (potentially for conscription). Czechoslovakia is interested in participating in the Plan and in supporting the UK, which should have the general power, while Czechoslovakia should have the power of central and southeast Europe (to inform Masaryk, Ripka, Dolanský). (Dejmek & Loužek, 2007, pp. 169-170)

There is no doubt from Chmela's comments that Czechoslovakia was interested in joining the Marshall Plan, however, as Veber (2008) mentions, Czechoslovakia was forced to refuse the aid under pressure from Stalin. This forced rejection of the Marshall Plan was seen to be a gross interference in the internal politics of a sovereign state, and contravened the agreement that the USSR signed with Czechoslovakia on 12 December

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1943 explicitly swearing not to interfere in the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia (Čapka, 2010). As a result, the existing Democratic Parties in the government (Czechoslovak People's Party, the Democratic Party, and the National Socialist Party) hoped to provoke early elections in order to reverse the balance of power; however, the threat of a government coup became a strengthening influence for the communists in the National Police Corps (Sbor národní bezpečnosti – SNB). By accepting the dictates of Stalin, Czechoslovakia was now totally under Moscow's power and sphere of influence. It was only a matter of time until the last Czechoslovakian remnants of democratic principles and freedoms were dismantled, and the country was propelled toward a "dictatorship of the proletariat" (Bouška, 2012). Because all of the Eastern Bloc countries were forced to reject the Marshall Plan, the plan was confined to Western Europe only³. The Marshall Plan contributed to the economic reconstruction of Western Europe, and served to renew industry, agriculture and international trade. Thus the divide between Western and Eastern Europe grew even larger (Veselý, 1987).

In desperation, twelve ministers of the Czechoslovak People's Party, the Democratic Party, and the National Socialist Party delivered their resignations to Czech President Beneš⁴ in February 1948 as their negative reaction to the rejection of the Marshall Plan. However, for the government to fall, the majority of ministers had to resign and Social Democratic ministers, Defense Minister Svoboda and Foreign Minister Jan Masaryk did not. Without a majority, President Beneš refused to accept the resignations and the plan failed (Cuhra, 2006). Simultaneously, the Communist Party used every means to force Beneš (who was seriously ill) to accept these resignations, which he did on 25 February 1948, a day that was celebrated as Victorious February⁵

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until 1989. To replace those ministers who resigned, Prime Minister Klement Gottwald appointed new communist ministers, and with that act he achieved total communist rule in Czechoslovakia, which remained in place until 1989.

Novotná (2013) suggests that the resigning ministers had underestimated the Communist Party and its hunger for total control; thus they were neither prepared for this outcome, nor had they discussed this possibility with the President in advance. They had assumed that the situation would be solved in a strictly constitutional manner. Novotná claims that the organization of communists, their chemistry, and determination to deal with the situation in other than completely honest and open means brought them securely into leadership. Cuhra (2006) notes that due to the high degree of structure and organization within the Communist Party, the number of its members, and their intransigence and determination in achieving their objectives, the communist takeover was inevitable; it was just a matter of when and how.

Historian Pernes (1998) argues that there are many questions that remain regarding the events of February 1948. Economist and former member of the Central Planning Commission Jiří Hejda said:

It is already clear that February 25th was not a demonstration, but a premeditated coup that was necessary to avert disaster in the upcoming May elections. It was sheer luck that that the Soviet troops were passing the territory of the Republic at that point in time on their way into Austria and Hungary; so that issue could be taken care of, and after that, no one dared to do anything against the communists. (Hejda 2010, p. 293)

Gottwald realized that he needed to rid his government of potential rivals and opponents,

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and that it was necessary to appoint communist party members to positions of power in order to have total control; thus Gottwald purged all non-communist personnel in every important position in the state, in particular, the armed forces and civil service (Pernes, 2010). The government also limited freedom of speech and imposed censorship of media and speeches, which was controlled by the Ministry of Information and the communist party censorship office. Political pluralism was eliminated and the democratic parties were banned. The Social Democrats were forced to merge with the Communist Party and open elections were no longer held. Several associations, including religious and civic organizations, were forced to cease their activities; borders were closed and the Iron Curtain was built.

The term Iron Curtain, coined by British Prime Minister Winston Churchill immediately after World War II on March 5, 1946, should not be understood literally. West and East Berlin were divided by the Berlin Wall, but to build a wall along the Czechoslovak border was impossible because of the natural boundaries in many places created by rivers and mountainous ranges. Once the Iron Curtain was in place, a comprehensive system to guard the border was created. The view from the Czechoslovak border is described by Skulínek (2013):

The Iron Curtain stretched along the western border of the USSR, including East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Yugoslavia, and on the southern border of Albania, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, creating a guarded and impenetrable border, dividing the east and west. No longer could anyone move freely from country to country in the Eastern Bloc. In early 1948, the border was secured by the Financial Guard. The Financial Guard was an armed corps of the Ministry of

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Finance, which in the years 1918-1940 and 1945-1949 provided the surveillance of the state frontier and customs service. With Act No. 275/1948 (December 22, 1948) concerning the delegation of Financial Officers in the customs border zone to the National Security Corps, the power was transferred in January 1949 to the newly established Border Guard. In later years, members of the People's Militia also participated. During the first years the border was guarded only by people, but beginning in 1951, Engineer Technical security divisions were brought in. The system was comprehensive with diverse elements (that changed over time and evolved) including a wire barricade, which was later electrified, a controlled arable strip (likely the most important part of the system), walkway lights, observation towers and mines. On the railroad there were roadblocks, derailleurs and observation bridges to prevent escape. (Skulínek, 2013, pp. 13-19)

The communist coup in 1948 took place in only a matter of weeks, and when Gottwald opened the new parliament on February 25th 1948, it was soon evident that the democratic political process was wiped out. In order to secure his position, Gottwald released a new Communist Constitution on May 9th that eradicated the democratic state system. President Beneš, who was the last personal and political symbol of democracy refused to sign the new Constitution; however, weakened physically and mentally through illness, he resigned his position and died three months later. In his place, Prime Minister Klement Gottwald was elected and held both roles as Prime Minister and President of Czechoslovakia which gave him sole power.

In the years after the communist coup in 1948, the Communist Party needed to eradicate its most dangerous and vocal opponents who were army officers and politicians.

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However, there were dissidents across all social groups. Many emigrated, but most stayed in Czechoslovakia and were sent to jail or were hanged. There were many so-called political processes, such as court proceedings, that were politically manipulated. For example, Milada Horáková, a female Czech politician and Member of Parliament until 1948, remained an active and vocal anti-communist, and was subsequently arrested and executed in 1950. Similar atrocities awaited the highly successful members of the national Czechoslovak hockey team who, in 1947, won the world championships in Prague, the Olympic silver medal in Switzerland in 1948, and the gold medal at the World Championships in Stockholm in 1949. In March of 1950, they were refused permission to leave the Prague airport for the world championships in London because the Communist Party was afraid of their mass emigration. They were later officially informed that the British had refused to issue entry visas for Czechoslovak radio reporters, however, this was false. Eleven players were then arrested (eight of them were world champions) and found guilty of treason and espionage⁶ (Škutina & Bakalář, 1990).

The communists purged not only the local people, but also their own party members. For example, influential Slovak communist, Gustav Husák, who in later years became president of Czechoslovakia, was accused of bourgeois nationalism and imprisoned for treason, sabotage, and espionage. To punish dissidents, the communists built a network of hard labour camps in the uranium mines in the Czech areas of Jáchymov and Příbram where the prisoners lived harsh lives. The people left behind lived in fear and few dared to speak or act against the regime openly.

As noted earlier, it was a time when many people emigrated; however, Tomek (2012) notes that the creation of Act No. 231/1948 made leaving the country a political

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and criminal offense. The first massive wave of 25,000 refugees left between 1948 and 1951, and from 1948 to 1989, approximately 200,000 citizens fled Czechoslovakia. An electrified barrier was installed along the borders after 1951 to stop the exodus to the free world, and from 1952 to 1964 only about 252 refugees escaped successfully each year. Those who escaped successfully found refuge in camps where they could apply for asylum and for papers to emigrate to a selected country, most often the United States. However, due to legislation and low income quotas, the first emigrants were not able to go there until 1950. Although Navara and Albrech (2010) state that most emigrants considered their exile a temporary measure and planned to return after the fall of the communist regime, they did play an important role after they left. Because of the repressive political processes and attacks against opponents in Czechoslovakia, the main ideological resistance was led by emigrants from abroad (Tomek, 2010).

After consolidating their base of power, the communists began to introduce economic reforms. According to the model established in Moscow, they canceled the traditional market economy of Czechoslovakia and established five-year central plans which became the basic economic concept of the USSR and other Eastern Bloc countries. The five-year plans organized the economy of the entire country and dictated precisely what would be built, which goods would be produced, where and for what price, and how much workers were to be paid. To implement this method it was necessary to liquidate all private enterprise and to nationalize the means of production. A major feature of the five-year plan was the lack of unemployment: all citizens were required to work, and new jobs were created in order to employ every person. Foreign trade (exports) was conducted almost entirely within the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA), which

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encompassed the USSR and its satellites. In 1953, Gottwald died, but his successor, Antonín Zápotocký (President from 1953 to 1957), followed in his footsteps.

Under Zapotcky's leadership, the communist government depreciated the nation's currency and instituted a rationing system for food and essential goods; however, there was a significantly more expensive traditional market and the black market (Vokrouhlecký, 2004). President Zápotocký believed that monetary reform would simultaneously solve the issues of the rationing system and the black market, and in secrecy had new banknotes printed in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), even though the night before he had announced that there would be no monetary reform. This reform was presented as a victory of the working people and a blow to bourgeoisie, but it resulted in the depreciation and forfeiture of the savings of the entire population and contributed to a significant decline in the standard of living. Because the monetary reform was carried out without prior approval of the International Monetary Fund, Czechoslovakia's membership in this organization was terminated in 1954.

The monetary reform provoked the first major resistance in the Czech population, and demonstrations were held in several cities such as Plzeň (Pilsen) where its largest company, Škoda, had deliberately paid its workers in the old currency just days before. Police were called on to disperse the disgruntled citizens. Of the 20,000 people involved in the uprising, 250 were injured, and another 331 people were subsequently convicted in a political court hearing.

As communist control tightened in Czechoslovakia, Havelková (2004) notes the significant changes that occurred in Czech cultural life beginning in February of 1948, when Stalinist ideologue, Andrei Zhdanov adopted Soviet Socialist Realism, an official

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aesthetic doctrine. Composing and performing music, for example, now fell under the control of the newly created and centralized Union of Czechoslovak Composers.

Zhdanov followers railed against formalism, subjectivism and cosmopolitanism; they rejected western modernism, and compositions of such eminent Czech composers as Leoš Janáček, Bohuslav Martinů, and Alois Hába; and, they called for a return to traditional national values, specifically naming Bedřich Smetana. The acceptable musical genres became cantatas and mass songs with new texts⁷. The leading supporters of Zhdanov's doctrine were musicologist Antonín Sychra, music critic Miroslav Barvík, and composers Josef Stanislav (b. 1897-1971), Jan Seidel (b. 1908-1998) and Václav Dobiáš (b. 1909-1978). In the underground, however, some of the composers did not follow this official line, examples being Alois Hába who composed microtonal works and Marek Kopelent whose voice will be heard later in this chapter.

In Czechoslovakia, the authoritarian political conditions gradually relaxed during the 1960's, and Czechoslovak society became considerably liberalized. New small theatre groups sprang up, a new strongly liberal newspaper, the *Literary News*, was published, and even Czech movies appeared, created by an entire generation of young New Wave directors, the most famous of whom was Miloš Forman who fled to the United States in 1968. According to Ptáček (2000), the Czech New Wave films appeared as an expression of resistance to socialist propaganda films, as a compulsive need to literally show the truth, and as a means of compensating for the effect of the previous low quality films. This was a time of inspiration for many directors and the art of film all across Europe, especially Italian neo-realism, French New Wave cinema, progressive tendencies in the USSR, and Free Cinema movies in England⁸. In relation to the Czech new wave, Milan

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Kundera (1996) stated

The imbecility of commercial interests and the intransigence of ideological dogma were two evils that threatened the art of cinema. When the Czech film industry was nationalized, it was freed from the power of the first evil, and during the 1960's was slowly freed from the second. In that brief moment of freedom (relative freedom, but so rare on our planet) a whole plethora of great young Czech filmmakers was born. (p.5)

Similarly, the harsh grip of control over music began to ease somewhat in the 1960's and new trends in post-war Western music began to creep into Czechoslovakia. As in the other groups, new ensembles were created such as the Novak Quartet, Chamber Harmony conducted by Libor Pešek, Musica Viva Pragensis (connected with Marek Kopelent), and Sonatori di Praga. Creative ensembles for new music sprang up in other centres, including Group A in Brno and the Prague Group of New Music. During this period, communication with foreign countries beyond and within the Iron Curtain improved greatly, and Czech composers were allowed to attend the Warsaw Autumn Festival and musical activities in Darmstadt in Germany.

Simultaneous to the expansion and development among the arts, the country began to experience an economic downturn as the state economic five-year plan collapsed. This led to an opportunity for dissidents to criticize the situation, and in 1967, artists at the IVth Writers' Congress and students in a demonstration march at Strahov demanded more freedoms and significant reforms. Reformists within the communist Party were concerned about this criticism and began to work on their own plan of action through a show of force. In January 1968, Alexander Dubček, a communist reformer was

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elected as head of the Communist Party and began to plan an offensive to take back control, which will be described in the next chapter.

The first part of this chapter has provided an overview of the turmoil of political and social life in Czechoslovakia from 1948 to 1968, including a brief overview of the developments in the Czech arts and music. The purpose of this next section is to describe the changes to the general educational system during that 20-year period, specifically using the discipline of choral music education to illustrate those changes. The experiences and voices of the four prominent music educators introduced in Chapter One provide a personal glimpse into this time period through the recounting of their lived experiences.

Education in Czechoslovakia from 1948 to 1968

After the establishment of the communist government, Law No. 95/1948 Coll was passed that resulted in uniform, nationalized educational policies that corresponded to Marxist-Leninist theories and socialist ideology. Education was compulsory and free for all children from 6 to 15 years of age, and broken into three levels: National School (1st – 5th grades); High School (6th – 9th grades); and secondary schools that included four-year programs in industry, agriculture, female professions, or the arts, social and health services. Two and three year technical programs were also created (Předotová, 2012). This Law was valid only for 4 years and Předotová (2012) claims that the new educational policies repressed the individualism of both the students and teaching staff. Because teachers and school administrators were required to support the regime over professional expertise, the art of teaching was devalued, and experienced teachers were replaced with less skilled, non-professionals who were solid members of the Communist

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Party. According to Předotová, the quality of teaching was poor and skilled teachers were only prevalent in limited areas, often in music classes.

In 1953, harsh reforms were implemented and enforced that permeated all aspects of society. With respect to the educational system, Act No. 31/1953 Coll. reduced compulsory education from nine to eight years, and three years in higher, selective education. Most school subjects were politicized so that the curriculum was interpreted according to communist doctrines, and access to education was not derived from abilities of individual students, but by the "class origin"⁹ of the parents. Artists were required to create, write and perform according to the principles of Socialist Realism and artists were forced into unions which were solidly under the control of the communist structures. Communist propaganda that glorified the Soviet Union played an important role, and everything Western, such as Capitalism, was harshly attacked (Aubrecht & Kaderka, 2007).

The period from 1953 to 1960 is described as the biggest decline in general education development since the Second World War (Předotová, 2012). The effectiveness of education was impacted by the decreased time in schooling because the amount of curriculum requirements remained almost the same. The study of the political ideology of the Communist Party was seen to be more important than gaining expertise, learning skills, and using modern teaching methods. The Communist Party doctrines were at the forefront of the socialist intelligentsia. For example, in their assessments of students, teachers were required to list the parents' professions, whether anyone in the family had fled the country, or spoken out against the regime. Students with problems were not allowed to study what they wanted, while conversely, students ranked as only

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“good,” were admitted to the universities, often without being required to meet admission requirements.

The education system deteriorated during this period and in 1960, the Communist Party enacted its third educational reform (Act No.186/1960 Coll) that restored compulsory education back to nine years and secondary education to four years. This law emphasized that the goal of schooling was to educate a student who would work in the spirit of the scientific world view and collectivism based on the ideas of socialist patriotism and the internationalism of Marxist-Leninism. The mission of the teacher, in addition to the education of children and youth, was public political activity, and establishing links with the working class in accordance with the creative efforts of the society. Significant emphasis was placed on the social organizations such the Czechoslovak Youth Union and the Pioneer organization¹⁰.

The School Act of 1960 provided a uniform system of education which consisted of pre-school education in nursery schools and kindergarten for children under six years old, followed by nine years of compulsory education. Secondary and higher education institutions¹¹ provided the following curriculum and training: apprentice schools; schools for workers; vocational schools; general school (providing general education, for example gymnasium¹²); corporate technical schools; enterprise institutes; secondary music schools; music and dance schools; long-term courses and other trade schools for adult workers educational institutions of social organizations; universities; and schools for youth with special needs. Compared to the previous regulations, this act, which was valid until 1978, represented significant improvements for education, because it again extended compulsory education to nine years.

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As might be expected, music education was significantly impacted during this period. Immediately after the end of the war in 1945, the Academy of Performing Arts was founded in Prague followed two years later by the Janacek Academy of Performing Arts in Brno. Advanced Czech national music education consisted of conservatories¹³ for high school students and two university-level academies. Music education in the primary and secondary schools was allotted two hours per week. Music education became accessible to more students because the private music schools were closed and nationalized (Gergor & Sedlický, 1990), and, as a result most large cities in Czechoslovakia then had their own public music school, which was financially affordable for students. In spite of communist restrictions, the period from the late 1950s until 1968 was a time of optimal development for Czech arts schools (including music, painting and drama), because the new School Act released in 1960 coincided with the temporary political relaxation of the totalitarian regime noted earlier in this chapter.

The law of 1960 also allowed the gradual emergence of the People's Schools of the Arts, which were originally the music and art schools that were nationalized after 1948. Some schools were also newly created. Harvařík (1966) reports that, at that time, there were 368 People's Schools of the Arts with 120 smaller branches, and an enrolment of 142,449 students in Czechoslovakia. Harvařík (1966) further states that

the achievement of socialism is that studying at all types of art schools was to be free of charge, including study aids, textbooks, instrument loans, etc. The state provided significant resources to fund the art schools. While students paid a small monthly tuition at the People's Schools of the Arts it is only a small part of the amount of tuition costs, and most of it is paid by the state. (p. 7)

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Table 2: Traditional path of music education during communism

	Universities		
	Secondary Education – secondary music schools; music and dance schools, conservatories.	Music Schools – later People’s School of the Arts	Choirs
	Compulsory Education (9 grades)		

Gregor and Sedlický (1990) report that after 1948, two hours per week were allotted for music instruction from Grades 1 through 9 and also in the gymnasiums. The curriculum established music education as a combination of reproduction and reception, as preparation for future music listeners. It was emphasized that the subject should not be conceived as "singing". In 1953, however, music education was limited to Grades 1 through 7.

In Chapter One, four musician educators were introduced who were interviewed to provide personal accounts of the state of music education during this period for this study.

Marek Kopelent (b.1932) came from a family that had been deeply affected by Masaryk’s¹⁴ ideology of morality and democracy. He recalls that his father was interested in politics and thus he was as well. In 1948, 16-year old Kopelent was a student of the French gymnasium in Prague and a member of the Masaryk-Mohykán community¹⁵. For Kopelent, the changes in 1948 meant that all the moral and democratic principles by which he was raised, no longer applied in regular life. However, while he noted major political and social changes in society, he immersed himself in his studies and recalled little or no change in music education at that time. It was during his studies at the French gymnasium that Kopelent found his passion for music as his life’s work. Kopelent credits his music teacher, Jaromír Klobouk, for taking advantage of the high quality of Czech

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music education and moving it forward. Kopelent noted that the quality of music education then surpassed today's teaching because the expectations of students were significantly higher. Excellent Czech choral literature was used, such as works by Vojtěch Bořivoj Aim (b. 1886 – 1972), Josef Bohuslav Foerster (b. 1859 – 1951), and Jaroslav Křička (b. 1882 – 1969). While these composers' works formed a significant part of the curriculum, their work was banned after 1948 and replaced by other, communist composers.

As a passionate and active student at the French gymnasium, Kopelent gradually became known as a cultural informant,¹⁶ composed his first little songs and took part in concerts organized by the French gymnasium.¹⁷ When the Communist Party came to power, the teaching of French and French history was widespread, and taught by French teachers. In the spring of 1950, however, and just before Kopelent's graduation, the Communist Party banned all French teachers and teaching. In 1950, Kopelent auditioned for the Academy for Performing Arts in Prague, a year he refers to as the worst time for the arts with regard to politics. He recalls that his auditions and those of his classmates from the French school were judged negatively. He was accepted, not to the regular program, but to the preparatory class at the conservatory. After one year, he auditioned again and was finally accepted into the advanced program. After 1948, all important positions in music education were appointed politically to recognized Party members. Their artistic experience was of little importance; rather, the emphasis was on their political beliefs and active communism. At that time, one of the major composers in the Communist Party, Václav Dobiáš (b. 1909 – 1978), was a senior administrator in the Academy for Performing Arts. Kopelent describes his music as directly in line according

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to the standards of Socialist Realism and Dobiáš enthusiastically promoted this style throughout the school. His pro-communist works could not be criticized openly and were widely performed at major functions for which they were often directly composed (Sobotka, 2010).

During his studies, Kopelent encountered his first predicament which soon became typical of his life as a composer during the communist period. Before his auditions, Kopelent had studied privately with Jaroslav Řídký (b. 1897 – 1956). Řídký was influenced by atonal music and did not use key signatures, even when it was a tonal work. Kopelent recalls a classmate who composed a song for an examination without using any key signatures as Řídký would have done. During the exam, when this classmate was confronted by Dobiáš as to why he had not used the key signature, Kopelent naively interrupted and said that for this song it did not matter. Dobiáš lashed out at him with the words: "Kopelent, do you realize what you're saying?" (M. Kopelent, personal communication, June 17, 2013). Because of that he was summoned to the Dean's office and given an official reprimand. As Kopelent remembers, he got into a similar situation during his studies several times, something he describes as an illustration of the status of Czech music education after 1948. Freedom of expression and the ability to give one's own opinion began to be suppressed if it did not follow the party line. However, following this difficult and demanding period in early communist Czechoslovakia, the situation slowly began to relax by 1954. Whereas the works of composer Bohuslav Martinů had been previously banned, Dobiáš himself featured Martinů's chamber cantata *Opening of the Wells* in performance.

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After graduation, Kopelent was not able to find a job, which he remarked was an interesting irony and paradox of the infamous communist planned economy. The Five-Year Plan with its rigid parameters of which goods were to be made, what would be built, where and at what price, which workers would be needed, and how they would be paid meant that graduates would be allocated places in a specific position in a specific company. The only exceptions were artists. Even during the most severe times of communism, artists were able to maintain a status that Kopelent described as “private entrepreneurs.” For Kopelent, however, it was a disadvantage, because he needed to find a job to have enough money to compose. Finally, in 1955, he felt himself fortunate to secure a position as an editor for contemporary music with the State publishers of literature, music and art. In 1960, the Music Scores Department was transferred to Supraphon, the biggest Czechoslovakian gramophone recording company. Kopelent enjoyed working in the publishing house but was cognizant that during the entire period of communism, one always had to be careful; he had to be always "sniffing" which meant that because he was a quiet dissident, he had to be extremely careful to find out with whom he could talk openly and who were communist informers. Kopelent worked there for 15 years until 1970 when he was fired for political reasons, because he spoke out politically against the regime.

This period was important in his life's work because he had the opportunity to participate in the book fair in Warsaw and was able to connect with the Warsaw Autumn Festival where he encountered and engaged with modern compositional techniques. He began to organize regular annual trips for composers starting in 1960 and as a result fell into disgrace with the Union of Czechoslovak Composers because he did this on his own.

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The Union of Czechoslovak Composers was established in 1949 by the Soviets as a model "voluntary but selective" ideological organization of musical artists, critics, and theorists. The second Congress of this organization (May, 1949) established three sections: composers, musicologists, and concert artists. The Union promoted the formation of Socialist Realism and condemned formalism in contemporary music. Like all other art associations, which were subordinates of the Communist Party, the Union had access to substantial funds because this was the way that the Union recognized and rewarded ideological and political displays of public performance and new compositions, specifically through financial rewards for the creators. The Union held a monopoly over all new music (Zapletal, 2013).

In 1961, 19-year-old Petr Kotik was allowed to establish a chamber ensemble called Musica Viva Pragensis. Kopelent, while still working in the publishing company, became the artistic director and chief administrator of this ensemble in 1965. At that time, there were few chamber orchestras in Europe, so this ensemble quite easily became well-known and was allowed to travel abroad (even outside the East block) because it was earning money and paying fees to Pragokonzert, the only permitted professional production and concert management company in Czechoslovakia. Kopelent's reputation as a composer also grew abroad (while he was writing for this group and also for others) as did the number of international engagements for the ensemble. The status and popularity of this ensemble were so great that touring for them was quite relaxed, however this changed dramatically after 1968 which will be described in the next chapter. (M. Kopelent, personal communication, June 17, 2013)

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Jiří Chvála (b.1933), who was one year younger than Kopelent, had similar recollections of life in Czechoslovakia from 1948 to 1968. Even as a young adolescent, he remembers clearly the period after World War II, the elections and when the Communist Party slowly took control, and he describes it as slick and suppressive. Chvála recounts that, as a fifteen-year old, the events of 1948 meant no major changes for him. The teachers who taught him at gymnasium were still the same, although he recalls that they had to update the political subtext of teaching, which for some was easy and for others more difficult. With regard to his ongoing music education during extreme totalitarianism, Chvála was at an age when he accepted the situation as given and unchangeable. He did not need to fight against communism because he was studying and working in a profession where he wanted to be and where communist policy was not restrictive for him.

Like Kopelent, before joining the Academy of Performing Arts, Chvála had to undergo a one-year preparatory course and after that he auditioned for conducting at the Academy. In 1952, at age 19, he met Jan Kühn (b. 1891 – 1954), a renowned conductor in the Czech choral world. It was a significant time for Kühn as it was his first year teaching at the Academy and also the year when both of Kühn's choirs, the Czech Choir and the Kühn's Children's Choir became affiliated with the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra organization. Chvála studied both singing and choral conducting with Kühn and was enamoured with the sound and possibilities of the choral genre. In his childhood, Chvála had never been impressed with choirs, likely he says now, because he had never heard a great choir and could always hear the inaccuracies. But at the Academy, Kühn showed him excellent choirs with perfect sound and intonation, and he was astonished.

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During his studies he went to listen frequently to the Czech Choir; Kühn invited him to sing in the ensemble and eventually offered him a part-time position in the choir as a financial contribution to his studies. Chvála recounted how much he had learned from Kühn, and in spite of the fact he did not have a great voice, he learned how to use it effectively. After three years, Chvála was named choirmaster of the Czech Choir, although in fact it was only the position of assistant choirmaster. This appointment showed the trust and confidence placed in Chvála, who was gradually assigned more significant tasks such as working with the Chamber Orchestra on the Bach Cantatas, the premiere of *Stabat Mater* by František Ignác Tůma and other works. The period of study at the Academy of Performing Arts was significant for Chvála, because in addition to studying with Kühn, he worked with many significant musical personalities such as cello teacher, Karel Pravoslav Sádlo (b. 1898 – 1971), who had an impact on his professional and artistic growth. Jan Kühn died suddenly in 1958 before Chvála was able to graduate. However, he was able to continue working with the choir and, in 1959, Josef Veselka came to Prague to replace Kühn as choirmaster of the Czech Choir. Veselka had completely different views on working with the choir and was responsible for its professionalization¹⁸ which Chvála observed carefully.

Chvála was fortunate after graduation to be offered a job as an accompanist at the Academy in the Conducting Department and for the Opera, so he was able to maintain his contacts with other teachers. Soon he began teaching there and reached the rank of Associate Professor. While working at the Academy he also continued working as the assistant choirmaster with the Czech Choir and, in 1967, he was appointed as a head of Kühn's Children's Choir. Chvála points out that Kühn's contribution to Czech choral

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singing has been recognized but not truly appreciated yet. According to Chvála, Kühn laid the foundations of the Czech professional choral art and others have followed in his footsteps¹⁹.

Chvála became choirmaster of Kühn's Children's Choir in 1967, one year before the violent occupation of Czechoslovakia as described in Chapter Four. While Kopelent described the easing of restrictions before 1968, Chvála felt that the period of relaxation began earlier. For example, the Theatre on the Balustrade was established in 1958 and focused on Czechoslovak avant-garde culture without any problems. He recalls that the cultural sections in the various newspapers published interesting articles and, in 1955, the magazine *Květen* (May) was first published and brought younger writers together who were discussing partial liberalization of the cultural environment. All of this influenced his sense of a more relaxed atmosphere that developed in the 1960's but changed abruptly in 1968 with the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, as it will be described in the next chapter. (J. Chvála, personal communication, June 17, 2013)

During the period from 1948 to 1968, Blanka Kulínská's (b.1935) experience was entirely connected with the Children's Choir of the Czechoslovak Radio, first as a singer and later as a conductor. At the age of 13, she joined the choir as a singer before becoming choirmaster of the training choir at age 15. After marrying the conductor, Bohumil Kulínský, when she was 19, she became co-conductor of the choir thereafter. Under their artistic direction, the choir developed into an exceptional choir, recording and touring. Their recordings from the 1960's continue to be of great value, are archived at Czech Radio, and have been remastered and continue to be broadcasted on air even now. Kulínská believes that one of the reasons the choir was so successful was because

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children had few other options at the time, so singing was often the only thing they could do. As a result, many children auditioned for the various choirs in the country in order to have the opportunity to participate in musical activities and to travel.

Blanka Kulínská was 13 years old when the Communist Party began to dominate Czechoslovakia and, as a member of the Children's Choir of the Czechoslovak Radio, she went on its first tour abroad to Sweden. Kulínská remembers clearly various details of the tour, which at first view may seem unrelated to choral singing and music education, but help one to understand the situation in Czechoslovakia at the time. During the trip to Sweden, the singers were invited to a reception. It was a new experience for all of them and after surviving six years of post-war devastation in Czechoslovakia, they were unsure how to react. For the first time in their lives, she recalls, they saw a huge buffet of many foods in front of them with oranges and lots of chocolate. They were accommodated in comfort with families and, in the words of Kulínská, “It was their dream experience.” While the Czech people were suffering after World War II, Sweden, which had remained neutral during the War, was able to retain its advanced standard of living. Kulínská also recalled the incredible popularity of Czech music and composers while in Sweden, such as Jaroslav Křička, Czech composer, conductor, organizer, educator and journalist. The choir had several songs by Křička in its repertoire during the tour, and so their concerts there were highly successful. She commented on the fact that his legacy is evident even now in his work for children’s choirs.

Kulínská noted that the year 1948 and the advent of communism had a significant impact on Czech choral singing, especially related to repertoire. Until then, choirs had complete freedom to choose their own repertoire. But beginning in 1948, the choirs were

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forced to sing pioneer songs written by communist composers and which featured texts supporting the communist regime. When Christmas carols were completely banned from the repertoire, Kulinská felt emotionally attacked. Later, after 1955, when restrictions began to relax, she recalls that some carols could be performed, but only those with no mention of the baby Jesus or the Virgin Mary. Otherwise, the Kulínský's did not feel any restrictions to their choral programs. The Choir continued to thrive and was allowed to travel abroad for tours. They were not members of the Communist Party, nor were they pressured to join. However, a critical turning point occurred as a result of the Soviet occupation in 1968, to be described in the next chapter. (B. Kulínská, personal communication, July 1, 2013)

Jiří Skopal (b.1947) was born in Velké Losiny in Czechoslovakia one year before the onset of communist control. His view of this 20-year period of communism is therefore different, compared to the other respondents. He recalls that his grandmother and father often reminisced about the period of the First Republic (the establishment of Czechoslovakia in 1918 during the reign of the first president T. G. Masaryk). But for him no change had occurred. He felt that he spent a wonderful childhood free of restrictions. He read in popular children magazines that people would someday fly to the moon and Mars; he cheered when Sputnik flew around the globe and when cosmonaut Gagarin flew into space. Skopal remembers being asked when he went on tour to the United States in 1990 for the first time, "What was it like when you could not talk or walk freely on the street and give your opinion?" Because he was born into communism, he had no other experiences and was unable to compare what was before. Skopal says he later learned about the 50 years of communist rule when many innocent victims were

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executed as a result of artificial communist political processes. However, he also learned of other bad situations that had happened elsewhere in the world. He also found that he could attend church without any problems. In contrast, his father, the director of the school, was told by the school inspector not to attend masses. But even so, Skopal believed it was a recommendation, rather than a ban. Skopal feels that because he was young at the time, he has only good memories as he grew up in his community. He acknowledges that there was no doubt that the planned economy was built on certainties. People did not need to think or worry about having a job or money to live. He knew that if he graduated from school, he would get an allocated job, that life would be easy and quiet. Similar to Chvála with regard to the question of communism, Skopal did not feel a need to rebel against the system. His teachers' assessments and profiles were positive; he could study where he wanted and find a job working in choral music. (J. Skopal, personal communication, June 23, 2013)

Summary

There is no doubt that 1948 marked Czechoslovakia's unexpected transition from democracy to totalitarianism, from a dissolution of independence of Czechoslovak control to the autocratic rule of the Soviet bloc. Based on the literature about social, political, and educational experience, as well as the recalled experiences of four musician educators who lived during this 20-year period, there are three key themes that can be authenticated and summarized for the period from 1948 to 1968: 1) reluctant, forced change, 2) compliant adaptability, and 3) resilience.

The onset of communism brought about significant enforced change to an unsuspecting country that included prescribed rules and restrictions, a weakened

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economy, and a loss of autonomy. The most difficult period was the first 10 years beginning in 1948, when the Communist Party had to show its supremacy and superiority through force and intimidation in order to subjugate and suppress the people. However, while the imposition of the Five-Year Plan had negative consequences for most people, educational reforms provided children and youth with free educational access and some opportunities until 15 years of age. Indoctrination practices and some unskilled teachers who were Party followers influenced the general curriculum, but music education, on the other hand, was not affected to any great extent. Students received two classes of music per week, usually taught by specialists. However, communist doctrines in the curriculum and repertoire were pervasive. In both the primary and secondary schools, the major changes related to the political subtext were always prevalent in the repertoire. The exceptions were the French schools, such as the one that Kopelent attended. Foreign teachers were banned and the schools no longer could teach French²⁰. Change also impacted university and academic institutions as key positions were assigned to politically loyal instructors, and the students who attended the schools were chosen based on their loyalty to the Communist Party.

With regard to choral education, the musicians interviewed had indicated their resilience and the ability to adapt. Kopelent, the composer, found ways to make music and to continue composing what he wanted, although he talked about how careful he was in speaking with others around him in case they were communist informants. Choirs continued to flourish in much the same way as they had for centuries previously when the country was occupied. In spite of the fact that the repertoire was manipulated by the State to include songs that promoted communist ideas and ideals, while banning sacred music,

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the conductors seemed to find ways to have the choirs perform excellent repertoire at high artistic levels. Choirs, especially the children's choirs, continued to experience significant growth and development opportunities. There were not many other musical activities for children, so the talented and committed music teacher/conductors promoted their choirs, and with so many children auditioning, the choirs developed very quickly to a high level.

From the late-1950's to 1968, however, the political and social environment began to change as restrictions were relaxed and a sense of freedom within communism emerged. Artists were allowed to be creative and to develop materials of the New Wave Art Movement that could be performed within Czechoslovakia. However, this complacent atmosphere changed abruptly in 1968 with a Soviet show of force that dramatically changed life for all going forward.

Chapter 4:

1968: The Invasion of the Warsaw Pact Army into Czechoslovakia

Historical Overview

1968 has been described as the most significant turning point in time during the 43-year communist occupation of Czechoslovakia (Aubrecht & Kaderka, 2011, Vančura, 1990); and, it is for this reason, that an entire chapter is dedicated to this one year. This chapter documents and describes the socio-political and educational events of that year, including the Warsaw Pact Army invasion of the Czech territories to re-establish and consolidate a rigid hold on the country, resulting in even greater oppression for the Czech population for the next twenty years.

After 1948, when the communists seized power in Czechoslovakia, the country fell into a growing spiral of deteriorating economics (Koudelka, 2008). However, even though the people's speech and actions were restricted, and the entire country was gripped by a strong communist hold, a small reform faction continued to exist within the Communist Party; the leaders of this group were intent on pursuing economic reform in order to improve and increase the productivity of the national economy, and more importantly, to improve the standard of living for Czechoslovak citizens (Koudelka, 2008). In addition, many citizens, artists, and intellectuals were also looking for some form of change, not to destroy socialism, but to convert it into a better and more beneficial way of life. In Czechoslovak society, the process was called "socialism with a human face" and the intention was to create democratic socialism. (Vančura, 1990) describes it in the following way: "It was not a movement against socialism; rather it was a movement for better socialism" (p.17).

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By the 1960's, the strict regulations of the communist regime had become more lenient. At the same time, Antonín Novotný (b. 1904–1975), who became president after the death of the previous president, Antonín Zápotocký in 1957, was faced with a deteriorating economic situation in the country; moreover, there was increasing pressure from the people for investigations into the Soviet Union's unfair trials in the early 1950's, such as the one involving the death of Milada Horáková²¹. In response, Novotný created two commissions of inquiry that resulted in the release and rehabilitation of a number of political prisoners. To deflect attention from his own role in these processes, Novotný replaced the old Stalinist leadership of the Communist Party with younger officers who had become members of the party after the World War II.

Křivancová (2013) explains that this relaxing of conditions occurred gradually across all countries of the Eastern Bloc, but to varying degrees. For example, Hungary and East Germany were allowed to establish limited private enterprises, and, across the USSR, the atmosphere of fear slowly subsided and was replaced with hope for a better future. But Křivancová notes that while the other countries in the Eastern Bloc were engaged fully in reform, Czechoslovakia started slowly. By 1968, however, the country had become increasingly determined to seek economic and social reform.

The first public demonstration against the Communist Party occurred during the 4th Congress of the Czechoslovak Writers' Union held in June, 1967 (Aubrecht & Kaderka, 2011). Some writers criticized President Novotný and his bureaucratic style of governance, noting that he should be arguing for democratization, the abolition of censorship, and the introduction of freedom of speech (Sígl, 2009). An important figure to speak at the Congress was writer and poet, Václav Havel, who, later in 1989, would

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become the first president of free Czechoslovakia. Members of the reformist faction felt that the main obstacle to the implementation of changes was President Novotný, who was also the first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party.²²

Simultaneously, during the later 1960s, the leadership of the Central Committee of the Communist Party in Moscow began to question Novotný's leadership; they considered him to be the main obstacle in solving the problems of unrest among the Czechoslovak people. In October 1967, Novotný asked for, but did not receive, any political support from the Central Party in Moscow which foreshadowed the demise of his leadership (Vaculík & Čapka, 2002). In January, 1968, under pressure, but at his request, Novotný resigned as first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and later, on March 22, 1968, he resigned from his position as President of the state (Tomašíková, 2012). Ludvík Svoboda (b. 1895-1979) was named as the new President and the most politically powerful position of First Secretary was awarded to Alexander Dubček (b. 1921-1992) (Vaculík & Čapka, 2002).

Svoboda was not only a Czech politician, but also a General in the Army. He was first active as a military leader in World War II, and then in the postwar government as the Minister of Defense. From 1948 to 1968, he was a member of the National Assembly, and in 1968, the National Assembly elected him as President, his only position within the Communist Party. This separated him from his predecessors, such as Klement Gottwald who was both President and Chairman of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. Svoboda's activity focused on promoting democratization and he tried to have the widest possible contacts with the public.

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Having rejected the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968 both morally and politically, however, as described in the next chapter, he lost his political power in the subsequent period of normalization and had very little room to influence political events from his position of President (Vaculík & Čapka, 2002).

Dubček used his power as First Secretary in the Spring of 1968 to continue to develop the path toward liberalism across all of Czechoslovakia. This was a period that came to be commonly known abroad as the Prague Spring, in tribute to the term the Spring of Nations, the artistic name given to the infamous revolutionary year of 1848, a time of upheavals and dissatisfaction among the middle class workers across most of Europe (Gressner, 2008). The metaphoric term symbolized the awakening and hope that coincides with the coming of the season of the year that brings new life and hope (Gressner, 2008) and was reflected in Dubček's new Action Plan. People believed in Dubček; they had confidence that he could humanize communism and would bring democratic principles to the system. Ševčíková (2010) describes Dubček's Plan as one of the primary events of the Prague Spring; its main principle was to create a system that would link socialist ideals with democratic principles. Another important tenet of the Action Plan was the overall democratization of the political system and a reform of the system, with emphasis on education and qualifications rather than one's standing in the Communist Party. The Action Plan was primarily concerned with the economic structure of the country because it was in crisis; thus, significant reforms were put in place to grow industry. Another key issue of the Action Plan was the promise of freedom of travel and speech, as well as the prevention of censorship of scientific works and debates, and any restriction of artistic activity. The population, however, was convinced that this would

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only result in a mere exchange of functions within the Communist Party; they did not expect that anything would change, nor that these changes would affect the future development of the society for many years (Křivancová, 2013).

The Action Plan was also committed to educational change and stated:

Quality education—the goal of our schools: To further develop our socialist society, the people must be educated. It is essential for us to overcome the challenges that have come with the onset of the scientific revolution, deepen relationships and institutions of socialist democracy, and promote the cultural and humanistic nature of socialism and the development and application of each person in it. We therefore consider further development of our educational system as our primary goal. (Action Plan, 1968, p. 26)

Koudelka (2008) credits the media, which had gained increasing freedom of expression with helping to implement the reforms by becoming the intermediary between the reformist faction and the Czechoslovak people. He explains that until Novotný's government, the media had simply been a tool of official propaganda and was held accountable to the Communist Party. However, with the new government, censorship was abolished and the media were granted freedom of speech only for a period of ten weeks before the occupation. Nonetheless, during that brief time, the press was able to expand the ideas of reform among the people. Křivancová (2013) describes how the newspaper articles at that time informed the people about the horrific acts, the mistakes and shortcomings of the government from the 1950s, which heightened the people's outrage and their demands for redress and compensation of those affected. Ševčíková (2010) comments that the media were responsible for instilling a sense of national awareness and

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political commitment in the Czech people; the media used the growing public hunger for debate, respect, recognition and a sense of urgency, to speak openly about these issues and realized that it had the power to influence events in Czechoslovakia.

In April 1968, shortly after the adoption of the Action Plan, the Soviet ambassador in Czechoslovakia, Stepan Chervonenko (b.1915-2003), sent a message to Moscow describing the unrest developing in Czechoslovakia (Křivancová, 2013). The Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in Moscow called a meeting, the main subject of which was a discussion about the situation in Czechoslovakia. After that Brezhnev sent a personal letter to Dubček:

I want to openly say that my comrades and I share a fraternal concern over the developments in Czechoslovakia. . . . Honestly, I tell you that the situation in the Communist Party concerns me. Every day, we see documents of propaganda and we receive other forms of intelligence that describe us as a significant enemy. Therefore I think that we communists must be vigilant and united . . . (Benčík, 2007, p. 86)

Another major concern for Moscow came from a manifesto by writer Ludvík Vaculík. Křivancová (2013) entitled *Two Thousand Words* published on June 27, 1968 in several newspapers. In criticizing the conservative elements of the Communist Party, Vaculík (1968) recommended that the citizens should take control of the reform agenda.

The actual intervention was preceded by several meetings when representatives of the Soviet Union, East Germany, Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Czechoslovakia met on August 3 in Bratislava to sign the Bratislava Contract that confirmed the countries' unwavering loyalty to Marxist-Leninist principles of proletarian internationalism²³. The

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contract also affirmed the struggle against bourgeois ideology and all anti-socialist elements (Křivancová, 2013). The situation in Czechoslovakia was seen as the beginning of a counter-revolution and culminated in August 1968 with the Warsaw Pact Army invasion of Czechoslovakia²⁴.

On the night of August 20, the combined armies of five of the Warsaw Pact countries crossed the borders into Czechoslovakia, capturing the airport and surrounding countryside. At 2:00 a.m., the Czech Central Committee of the Communist Party in Prague broadcast the following on Czechoslovak Radio:

To all of our people of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic:

Yesterday, on the 20th of August, 1968, about 2300 hours, the troops of the Soviet Union, the People's Republic of Poland, the German Democratic Republic, the People's Republic of Hungary and the People's Republic of Bulgaria crossed the border of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. This was done without the knowledge of the President of the Republic, the President of the National Assembly, the Prime Minister, the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, or the authorities.

At this point, we are holding meetings of the Bureau of the Communist Party Central Committee to deal with the planning of the 14th The Party Congress. The Bureau of the Communist Party Central Committee calls upon all citizens of our country to remain calm and not to resist the armies. Neither our Army, Police nor People's Militia have been given orders to defend the country.

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The Bureau of the Communist Party Central Committee considers this act not only contrary to all the principles of relations between socialist states, but a denial of fundamental norms of international law.

All leaders and officials of the state, the Communist Party, and the National Front remain in their positions to which they were elected by the laws and other rules applicable in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, as representatives of the people and members of their organizations. The constitutional authorities have convened an emergency meeting of the National Assembly, the Government of the Republic Bureau of the CPC of the Central Committee Plenum to discuss the situation. (Communist Party Central Committee, 1968, p. 1)

According to Ševčíková (2010), about 750,000 troops and 6,000 tanks from five of the Warsaw Pact countries had been moved secretly into place overnight. (Albania and Romania refused to participate.) Surprised by this move, Czechoslovakia did not respond or fight back; rather the people protested in silence. Aubrecht and Kaderka (2011) describe how people gathered in public places with Czechoslovakian flags in hand or dressed in the tricolored clothing of the nation's red, white, and blue. They wrote political slogans on walls in Russian, and many of them tried to discuss the situation with the soldiers, explaining that Czechoslovakia was not interested in war or a revolution; they simply wanted to be a reformed socialist state.

Povolný (2008) describes that the main objectives of the operation were: to overthrow the reformists; restore communist control to those faithful to Moscow; to arrest the rebel members of the party leadership; to destroy the independent media; and, to eliminate resistance and potential centers of resistance. The troops occupied the offices of

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the newspaper, *Rudé právo*, the news agency *Česká tisková kancelář* (ČTK), the Czechoslovak television and radio stations, shutting down the freedom of the press. The occupation, however, spared the publishing houses, the ministries, the banks, the Academy of Sciences building, the Bureau of the Central Committee, and other government buildings.

Ševčíková (2010), Aubrecht and Kaderka (2011), and Křivancová (2013) all agree that while the operation was deemed a military success, it was not so politically. Although the goal of the intervention was to divide and confuse Czechoslovak society, the intention of occupying the country was apparently rejected by the entire nation (Pauer, 2004). The intervention failed at the political level, and thanks to the civil resistance of the people, the onset of a government loyal to the Soviet Union was prevented. The Soviets realized that it would be difficult to take control firmly in their hands, so they took the Czechoslovak leadership to Moscow, including representatives of the Czechoslovak government headed by Dubcek and President Svoboda to convince them to support further discussions (Benčík, 2007).

The meetings in Moscow were intense, and President Svoboda worked to resolve the situation as soon as possible to avoid loss of lives in occupied Czechoslovakia. At the final meeting on August 26th, the members of the Czechoslovakian delegation were forced to sign the “Communique on the Soviet-Czechoslovak talks” and the “Protocol on interviews between delegations of the USSR and Czechoslovakia.” These documents ensured the loss of voice of the Czechoslovakian delegation and the end of any further democratic reforms (Křivancová, 2013). The Soviets also forced the Czech leadership to

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sign an additional contract to ensure a “temporary” continuance of Soviet troops in Czechoslovakia which legalized the occupation.

It is also worth mentioning that although the most obvious symbol of the invasion was the presence of the armies in the capital city of Prague, the events also occurred in other cities all over Czechoslovakia. Čermák (1990) describes the situation in the city of Olomouc:

Initial paralysis was quickly followed subsequently by panic as the people anxiously shopped for food and other needs; these were then replaced with anger and a commitment to active resistance. People wrote inscriptions on buildings, walls, and windows; they distributed leaflets against the invasion and painted banners. A petition against the invasion was signed by thousands of people. The people then erased the names of streets or completely removed road signs so the occupying army could not find their way around the city. Czechoslovak Radio and other media attempted to report current events even though those in power tried every possible way to prevent their broadcasts.

According to Křivancová (2013), despite the military re-occupation and surrender of Czechoslovakia, Dubček and his Czech leaders retained the sympathy and support of the Czechoslovak nation. However, there is no doubt that the August military occupation ended the Prague Spring reform process and was replaced by years of repressive measures of normalization, as described in the next chapter. Many opponents of the occupation lost their jobs and there was massive emigration. Křivancová notes that the Moscow Protocol is often characterized as a betrayal, a surrender, or political suicide of Czechoslovakian representatives. Benčík (1998) adds:

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Although it [the occupation] did not destroy the state, it meddled into the administration of the Czech and Slovak nation in a way that meant a substantial loss of sovereignty, and deeply offended the dignity of Czechs and Slovaks. (p. 224)

Aubrecht and Kaderka (2011) note that in the early days after the invasion the nation was incredibly consistent and supportive of Dubček as its citizens resisted the occupation. But in the following weeks, a moral crisis grew within the nation as people resigned and gave up fighting for their rights, except for some of the youth of the nation who remained vocally opposed to the invasion. Student, Jan Palach, protested against what he referred to as the demoralization of the Czech people and degradation of his society by burning himself in January 1969 in Wenceslaus Square; his actions were followed by more students, including Jan Zajíc and Evžen Plocek. Palach's funeral on January 25, 1969 in Prague became symbolic of a nationwide demonstration against the Soviet occupation. Palach's act was recognized twenty years later when, despite harsh police intervention, there were mass demonstrations which marked the disintegration of the communist regime. That time has become known as Palach Week in Czech history (Tomašíková, 2012).

Perhaps the most important indicator to the people of the end of the Prague Spring occurred in 1969, when the Czechoslovakian hockey team beat the USSR in the World Cup in Sweden. This victory led to turbulent celebrations across the country, but mainly in the streets of Prague that clearly had an anti-occupation character as the people damaged government offices (Aubrecht & Kaderka, 2011). The Czech army, controlled by the Soviets, moved in, and later the communist leadership began to remove the

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reformists from their posts and began a process of normalization²⁵ which would solidify the control of the communist regime. The 1968 invasion was immediately followed by a huge wave of emigration as many Czech citizens failed to return from their holidays in Western countries or in Yugoslavia.²⁶ Approximately 70,000 people were sentenced, in absentia, for illegal emigration in the first months of the occupation, with most being sentenced to prison terms of about two years; in addition, their property was confiscated. In all, about 300,000 people were impacted. Many Western countries granted the refugees permanent residence permits and work permits.

Education in 1968 in Czechoslovakia

Although the Action Plan described previously was established to change the educational system, it had little impact because attempts to reform came to a halt as a result of the invasion; the Education Act that had been adopted in 1960 remained in place until 1978. The School Act of 1960 provided a uniform system of education, compared to the previous regulations, and provided significant improvements for education because it again extended compulsory education to nine years. Morkes (2002) notes that the Action Plan drew attention to both the positive and negative aspects of schooling and to the development of education. It was critical of the bureaucratic system in the schools' leadership and appealed for democracy where all individuals would be free to achieve the highest level of education based on their talents and abilities. The Action Plan stated:

We consider further development of our educational system as a critical task. We are building on the solid educational traditions of our nation, based on the good results by which our socialist development has enriched our education, especially its general principles of democratization and the implementation of the

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comprehensive school. We must overcome the effects of past shortcomings when the quantitative results of education were often replaced at the expense of the quality of teaching. There has not been much care given to teacher training . . . Nor have modern concepts and contemporary pedagogies been used in our educational system. Therefore, today's primary task is to put significant resources into the purposeful upgrading of the level, intensity, and especially the value of education, to deepen and increase the general knowledge of the people, and broaden the basis for effective selection and training of talents, by improving the content, form and means of education. (Action Plan, 1968, pp. 26-27)

The Action Plan set out six objectives for education:

1. to prepare a format for the long-term development of the education system,
2. at the middle and high schools, to create conditions to ensure that all young people who had the potential, proven by the results of the previous training, would be admitted to studies they chose,
3. at universities, to consistently apply democratic principles and methods in their management,
4. to deepen and extend the system of adult education,
5. to ensure the legality of educational administration in order to enhance the role of educational administration, and,
6. to ensure consistent and equal conditions for study and placement for all young people of all nationalities. (Action Plan, 1968)

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This Plan for education, however, was never implemented because of the entry of the Soviet troops into Czechoslovakia in 1968, and all democratic reforms came to a halt. Váňová (2007) points out that during the relaxed atmosphere of the Prague Spring in 1968, there were some attempts to restore the education system of the First Republic, in particular to recover the eight-year gymnasiums, where the students could study after the first four grades in grammar school. However, these attempts resulted in Regulation No. 168/1968 Coll., Act of December 19, 1968, that decreed that after nine years in grammar school, the gymnasiums would provide a secondary education program of four years that would end with graduation.

Music education before 1968 was ideologically influenced by the doctrines of the socialist state (Kopřivová, 2012). All teachers, including music educators, were under pressure from the regime, and attitudes, approaches to students, and communication with the students were closely monitored. Even though music education was a compulsory subject, Lýsek (1963) found the quality and level of music education to be problematic because there were no trained music teachers in general schools; on the other hand, music education in the music schools was highly successful because of the musically trained teachers. According to him, the quality of music education in primary schools was not good, mainly due to lack of musical education of the teachers. Kopřivová (2012) states that, while the essence of the music curriculum during that period was to instill in students both a theoretical foundation and also a positive relationship to the arts, the lessons incorporated propaganda songs. These songs were then included in the music classroom, but they were also played on the school public address systems so that the students would hear them continuously and remember them. Playing frequency was

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increased especially on significant days that were linked to some significant event, such as with May 1st (Labor Day). Usually, these songs were aired both in the Czech and in Russian languages (Kopřivová, 2012). However, during the period of relaxation in the 1960's, the curriculum for art and music began to lean toward socialist patriotism (Lýsek, 1963). It is important to note, however, that the curriculum was not only oriented to Soviet doctrines, such as theories of Marxist-Leninism and Socialist Realism (which was a mandatory course of study in all departments of every University as well as Russian language courses), teachers also focused on Czech composers of the previous centuries, such as Antonín Dvořák (b. 1841 – 1904), Bedřich Smetana (b. 1824 – 1884), or Leoš Janáček (b. 1854 – 1928). We can see similarities in other countries, such as Romania. Bute (2010) noted, that the consequences of commitment to Marxist-Leninist principles were a public critique of cosmopolitanism and a call for ideological purity followed by an increased nationalist direction in culture, music and education. Subsequently, foreign movies and books and valuable works of art that were not consistent with communist ideology were prohibited and artists were again compelled to create within the boundaries of Soviet Socialist Realism. (p. 197)

But Kopřivová (2012) observes that the influence of the political regime was so strong and evident, that its approach did not allow the young generation to know composers of Western Europe and North America. Music textbooks and the curriculum reflected only information and facts that were in the spirit of the teachings of the Soviet Union and the communist regime.

To more fully understand the impact of this pivotal year, the comments of the four music educators interviewed for this study may be useful. As in the other chapters, this

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information was gathered through a series of personal interviews with musician educators who experienced these times. The stories recounted here extend a short while beyond 1968 in order to explain some of the impact of this pivotal time in Czech society.

Marek Kopelent was 36 years old in 1968 and was working in a publishing company as the artistic director and chief administrator of the ensemble *Musica Viva Pragensis*, a popular ensemble that travelled abroad frequently. Prior to the invasion, Kopelent, a social activist and reformist, gave a speech in March at a meeting of artists in which he appealed to his audience that they should remember carefully the events of the 1950's when poets and artists were silenced. In May, he and his coworkers in the publishing company signed a petition in support of Dubček to withstand the pressure from Moscow, an action that was later held against him. During the August invasion, Kopelent was in Prague while his wife and young children were vacationing in the country at Vysočina, about 125 km from Prague, and on the day of the invasion a colleague phoned him at 4:00 a.m. to tell him that troops had invaded the city; he realized that he could hear the sound of tanks and planes, so he too began to call others to inform them. That day he went to work as usual and avoided the silent protests at Wenceslas Square although he knew about them, because it was a time when nobody knew what would happen. In the evening after returning home, he heard shelling and recalls feeling frightened. His wife left the children in the country and came to him in Prague, as she too was scared. He remembers this as a time of uncertainty and everyone feared that they would be going to war again. As noted earlier, while the nation was in shock at the beginning of the invasion, they were committed to protest against the invasion; shortly thereafter, however, the people appeared to be in moral crisis, which meant that they

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began to lose their moral principles and the desire to unite and fight for their rights. Many became resigned to the situation, and resumed their normal lives as before.

In 1969, Kopelent accepted a one-year scholarship in West Berlin, which was arranged by Spanish composer Luis de Pablo whom Kopelent had met several times at festivals in Warsaw. He had obtained a special permit in the 1960's to cross the border when it was easier to do so, and was able to cross the Iron Curtain with little trouble. However, crossing the border gradually became more difficult, and then almost impossible, as the period of normalization enveloped the country. The scholarship was under the Berliner Künstlerprogramm at Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD)²⁷ in West Berlin, which was isolated from the rest of West Germany.²⁸ With the monies, he was able to buy a car and was allowed to go to France for ten days with his entire family on vacation. After the one-year period, he returned to Czechoslovakia and later many wondered why he did not stay abroad as he could have emigrated quite easily. He notes that at the time, he had no idea what awaited him back in Czechoslovakia, and he was a naïve patriot who felt he should go home to his country.

Back at home, Kopelent returned to work at the publishing company; however, one month later, strict screening processes were imposed which resulted in everyone being checked to determine their loyalty to the communist regime, and ultimately their employment. According to Act No. 153/1969 Coll (a law that amended and supplemented the Labour Code), it became possible to dismiss an employee from employment, if s/he disrupted the socialist order with his or her activities and did not have the confidence necessary for holding the existing position. Kopelent remembers that members of the Communist Party were screened first, but eventually everyone had to go before the

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commission, and Kopelent was called during the summer of 1970. Čulík (2002) states:

“Even in the first week, people were uniformly against the August occupation . . .

however, the unity of the nation did not last. People were soon divided into collaborators and victims: those who gave in to the takeover, and those who refused to go to the screenings and were existentially destroyed”.

On October 19th, 1970, Kopelent heard from two of his colleagues, and later others, that he would be fired because of his reformist views. Because he had not heard anything official for two months, he finally asked his supervisor in December what was happening and he was told that he would be fired. On March 31, 1971, after fifteen years of employment, he was terminated and no longer had any income. The family lived for a while on the Tuzex²⁹ vouchers that Kopelent had received from abroad as royalties from his compositions. Kopelent’s wife, who had not worked outside the home previously, found a job and worked for 10 years in a television studio as a sound mixer (M. Kopelent, personal communication, June 17, 2013).

With regard to Kopelent’s musical works during the 1960s, Matzner (2009) writes that because of Kopelent’s strong relationships in foreign countries, he received a number of commissions, and his works were premiered at prestigious European festivals. On the other hand, he recounted that his ability to compose was limited due to his work duties. However, he composed *Meditation* pieces for chamber orchestra (1966), *Snehah* for soprano voice, jazz alto voice and chamber ensemble (1967, premiered at the festival La Biennale di Venezia, 1966), *Prayer of the Stone* (1967) and *Still Life* for chamber ensemble (1968, premiered in the town of Donaueschingen in Germany).

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In 1967, Jiří Chvála, at age 34, became the choirmaster of Kühn's Children's Choir. He recalls the 1960s as a period of relaxation in Czechoslovakia with a special atmosphere. He described the newspapers as "transformed" to include special cultural pages, and the magazine *Květen* also had many interesting cultural articles. In August, 1968, the Kühn Children's Choir traveled to camp on the Hora sv. Kateřiny (St. Catherine's Mountain) to rehearse and were there on August 20th during the Russian invasion.³⁰ Two days later, they decided to return home. On their way back, they encountered many Russian tanks and he described it as a time of fear and uncertainty. Although it was a terrible time, everyone knew that they must go on; so beginning on September 1st, 1968 the choir resumed its normal rehearsals. As part of the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, he felt that this organization had a role in preserving Czech culture, which meant they had fewer restrictions about the music they would perform. The Artistic Director of the Czech Philharmonic, Jiří Pauer, worked successfully to protect the organization, the orchestra, and the choirs, and in 1969, the choir was sent to Regensburg, Germany by the Czech communist Ministry of Culture. For Chvála, it was reminiscent of the events of the 1968 Prague Spring as the choir performed a patriotic Czech program, including the *Hymn of St. Wenceslas*. Chvála notes that the choir did not sense any real changes immediately after the occupation. While there were general repercussions and restrictions in Czechoslovakia after 1968, contacts with foreign countries were not interrupted immediately. Because they were associated with the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, the Kühn Children's Choir was in the enviable position of having few restrictions, neither in activity, nor in the selection of repertoire. They continued to sing religious music which other choirs could not even think about doing. Compared to

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Kopelent, Chvála did not have problems with the regime. He was not active in the August 1968 events, nor had he spoken out for reform. Everyone was required to participate in the screenings, including Chvála. However, the fact that the choir was part of the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra provided a safety net for Chvála and he experienced no problems (J. Chvála, personal communication, June 17, 2013).

It is interesting to see that the cultural organizations, such as the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, had an advantageous position under the communist regime because their foreign tours and sales of recordings brought financial gain to the regime, and therefore the restrictions were lenient. However, politically active reformists were not allowed to become musicians in the orchestra and were forced to leave after 1968.

Blanka Kulínska (then aged 32), and her husband Bohumil Kulínský (then aged 58) were choirmasters of the Children's Choir of the Czechoslovak Radio in 1968. Like Chvála and the Kühn Children's Choir, both Kulínský's were also with their choir at their singing camp at the end of August 1968 in the Orava region in the mountains called the Low Tatras of Slovakia. Kulínská remembers that everybody was shocked by the invasion. No one knew what was going on, and no one could believe that this was happening. The situation was harder for them because they were almost 500 kilometers from their homes, and the children were worried about their families. The choir returned early from camp but resumed its normal schedule in September. Like Chvála's choir, the Kulínský choir was under the protection of the Czechoslovak Radio, and thus protected against the communist restrictions, even though neither Kulínský nor Kulínská were ever members of the Communist Party. However, every person, including those associated with the media and Czechoslovak Radio had to go through the screenings because they

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were under the strict supervision of the Communist Party. But like the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, and in spite of the control of the Communist Party, the choir was safe. Neither Kulínská nor her husband voiced their concerns about the regime so they had no problems, and the choir was able to continue to travel abroad and perform numerous concerts after the invasion, bringing money and cultural prestige to the regime. It appeared that the communists wanted to demonstrate their cultural sophistication to the world and this has been a part of the above-mentioned bourgeois music they valued, such as Dvořák, Smetana and Janáček. (B. Kulínská, personal communication, July 1, 2013).

Jiří Skopal, 15 years younger than the others, was 21 years old and studying at Palacky University in Olomouc in 1968. He remembers watching the events of August 1968, listening to Czechoslovak Radio, and reading leaflets describing the horrors going on in Prague. As a student in a smaller centre, the events of 1968 impacted him far less. There was more fighting in Prague and the situation was more intense, as evidenced by the Palach case and the student unrest. And, while he felt some anxiety and disappointment, he had grown up in communist times and he commented that he accepted the events of 1968 as something he could not change. He described the soldiers as puppets being controlled from above. It is perhaps because the invasion took place in August, during the national school holiday, and the new term at university would not begin until late September, that the student protests involved those living in Prague in the centre of the political situation. Living in a small village, Skopal was nowhere near the center of events. Interestingly, some of his best colleagues, such as choirmaster and composer Vytautas Miškinis from Lithuania, and other conductors from Tallinn, and Dubna near Moscow, were from the countries in the Soviet Union whose armies had occupied

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Czechoslovakia, and they remained his friends; none perceived the occupation as their responsibility. He commented: “Our connection as friends persisted despite the escalating political problems.” Skopal described the situation as “coming to the realization that occasionally in politics the powerful states eat the smaller ones, but that life continues” (J. Skopal, personal communication, June 23, 2013).

In spite of accepting the fact that this was going on around him, Skopal was disappointed because Dubček’s era was one of new freedoms, and he could see that all of that would come to an end. He remained working with his choir at an elementary school in Postřelmov, a job that he so enjoyed that he did not care whether he was paid for working there or not. In 1968 he also began working as a voice consultant for the Choral Society of North Moravian Teachers (J. Skopal, personal communication, June 23, 2013). Although Skopal’s contribution to musical education at this moment is purely descriptive and minimal, his description of the events of 1968 help to form a picture of events from the perspective of a student who lived in a different area of the country during 1968.

Summary

1968 brought a significant change to Czechoslovakian politics and social life, but little to education. The turning point began with the Prague Spring when the political hold of the communist regime was at its most relaxed. Censorship was abolished and freedom of speech was introduced. The Action Plan was launched and touched on political and social reforms. With respect to education, the Action Plan proposed to mandate equality in education to assess students on what they learned rather than their position in society. However, while there was a breath of democratic action in the air, the Prague Spring was too short a time to realize any real reform. The people believed in

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Dubček; that he could humanize communism, and would bring democratic principles to the system. Moscow, however, was concerned about the emerging democratic principles, and became concerned that a democratic state would be harder to control and influence than a country ruled by strong totalitarian regime. While Moscow initially exerted enormous pressure on the Czechoslovakian Communist Party to stop the reform process (Vlček, 1999), the Czechoslovakian leaders, with the support of a majority of the population, continued down the path toward freedom from domination. As a result of a series of unsuccessful negotiations, Czechoslovakia was occupied by the Warsaw Pact Army until 1989.

For education, this meant that the proposed changes in the Action Plan were neither developed nor realized, and the Education Act of 1960 remained in place until 1978. At that time of year in 1968, many of the choral conductors of the professional children's choirs were in residence at various singing camps; and, because of the occupation, the children were forced to return home earlier. However, the various choral organizations resumed their usual Fall schedules a month later as the people all around the country went back to their normal routines.

Although the occupation was radical, according to those interviewed here, society did not perceive any major changes immediately. Choirs and schools continued normally and for a while, with the release of political conditions in the beginning of the 1960s, it was still relatively easier to cross borders and travel abroad which was how many people, who were on holidays in August, were able to emigrate during 1968. In addition, many left a few months later and never returned to Czechoslovakia. Later, restrictions to daily life affected everyone, especially those who had been politically active against the

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regime. Active and even passive reformists, like Kopelent, lost their jobs and suffered because they had openly supported the Prague Spring. Chapter Five describes in detail the repressive measures of normalization that came into effect after the August invasion.

Chapter 5:

From Normalization to the Velvet Revolution

Historical Overview

Chapter 5 is devoted to the twenty-one year period from 1968 (the time when normalization was imposed on Czechoslovakia by the Soviet occupation) to the onset of the Velvet Revolution in November, 1989.

After the defeat of the Prague Spring and the Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia in August 1968, the leadership of the Communist Party felt the need to silence those who still believed in the ideals of the democratic reforms. According to Čornej (2001), at the meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party in November, 1968, the conservative members harshly confronted the supporters of the reform movement within the Communist Party. The final resolution of the meeting was the acknowledgement that the main threat to the Communist Party was "right-wing opportunism," by which was meant people acting as if they respected and adhered to Marxist-Leninist principles while actually quietly but vehemently rejecting them. There were a number of right-wing opportunists who were opposed to the Communist Party that dominated Czechoslovakia; they favored a Western model of pluralism, or the ability to choose among several political parties, and refused to accept revolutionary solutions or adopt ideological compromises (Čornej, 2001).

Gustáv Husák (b. 1913 – 1991) was named the First Secretary of the Central Committee on April 17, 1969, and his goal was to bring Czechoslovakia out of political crisis and to re-establish Czechoslovak adherence to the ideals of the communist regime. Husák was born on January 10, 1913 in Dúbravca (today part of Bratislava). In the 1920s,

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he studied at a grammar school in Bratislava, and at age 16, he joined the Communist Youth League. In 1933, he began studying Law in Bratislava and joined the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. After the communist coup in 1948, Husák was initially politically successful, but in 1950 he was accused of bourgeois nationalism. This was a Marxist term used to refer to the common people, who, according to the Communist Party, looked out exclusively for their own property and national interests, and ignored the interests of the workers (Čornej, 2001). In February 1951, he was arrested and in April 1954, during a trial that was a sham, he was sentenced to life imprisonment. He was one of the few people who pleaded guilty, which probably saved his life (Čornej, 2001). In 1960, after a period of amnesty by President Novotny, Husák was released and in 1963 was fully pardoned. During the 1960s, he was initially one of the leading figures among the reformists in the Communist Party, and during the Prague Spring he was seen to be a faithful follower of Dubček. In April 1968, he became deputy chairman of the Czechoslovak government (Čornej, 2001). Husák, however, changed his political views, and in August 1968, became an ally to Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev (b. 1906 – 1982), a Soviet politician, who between 1964 and 1982 was the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, which meant he was the highest representative of the Soviet Union. Because of Husák's support, Brezhnev named him the leader of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in 1969. Until May 1971, he was its First Secretary, then until 1987, he served as Secretary General. In 1975 was appointed as the President of Czechoslovakia for fourteen years.

The appointment of Husák to the role as First Secretary in 1969 signaled a return to social and political life in the state before 1968 when the Communist Party was not

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threatened by the democratic ideas. This period of re-establishing normal conditions is now commonly described as one of “normalization.” Rataj and Houda (2010), however, explain that the authoritarian system that was reinstated was nevertheless fundamentally different from socialism before 1968, and also from the Stalinist model of ‘national socialism’ after 1948 when the communists first seized power in Czechoslovakia.

National Socialism is a term that refers to the unique way each nation was allowed to relate to communism prior to 1948 (Rataj and Houda, 2010). National Socialism was abandoned by the Soviets after 1968 which required the occupied countries to follow a path that required complete submission to the USSR.

What developed is referred to as ‘real socialism,’ while most aspects of communist control prior to January 1968 were restored, the Czechoslovakian Communist Party did not reinstate the mass ideologically-based political trials of the 1950s. The communists changed their strategy to intimidate people and forced them to acknowledge the communist system and to publicly show their obedience to the regime. For example, participation in elections, meetings, and votes on corporate assets were still required; however, the Communist Party no longer allowed the people to play an active role in politics. This created an interesting paradox. Although elections were held, they were simply an outward illusion of freedom of choice; in reality, elections lacked any meaning. There was only one candidate and the people who were forced to vote, could only approve the candidate. People could vote for a party other than the communists; however, they were required to vote in secret, thereby raising suspicions about their commitment to the communist regime. These people would undoubtedly have problems with the communist regime in the future (Tomašíková, 2012). In trying to achieve civic passivity

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and to entice more people to non-political activities (such as music, sport, gardening), they encouraged the people to be politically lethargic and non-participative. Václav Klaus (2003) notes:

I disagree with those who criticize the ordinary people who collaborated with the totalitarian regime; those who did not rebel. . . . The reaction of the mass of the "ordinary citizens" with regard to these forced conditions was resistance, inefficiency, substitution for individual activities, atomization of society, passive living in scenes of propaganda, which no one believed." (Klaus, 2003)

Those who disagreed with the regime were bullied, and also lost their benefits and access to such avenues as higher education and better employment. As explained by Rataj & Houda (2010),

A common reason for bullying dissidents was checking the so called stamps in the National Identification Cards, or checking the required job duties. Efforts for compliance with the "laws" provided the government with a semblance of legitimacy of the system and were some of the typical characteristics of the entire twenty year period. (p. 352)

In carrying out his duties, Husák enacted the Law of Emergency Measures in 1969 that allowed the state authorities to immediately exclude undesirable people from educational study or to dismiss them from employment, and to impose a three-week prison sentence on political opponents without the requirement of court approval (Čornej, 2001). Thus, the new political leadership used all of its powers to break down social unity. An example of this was described in the previous chapter with reference to choir director Marek Kopelent, who was fired from his position for being seen as dissident.

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President Ludvík Svoboda was another key personality during the early stages of this period of normalization, who became president despite having previously identified himself with the reform path of Dubcek. After the invasion of Czechoslovakia by the Warsaw Pact armies in 1968, Svoboda immediately flew to Moscow where he was involved in long negotiations to aid the Czechoslovak politicians who were also called to Moscow after the invasion. The Czechoslovak people soon became angry with Svoboda because he subsequently signed the Moscow protocols, and they felt betrayed. Although the people would have preferred a new leader, they had really no choice but to elect him again as president in 1973. Svoboda, however, had to cease his duties one year later due to ill health, and he died at the age of 84 on September 20, 1979. His successor as president was First Secretary Husák,

After the Prague Spring 1968, the entire economic structure of the Soviet Bloc countries was subject to central planning and redistribution (Ježek, Lukeš & Prokš, 1992). As a result, during normalization the government began construction on an extensive highway network, the subway in Prague, the gas transit pipeline, and large housing developments in many cities. At first glance, everything was presented positively to show the growing economy, but ultimately, all this led to major economic and technological stagnation. In fact, the growth of GDP by the end of the 1980s was zero (Ježek, Lukeš & Prokš, 1992). Bálek (2007) describes the economical situation in Czechoslovakia during normalization thusly:

It can be estimated that labor productivity in Czechoslovakia compared with Belgium, the Netherlands, Austria, Sweden and Germany was only at 53% of the level of these countries. Czechoslovakia, however, used higher energy and raw

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material consumption, but had a lower technical level of industry. (The country was delayed in global development by about 5-15 years, and this gap was already apparent in the seventies.) (Bálek, 2007, p. 45)

There is no doubt that because of the planned economy, Czechoslovakia was developmentally and economically behind, and by 1970 lagged behind other western European countries. Bálek (2007) also notes that there was a persistent excess of demand over supply that complicated the lives of the people and business. This was a factor in inhibiting economic growth and any comparisons to the rest of Western Europe. Bálek considered this to be one of the causes of the collapse of socialism later in 1989. As other countries outside of the Soviet Bloc were growing their technological industries, these industries amounted to less than a third of the Czechoslovakian economy compared to other capitalist countries with similar economic potential. Much of the investment went into construction, although that too was also lagging behind European levels. Bálek (2007) provides other statistical data:

The gross national income declined from 24.7% in 1980 to 15.5% in 1989. Thus the level of the Czechoslovak national economy lagged in terms of regulation, control and automation. Czechoslovakia lacked specialization in almost all its sectors and in the division of labor. The Cold War created significant barriers for Czechoslovakia to participate in international business. In the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance³¹ (CMEA) countries, however, the mutual supply of goods and services did not provide growth or efficiency. The Soviet economic system, which ruled the socialist countries, did not provide the necessary pressure or

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resources for competitive functioning of the economy, both within each country or amongst all of them. (Bálek, 2007, p. 45)

Ježek, Lukeš and Prokš (1992) commented that by using creative phrasing, the government masked the true state of affairs. If some numbers and facts did not match the list of accomplishments, they could not be published, as for example happened with the former Czechoslovakian automotive power, which had decreased the number of cars per capita to the level of developing countries. Nor were economic comparisons with neighboring West Germany allowed. Nevertheless, in reality, “The Czechoslovak citizen had to work seven times longer than a West Germany citizen to earn the money to go for vacation to Yugoslavia, or twelve times longer to earn money to buy a kilogram of coffee.” (Ježek, Lukeš, & Prokš, 1992, p. 19).

Directive, bureaucratic methods of economic management were restored during this period, which meant that all economic activity was established solely to fulfill the written plans of the government. The monopoly of state ownership prevented capable and enterprising individuals from managing on their own. This led to the idea that national property belonged to everyone and therefore to anyone, so public pilferage became something absolutely normal, almost the norm of social morality. There was a common saying that "he who does not steal, robs his family," which became the watchword of that time (Ježek, Lukeš, Prokš, 1992). While the Communist Party did everything in its power to pacify the people so they would be quiet and disinterested in politics, there was, however, a faction of the population who worked underground to protest against the regime from the very beginning of normalization.

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As mentioned in the previous chapter, one of the first visible protests after 1968 occurred when three university students burned themselves to death in protest beginning in 1969. Because he felt that the people had become apathetic and passive to the events that were happening around them, Jan Palach, a student of the Philosophical Faculty of Charles University set himself on fire in Wenceslaus Square in Prague. He hoped that his desperate act against the political developments in Czechoslovakia would rouse the people to show their dissent with the occupation of Czechoslovakia. As Blazek (2013) recounts,

Jan Palach thought for a long time about some form of radical action that would galvanize the public to resist. He considered various forms of protest. This is evidence in his proposal to occupy the main building of the Czechoslovak Radio and to broadcast a call for a general strike, which he sent at the beginning of January 1969, to the student leader, Lubomir Holeček, when speaking to a gathering of students of the Faculty of Arts at Charles University in Prague.

He never received an answer. Therefore, he considered another form of protest. He wrote four letters and all of them he signed as Torch #1. On the last card, which he sent to his friend just before he killed himself, he signed himself as "Your Hus," after the Czech religious thinker Jan Huss (b. 1370-1415 (see Chapter Two). In these letters he threatened that if his demands were not met, then people would burn for the cause. His demands included the abolition of censorship, disabling the monopoly of the Soviet News, and firing collaborators from their functions. He demanded that the people should begin an indefinite general strike. If there were still non-compliance by January 21, there would be further voluntary self-immolation of young people. Palach said he would be

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honoured to be the first to die. According to historian, Peter Blažek (2013), Palach's goal was to shock people out of complacency. Palach's biographer, Jiří Lederer (1990), categorically disagreed. He referred to Palach as a young man of principled truthfulness and claimed that some group of voluntary torches existed, even though there was no evidence of that, and its other members were not known (Rataj & Houda, 2010). Another student, Jan Zajíc, and worker, Eugene Plocek, however, later followed Palach's example.

After the August invasion in 1968, and then later in the 1970s and 80s, there was a huge wave of emigration of about 200,000 Czechoslovak citizens. They went mainly to German and English speaking countries (Germany, Austria and Switzerland, the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, and Australia). Some found new homes in the Scandinavian countries, especially Sweden, while others went to the Netherlands, France, and Italy. Not everyone left the country for political reasons. Many emigrants were motivated by the idea of a better life, economic status, and better job opportunities. But the majority of people left the country involuntarily and unwillingly due to fear of persecution by the secret police. It seemed their only form of expression of resistance to the regime. There were also cases of forced deportation of undesirable opponents of the regime, which showed that the Communist Party was concerned about public backlash if some opponents were imprisoned. It was easier to deport them from the country (Ježek, Lukeš & Prokš, 1992).

Not all Czechoslovak citizens who remained were reconciled with the situation in the country. Porter (2011) mentions a statement by Jan Urban, a prominent former Czech dissident, who characterized that time:

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We had to prove our loyalty by humiliating ourselves. If you didn't do it, if you didn't accept their normalization, you could not continue your education. Even if you could accept, that your own career would be over, could you accept it on behalf of your children? Would you deny them an education? Would you subject them to being targets for the StB³²? It was no different from the Nazi occupation. My father was in the Czech resistance, a partisan in Eastern Bohemia, a hero of the Communist Party, ambassador to Finland after the war, but in '68 he, too, had to go through vetting process. The StB did not trust him. He was too strong, too confident, and he believed in the system's promises. He would not sign their paper supporting the Warsaw Pact's invasion of Czechoslovakia. Instead of a deputy minister, he became a night watchman. His heart gave out after his third interrogation (p. 114).

Political and ideological pressure afflicted mostly the science and culture sectors. Many scientists and artists were allowed to work in their field, however, official art creations conformed to the policy of Soviet Socialist Realism, which dictated that, for example, texts of poems had to be about love for the Soviet Union or the promotion of communist citizenship. Beginning in 1949, composers were required to join the Union of Czechoslovak Composers and only members of this organization could be professional composers. After 1968, this Union was abolished and new Association of Czech Composers and Concert Artists was created. Only the composers, who were loyal to the communist government, could be members. With this action it was ensured that all compositions would respect Socialist Realism. As mentioned in the previous chapter, at all universities mandatory courses were provided in the theory of Marxist-Leninism.

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Teachers at schools, as well as employees in all companies were vetted and people who in any way stood against the regime were fired.

In spite of this, there were attempts to create the illusion that art was independent of the regime. Actors who were not allowed to play in theaters held theatrical productions in their homes, and played to small circles of people who were their friends. One art group that was deemed most dangerous to the regime and incompatible with the Communist Party's notion of socialist art was the rock band known as *The Plastic People of the Universe*. The authorities described the members of this band as hooligans, and they were arrested by the police and imprisoned. It was a surprise for the Communist Party that the arrest of members of this little-known group triggered a wave of solidarity, and was an essential catalyst for uniting the opposition who previously had been fragmented. The main leaders of the opposition decided to create a citizens' initiative, open to all supporters (Čornej, 2001).

In the mid 1970s, Czechoslovakia signed the International Covenant on Civil and Human Rights, a document which was adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by the United Nations General Assembly on December 16, 1966, and came into force on March 23, 1976 (Bartošíková, 2013). The main objective of the Covenant according to Bartošíková (2013) was to achieve respect for fundamental human rights. Parties had a duty not only to respect human rights, but also to strive for their development. But the signing of this document by Czechoslovakia did not mean that the government would either respect or follow this code, and in 1976, Václav Havel (b.1936 – 2011) and Zdeněk Mlynář (b. 1930 – 1997) publically condemned the Czechoslovak

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authorities for ignoring human rights, through a statement which playwright and writer Pavel Kohout (b. 1928) named *Charter 77*.

In the beginning of the text, *Charter 77* emphasized that it was not created to oppose the regime. The Charter was not a political party, nor were its proponents interested in setting out their own political objectives. They did not intend to invent a political program that would lead to political or social change (Čornej, 2001). Its signatories wished to engage in constructive dialogue with the state power and draw attention to cases of injustice that were happening in Czechoslovakia. They wanted to draw attention to specific cases of human rights violations and act as a mediator in conflict situations. This declaration was signed by 243 publically influential people, such Jan Patočka, Jiří Němec, Václav Benda, Václav Havel, Ladislav Hejdránek, Zdeněk Mlynář, Pavel Kohout, Petr Uhl, Ludvík Vaculík, and Jiří Hájek, all of whom were well known artists, journalists, scientists, and members of other occupations; many of them of them were dissidents and known among the Czech public even before normalization.

On January 6, 1977, the authors and signatories sent the *Charter* to the Federal Assembly, the Government of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and the Czech Press Agency ČTK. However, when three of the writers and signatories, Ludvík Vaculík (writer), Pavel Landovský (actor), and Václav Havel (playwriter), went to deliver the document, the secret police stopped them and confiscated the material. Because the initiators of the Charter were expecting this move, they had already sent a copy of *Charter 77* to foreign journalists and thus the information about this new protest was leaked to the world. *Charter 77* had little influence on the policy of the Czechoslovakian government. In contrast, however, Western governments began to increasingly recognize

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its importance (Skilling 1990, p. 189). The Secret Police were enraged and began to persecute anyone who had sympathized with *Charter 77* (Čornej, 2001). For example, nine spokesmen of *Charter 77* were jailed from 1977 to 1986, and spent 24 years in prison (Prečan, 1990). The importance of the *Charter 77* was that it united ideologically and politically diverse independent initiatives at a time when political opposition was weak, and people were adapting to living with real socialism. Because of *Charter 77*, Czechoslovakia became a focal point of worldwide interest that supported the dissident movement and spared many of its activists from police and judicial persecution (Otáhal, 1994).

Reports of *Charter 77* activities spread through a newsletter called *Information about Charter 77* (or, in short *Infoch*) created by left-wing journalist and dissident Petr Uhl (b. 1941). With his friends, they made 12 typewritten copies and sent them abroad. The newsletters soon developed into a twenty-page magazine that had permanent sections. It was published by Uhl and his friends every two weeks and contained documents about *Charter 77*, essays, reports, various petitions, statements, and letters. *Infoch* was published for twelve years, and because he proudly claimed to be the publisher, Petr Uhl was sent to prison for five years in 1979 (Čornej, 2001).

The people, who signed the Charter were called Chartists, and the Communist Party was not able to put them officially on trial because they did not violate any laws. There were only a few political trials involving Uhl, Jiří Dienstbier, Václav Benda, and the future Czech president Havel, who were convicted of subversion of the republic and sent to prison for four and half years. Čornej (2001) stated that those who did sign *Charter 77* were fired from work, interrogated, and harassed by the secret police. From

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its first publication, the Communist Party tried to convince Czech society to condemn the Chartists. On January 28, the Communist Party convinced hundreds of well-known artists at the National Theatre in Prague to sign a new document called the *Anticharta*. Most artists who signed admitted that they had not wanted to sign but were afraid not to. But this campaign had the opposite effect; attention at home and abroad turned to the Chartists (Čornej, 2001).

Some of the signatories of *Charter 77* founded the Committee for the Defence of the Unjustly Persecuted (VONS) in 1978. The committee's duty was to disclose all cases of wrongful prosecution and provide assistance to affected families. After one year, ten members of VONS were arrested and six of them were sentenced to six years in prison. But others replaced those arrested, so the organization continued its work. Another integral part of this period is referred to as *samizdat*. The term comes from the Russian language and means "issuing one's own efforts or by own means" (Posset, 1991). Many dissidents created their own leaflets at home on typewriters and passed them around amongst their circle of friends. If someone was an author on the list of banned artists, or prohibited from publishing a work in official publishing houses, his work was created as a *samizdat*. This non-edited literary creation achieved considerable influence, even though its proliferators were threatened. Typed language editions (*e.g.*, called *Petlice* or *Expedition*) and periodicals grew out of this practice. It is interesting to note that *Charter 77* existed also as *samizdat*. The original document was confiscated, so people made copies that circulated as *samizdat* (Posset, 1991).

The following section describes the impact of normalization on the educational system.

Education in the Time of Normalization

Ježek, Lukeš, and Prokš (1992) state that education at all levels was required to support the needs of the totalitarian regime during the period of normalization. They sum up their description of schooling by noting that students in school were learning the opposite of what they heard from parents at home. Parents would warn their children not to tell at school what they had heard at home, and this hypocrisy became normal behavior for them. The state of education worsened during these years. For example, during the 1985-1986 school year, the pupil-teacher ratio doubled and was twice as high as in Austria. The number of university graduates in Czechoslovakia proportionate to population ranked among the poorest countries in Europe, alongside Albania and Romania. The budget allocated to education was even lower than the level of the countries in Africa (Ježek, Lukeš & Prokš, 1992). This decline in education was to a significant extent attributable to communist ideology. Because the goal was to suppress the people and their rights and freedoms, educational theory and educational practice were developed to fulfill that goal. As Václavík (1995) explains,

In the former socialist Czechoslovakia, education received considerable attention since the construction of new socialist and communist society consisted, among others, in educating a new type of person. Therefore, the guiding principles of educational influence were enshrined in the Constitution. The Constitution of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic in 1960 in Article 16, paragraph 1 noted: Any cultural policy in Czechoslovakia must be conducted through education and teaching in the spirit of the scientific world view of Marxist-Leninism, bringing about a close connection with the life and work of the people. (p. 138)

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According to a memorandum released by Státní pedagogické nakladatelství (SPN – State Pedagogical Publishing) (1976), a project was developed called *The Further Development of the Czechoslovak Educational System* that provided elaborate detail of the educational system as a whole. It included all levels of schools, after-school facilities, teacher training, etc. The length of compulsory schooling was set at 10 years, and included the characteristics of the individual subjects, individual learning plans, uniform curriculum, and textbooks. The content and scope of the curriculum were newly conceived. The result was that in every school of the same type, the same things were to be taught at the same time to the same extent and ideally, by the same methods. This program lasted through the 1960s and the 1970s. One section clearly articulates the goal of education:

The task of the socialist school is still to educate members of our socialist society who possess a communist attitude toward work, who are able-bodied, able to actively participate in social and public activities, who will work successfully in different areas of economic and cultural life, protecting and reproducing its wealth, who are prepared to selflessly defend the socialist homeland and the community of socialist countries (...) Education in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic is based on Marxist-Leninism and is constantly being improved based on the latest knowledge of science and technology. (SPN, 1976, pp. 4-5)

In summary, the Communist Party advocated two main objectives. First, the intention was to impact the psyche of the entire population, preventing them from forming their own opinions and brainwashing them with Marxist-Leninist ideals. The second was to train people to meet the unique economic challenges. Teachers were forced

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to publicly promise that they would adhere to these tasks; otherwise, they could not work as teachers. They were required to swear their allegiance to the system and the following provides one example of the oath:

I promise that I will always work with the interests of the working class in mind, and implement the policy of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. I will be loyal to the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and I will defend and strengthen the socialist system. . . . I will, according to the principles of communist education, cultivate in my students a love for the socialist motherland. I will make them respect the working class and the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. I will educate them in the spirit of the Marxist-Leninist world view. I promise to develop their feelings of solidarity and deepen their friendship with the socialist countries, especially the Soviet Union. . . . I am aware of the consequences that would result from failure to comply with my promise. (Šimíček, 2013)

Předotová (2012) describes how that the Federal Assembly of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic released Constitutional Act No. 62/1978 Coll., which amended Article 24 paragraph 2 of the Constitution of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, and Act No. 63/1978 Coll., the measures in the system of primary and secondary schools. These new objectives of the Act placed increased demands on deepening and perfecting each person in a socialist society and the introduction of secondary education for all young people. Rýdl (2010) identifies some other important actions during this period. Act No. 77/1978 Coll. about state administration in education that was released on June 26, 1978. It determined the scope and tasks of the state education system to consistently provide state education policy. The leading actors were the Federal Government of the Czechoslovak

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Socialist Republic, the Czech National Council, Government of the Czech Republic, local, county and regional national committees, Ministry of Education of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and other central state administration bodies. The Communist Party, the Socialist Youth Union and the Revolutionary Trade Union Movement were also recognized as non-governmental bodies that held significant influence on education and government organizations in making decisions and taking control.

On March 22, 1984, another law was issued by the Czech National Council (Act No. 29/1984 Coll.). This law amended the previous laws that cancelled the traditional nine-year schooling program, and replaced it with ten years of compulsory schooling (eight years at grammar school and two years at a secondary school) (Předotová, 2012). She mentions that even during this period, the students were recruited to the secondary schools primarily by class of origin. Some students were unable to study at a good secondary school and nepotism was rampant (Předotová, 2012).

Music education was also impacted during normalization. In the 1960s before the Warsaw Pact invasion, the recognition of the importance of arts and culture had grown, and new art and music schools developed. Harvařík (1966) noted that Act No. 186/1960 Coll. ensured further development and organization of a unified system of art education and at the same time, the Government approved the importance of aesthetic education for the development of a good socialist society. Basic music school and elementary art schools were consolidated into basic schools of art. After the invasion in August 1968, however, the status of art schools declined. They were still considered educational institutions but were required to provide their educational services as complementary to,

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and supportive of, general education in schools (Gergor & Sedlický, 1990). This meant that the music schools ceased to be educational institutions and were perceived to provide leisure activities for young people. Politically, the government wanted to prepare easily accessible leisure activities for the masses.

The situation in the 1970s and 80s could be described as a search for new methods in education. In the basic schools, there were restrictions on teaching music because the new curriculum, released in 1976, allowed only one, one-hour music lesson per week. Before 1976 the curriculum included European classical music history as well as theory and Czech music history with a heavy emphasis on Russian composers. The new curriculum, according to the Soviet view of history, suppressed these fields of teaching and put emphasis on performance, especially singing. Many of the schools developed good choral programs. Because music education was weakened in the schools, community music education programs seemed to flourish to complement school programs. The most famous examples from that period were the children's community choirs, Bambini di Praga, Kühn Children's Choir, Kantiléna in Brno, Permoník in Karviná, and Jitro in Hradec Králové. Singing festivals and competitions also expanded during this time (Gergor & Sedlický, 1990). This is one of the paradoxes of communist education. While music education in primary schools was not supported by teaching hours in the curriculum, school choirs and community choirs were supported financially by the communists to travel within Czechoslovakia and abroad, to participate in festivals and exchange events (Martinec, 2011). The four music educators interviewed for this study provide a personal perspective on the development of the situation in Czechoslovakia between 1968 and 1989.

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Gregor & Sedlický (1990) state that children and youth were culturally raised via solo singing and choirs. They point out that although the importance of music education in the elementary schools was flat, the art schools and choir were the institutions that raised the bar for cultural and artistic education. Choirs were established not only in schools but also in other institutions, such as the branches of the Czechoslovak Radio, the House of Enlightenment, and the Central House of Pioneers.

As previously mentioned in Chapter 4, Marek Kopelent, after returning home from his study scholarship in West Berlin, was fired from his job at Supraphon. After 1968, composers and artists were normalized and required to join the Association of Czech Composers and Concert Artists. The existing Union of Czechoslovak Composers (1949 - 1970), of which Kopelent was a respected member, was dissolved and the new Association of Czech Composers and Concert Artists was formed. This was a smaller organization with only about 100 members; Kopelent was not accepted as a member of this newly established professional organization because members had to be politically solid communists (Zapletal, 2013). As a result, he was excluded from active participation in the wider Czech cultural life of his peers. All of the members of the new Association of Czech Composers and Concert Artists were politically authorized individuals and members of the Communist Party, except for Petr Eben and Viktor Kalabis, both excellent composers but not members of the Communist Party. Kopelent suggests that this was a common practice at that time for communist-based organizations to have some non-members to prove that organizations did not exclude non-communists.

Readers will recall that, prior to the Prague Spring, Kopelent, as the artistic director of the choral ensemble *Musica viva Pragensis*, was allowed to tour abroad,

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mainly because they brought revenue to the communist-based concert management company, Pragokoncert. However, after 1968 the situation changed. In 1971, the ensemble performed in France followed by Germany in 1972. They were preparing for a major tour to Italy in 1973, but there was growing pressure from the Association of Czech Composers and Concert Artists that the group not be allowed to travel unless Kopelent and Zbyněk Vostřák, who was also under scrutiny by the regime, left the ensemble. According to Kopelent, he convened a discussion with the group's members, in which the musicians could decide whether they would continue without Kopelent and Vostřák, or cancel the ensemble. The musicians were in solidarity; unanimously they voted that if there was no alternative, they would disband this most successful ensemble, which they did.

After Kopelent was fired from his job at Supraphon, his life changed dramatically. He loved his job in the publishing house, but now found himself at home while his wife worked. It was acceptable in the beginning because he had time to write, however, this was not a viable long term solution. Kopelent had been receiving royalties for his works through the Copyright Protection Association (OSA). However, the new director of the OSA was Oldřich Flosman, who as a communist held important positions also in the Association of Czech Composers and Concert Artists. He radically changed the payment system to the composers and Kopelent lost his source of income. Kopelent began to look for work, applying for several positions in education but, because he was not member of Communist Party, he did not receive support from the communists to work as a teacher. He decided to write a personal letter to President Husák in which he tried to clarify and explain everything for which that he had been blamed. However, the President merely

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discharged his letter to the leadership of the Communist Party and the Ministry of Culture, and as might be expected, nothing changed. Kopelent had built an excellent reputation abroad and knew he could find work there, but he was not allowed to leave the country. He requested permission each time he received an invitation, and each time the communist government invented new reasons to reject this trip. The situation finally changed in 1976 when a new employee hired at the Ministry of Culture took over his case and began to moderate the restrictions against Kopelent.

In 1976, Kopelent was surprisingly called by the district school inspector for Prague-West, a new employee at the Ministry of Culture, who took over his case, and arranged to release some of the restrictions against Kopelent. The inspector offered Kopelent a place in the Primary School of Arts in Prague at Radotín. While this was one of the music schools labeled as a leisure supplement to academic education, it was evident that this was one of the cultural activities supported by the Communist Party. Kopelent began working there as an accompanist for the dance department, and remained there until 1991 (M. Kopelent, personal communication, June 17, 2013). Matzner (2009) notes that although from the perspective of today's observer, it may seem that this role might be perceived as disappointing for an established composer; however, such jobs did provide some release from an otherwise difficult, personal existence.

Perhaps the most severe punishment for Kopelent during this period was that his works were banned from performance in Czechoslovakia by the regime. However, much of his new music was performed abroad in the 1970s although he was not ever able to hear it, which must have been both frustrating and a complicating factor for a composer of contemporary music who needs to hear his music. Finally, in 1983, he was again

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admitted into the Association of Composers and Concert Artists as the political conditions were beginning to relax once again.

Kopelent was frustrated during the period of normalization as he was frequently invited to be member of juries for composition competitions. He recalls receiving invitations from Rio de Janeiro (1970), Biennale de Paris (1971), ISCM Festival Bonn (1976), and Alte Kirche Boswil Switzerland (1980), but due to his persecution by the communist regime, was not allowed to participate. His only chance to participate as a juror came in 1984, when he was allowed to sit on the jury of Kazimierz Serocki Competition in Warsaw (Matzner, 2009). Before the Revolution, even though he was not teaching at university, he had had several private students, including composers Petr Kofroň and Martin Smolka.

As noted in the previous chapter, Jiří Chvála, had experienced few problems with the communist regime. After 1968, the Kühn Children's Choir was part of the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra and this was one place where art took precedence over politics. Orchestra Director, Jiri Pauer, managed to protect the choir from difficult situations, such that even in 1969, during a concert tour to Regensburg, organized by the Czechoslovak Ministry of Culture, they were allowed to perform a religious program. Thus, it is obvious that in 1969, not all contacts with the west were immediately frozen; nor did everything change immediately. The choir had major responsibilities to the Czech Philharmonic and was required to sing all of the children's choir parts in the various cantatas and oratorios. They also performed with the National Theatre in Prague, and as such, had the best of possible conditions during normalization.

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Chvála described how the concert tours abroad were organized. Normally, when Czechoslovak citizens travelled abroad as tourists or on business, a communist, or trusted person, had to accompany them. This person was responsible for monitoring all participants. But this was not the case during tours of the Kühn Children's Choir for which there were no strict controls. They travelled regularly on tours organized by either the Ministry of Culture or by the communist concert management Pragokonzert. While they were always required to provide a report to the Communist Party after the tour, they were not controlled or monitored during the tour. But Chvála noted that he also toured with an adult choir during this period, and they always had a member of the Communist Party travelling with them. During this twenty-year period, Chvála and the choir travelled regularly throughout Europe and to Japan. Chvála remembers that they were financially supported by the communist regime through the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra and had access to rehearsal space, concert uniforms, and were provided with reasonable salaries for teachers that were comparable to the other teachers and other professions in the rest of the nation (J. Chvála, personal communication, June 17, 2013).

Blanka Kulínská's situation was more difficult than that of Chvála. Even after the invasion in 1968 and during the beginning of normalization, the Children's Choir of Czechoslovak Radio could perform and could travel abroad. Kulínská remembers that when the editorial staff of Czechoslovak Radio changed, so too did the general repertoire. Their problems began in 1972. The choir toured regularly to Italy and, while in Rome, they stayed in a convent at the Vatican because they had no other accommodation. This information was relayed to Prague and after their return home, Kulínská learned they were in trouble. The editors of the Radio were concerned about the choir's travels abroad,

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and after that point, negotiations with regard to any foreign concert tour became more complicated. Everything came to a head when suddenly the locks to their rehearsal rooms were changed one day, and Blanka and Bohumil Kulínský were fired from the Czechoslovak Radio and from the Children's Choir of the Czechoslovak Radio.

A mother of one of the children's choir member sent a message the next day from the director of the Elementary School at Lyčka Square in Prague that there was a school available for rehearsals. Kulínská describes this as a very courageous act at that time for the headmaster of this school, and they accepted this invitation to establish a new choir there. All of the children from the radio choir came with them and they established their new children's choir. They had no further interaction with Czechoslovak Radio, and simultaneously no recordings associated with the name Kulínský were allowed to be broadcast (B. Kulínská, personal communication, July 1, 2013). Kulínská proposed that the new choir be called *Bambini di Praga* because during their last tour in Italy, that was what they were called by their hosts. The Czech public, however, did not accept that name because at the time of normalization, using a foreign-language title was considered highly unusual, perhaps even disrespectful. Nonetheless, the name was accepted eventually and was retained into the next century (Škápíková, 2003).

Bambini di Praga continued the traditions that had been established by the Children's Choir of Czechoslovak Radio. Their *modus operandi* remained basically the same with an emphasis on vocal technique and the articulation of singing. The choir immediately earned a significant reputation for excellence with varied kinds of music and was allowed to tour abroad, arranged by Pragokonzert. The Kulínský's had many foreign contacts, and in 1973, the choir was able to travel on a month-long tour to Japan, which

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was the first ever Asian tour of a Czech children's choir. During their tours, there were always at least five senior members of the Communist Party who travelled with them and were introduced as friends of the choir (Škápíková, 2007). It was common knowledge that they were present to watch the adults and the children, and to ensure that they did not make contact with anyone. Kulínská states that in the period until 1989, Bambini di Praga was not restricted and that it was a wonderful time of artistic growth for them (B. Kulínská, personal communication, July 1, 2013).

For Jiří Skopal, the period of normalization was the beginning of his professional life as a teacher and choirmaster. By 1972, he had already won regional competitions with his first choir that he started at an elementary school in Postřelmov. From 1968 to 1982, he worked as a voice consultant at the Choral Society of North Moravian Teachers, and in 1971 he founded the choir in Mohelnice. In 1974, he began his doctoral studies at Charles University in Prague because he wanted a position as a professor at a university. He had hoped to work at University in Olomouc with Ladislav Daniel, the Head of the Music Department, but at that time Olomouc University would only hire members of the Communist Party. Because Skopal was not a member, he had to look elsewhere. In 1977, he accepted a position at the University of Hradec Králové where he taught Psychology of Music and Music Education methodology courses. At the same time, he accepted the offer to become conductor of Jitro Children's Choir after choirmaster Josef Vrátil, who died. He was very successful with this choir and within two years, he won the “Zlatý vavříň” (Golden laurel) award at a competition in Olomouc. The choir continued to win numerous competitions and embarked on concert tours abroad. In 1982, he founded the first boys' choir in Hradec Králové, which later became known as “Boni pueri” [and that

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this author much later also conducted (1999-2010)]. Both of Skopal's choirs were supported financially and artistically by the regime.

Besides working with the choirs he devoted himself to teaching and research at the university and in 1986, he was named Head of the Department of Music Education. As the administrator, he had full decision-making powers over his subordinates and was seen as a fair leader who always respected those who worked with him. If someone became involved in a situation that challenged others' beliefs, he would intercede to keep harmony in his department. Similar to Kulínská, he described this period of his life as culturally positive although he acknowledged there were some restrictions that everyone was forced to accept. His choice of repertoire for the choirs was not limited, and in his formalist approach to music, he like the other conductors probably felt that they were being apolitical, when the opposite was true. Because they did not program political or other music that challenged the government or communist values, they were not overtly apolitical; they were still somewhat complicit in helping the communists control society. Their choice in repertoire was likely not as free as they believed, as it may have involved a degree of self-censorship. Chvála was expected to perform for events, such party congresses, organized by the Communist Party, and the repertoire for these occasions, of course, had to conform to the party setting. With the exception of these restrictions, he admitted that in some ways, he regretted what happened to choral education after the Velvet Revolution because people generally rejected all that had been part of the communist period, and even the few good things were lost.

Summary

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When comparing the first two decades of Communist Party rule from 1948 to 1968 with normalization from 1968 to 1989, one looks to discover what was different. During the first period, people were more active and interested in politics, which resulted in the Prague Spring of 1968, when members of the Communist Party were tolerant of some democratic elements. It is generally accepted, on the other hand, that the period of normalization resulted in stagnation in political, economic, social, and educational life that resulted in delayed development relative to the rest of Europe. The Communist Party dominated in such a way as to make the people passive and disinterested in politics and, whether they realized it or not, choral musicians, ensembles, and school and community music groups in a sense contributed to that political project by providing outlets for what the government regarded as leisure pursuits and as a distraction from politics, and programmed carefully to avoid persecution from the regime.

Opponents of the regime were forced to emigrate (whether it was an escape, or they did not return from a business trip), or were fired from work; non-communist artists were not allowed to perform publicly. Education continued according to the established conditions beginning in 1948, when students were judged, not by their abilities, but by their class of origin and clean 'cadre reviews.' One excellent example of how people were treated is that of composer, Kopelent, who although famous abroad, was fired from his job, was not allowed to perform his music publicly in Czechoslovakia, or to travel abroad. The people during this period have been described as tired, disgusted, and resigned. They sought solace in other areas and became actively involved in other activities, such as sport, music, and gardening (Lukešová, 2012).

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During this period, a number of community choirs were highly successful. They seemed to have few problems with the communist regime, and were financially supported with free rehearsal settings, concert dress, reasonable salaries for teachers, and most importantly, could legally travel abroad. Kulínská was fired from the Czechoslovak Radio for political reasons, but after founding Bambini di Praga, was allowed to work without any limitations or restrictions. It follows that the communist regime supported activities that did not endanger it, and choral conductors could work to establish excellent choirs, while they programmed their repertoire carefully. At the same time, music and art, especially related to children, could distract people from active politics and from the ideas of democratic revolutions. In this regard, choral music education found itself in a place of advantage. The following chapters provide an overview as to how the Velvet Revolution came about, and how the situation changed after that point for the country and choral music.

Chapter 6:

The Transition to Democracy 1989-1992

Historical Overview

This chapter begins with a description of the Velvet Revolution and ends with the peaceful division of Czechoslovakia into two independent states, the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

Čornej (2001) notes that in the second half of the 1980s, it was becoming increasingly clear that the communist regime in Czechoslovakia found itself once again in crisis. The problems were not only economic, but also political; however, the Communist Party seemed not to notice. A major impetus for political change in all countries of the communist bloc was the appointment of Mikhail Sergejevitch Gorbachev (b. 1931) as the head of the Soviet Union. On March 11, 1985, he became General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and he seemed to be quite aware that change was needed. As Čornej (2001) observes,

The tension in Czechoslovakia gradually escalated. For nearly two decades since the "Prague Spring" and the Soviet occupation, a new generation of Czechs had grown up who had neither experienced the heady days of enthusiasm in 1968 nor the later persecution and purges of the people. This was a generation that was becoming more and more vocal. At the same time, the unfortunate consequences of the economic politics of previous years which was adversely reflected in the standard of living of the population became obvious. (p.418)

Gorbachev's first state visit to Czechoslovakia in April 1987 was a failure and a disappointment to the Czechoslovakian citizens as he falsely described Czechoslovakia as

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a country with a high standard of living. In addition, he confirmed his support of the current leadership of the Communist Party. The people were disappointed with President Gustav Husak's leadership in his role as General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, and in December, 1987, he resigned the latter position. While it was not unusual for the same person to serve as both President and General Secretary, the two required different functions. Husák was not perceived as successful, and was replaced in the function of General Secretary by communist politician, Milouš Jakeš (b. 1922).

At the same time, the people were growing increasingly dissatisfied, which became more evident as *Charter 77* became more public. It appeared that the people were becoming disgruntled enough to become interested in politics and the possibility of change. The police tried to deploy its agents against *Charter 77*, but the Charter remained the only platform of opposition against the communist regime. Slowly but surely, more people began to stand in opposition to the regime. The Communist Party had lost some of its strength and by that time, did not have sufficient political power (or perhaps will) to suppress the various groups. Čornej (2001) describes the situation thusly:

In 1987, a Democratic Initiative was established, and in the same year an independent newspaper the *Lidové noviny* appeared for the first time. In 1988, several movements were functioning, such as the Masaryk Society, Independent Peace Association, Czech Children, the Movement for Civil Liberties and a number of other organizations, including numerous ecological movements. All these activities stood out dismissively against the Communist regime; they organized newer expressions of disagreement with the regime and its methods,

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including petitions and street gatherings. (pp. 418-419)

These factions with their various initiatives were growing rapidly in the final years of communism as a result of increasing dissatisfaction. For example, the Independent Peace Association initiative for the demilitarization of society was established in April 1988. Its activities were highlighted on August 21, 1988 in Wenceslas Square in a demonstration that took place on the anniversary of the occupation of Czechoslovakia. By the Fall of 1988, its leaders became the targets of widespread repression and Tomáš Dvořák and Hana Marvanová were imprisoned (Blažek, Laube, & Pospíšil, 2003).

From 1988 to 1989, the Czechoslovak federal government led by Prime Minister Ladislav Adamec (b. 1926 – 2007) attempted to take some steps towards economic reforms; however, these were still based on the old Action Plan that had been developed during the Prague Spring 1968. Moreover, these reforms were unacceptable to the communist leadership. It was apparent that changes to the economy required parallel political and social reforms. Because Gorbachev was not prepared to interfere in the internal policies of the country, he (perhaps unknowingly) created a more favorable foundation for the work of the opposition and its growing initiatives. Even those who had been passive before were now joining the protestors. The communists still stubbornly resisted all of the signs of unrest even in 1989 and opted for confrontation. The police were called in to intervene; and there were reports of brutality that exceeded everything that had happened in previous years (Čornej, 2001).

The key year for change was 1989. Čornej (2001) states that after the invitation of the opposition groups, people gathered to peacefully commemorate Jan Palach, who had burned himself in 1969. However, the authorities did not support this gathering and

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deployed 2200 police officers and 1300 members of the People's Militia³³ to disperse the gathering; however, the people met on another day and their peaceful gathering grew into a massive protest, which lasted until January 21, 1989. This event was then named as Palach Week (Čornej, 2001).

In addition to ordinary citizens, some important people also began to criticize the regime. For example, Cardinal František Tomášek (b. 1899 – 1992) sent a letter in January, 1989 to Prime Minister Adamec in which he disagreed with the procedures taken against the demonstrators. Růžička (2001) described how the protestors had become more vocal that resulted in the arrest of Václav Havel. January 22 marked a significant day when the cultural workers protested against Havel's arrest in a letter to Adamec, and demanded that the government negotiate with the opposition about changes for the future.

Havel was released on May 17, 1989 and shortly after he wrote a text that he called *Několik vět* (*A Few Sentences*). According to Kaiser (2009), Havel's words became the basis of a petition that demanded the release of political prisoners, freedom of media, and other independent initiatives; it also stirred up further public debates about the various issues of recent history (especially what happened in 1968) about political issues and major investment projects (such as nuclear power plants). The number of signatures on the petition grew constantly and was signed by a number of celebrities (e.g., famous singer Hana Zagorová, painter Jan Bauch). By June 28, there were 1800 signatures, a month later 10,000 signatures, and by the autumn an estimated 40,000 signatures. On June 29, the text was published abroad. Although a smear campaign was launched against the petition, similar to the one during the establishment of *Charter 77*, it did not obtain

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the desired effect (Kaiser, 2009). The *Charter 77* movement officially released the text on July 10, 1989. The following extended quotation is from the text of *A Few Sentences*:

The first months of 1989 have once again clearly shown that even if the current Czechoslovak leadership very frequently incants the words "rebuilding" and democratisation, in reality they quite hopelessly resist all that creates democracy, or at least distantly suggests it. Citizens' petitions and initiatives not organized by the leadership are shut down. They break up people's peaceful assemblies and do not allow the public to have a say in the preparation of new laws. At the same time, however, the public has shown that it is ready to liberate itself from its lethargy; more and more people have the courage to express in public their desire for societal change. Society's move forward is starting to clash more seriously with the motionlessness of power; societal tension is growing and the danger of an open crisis is starting to be a threat. None of us wishes for such a crisis. For this reason we call on the leadership of our country to understand that the time has come for real and thorough systemic change, and that this change needs to come through free and democratic discussion. The first step toward any kind of meaningful change starts with a new constitution and ends with economic reform, and must therefore provide a change to the societal climate in our country, into which the spirit of freedom, trust, tolerance and plurality must return.

In our opinion, what is necessary is:

1. The immediate release of all political prisoners.
2. That freedom of assembly can no longer be limited.
3. That various independent initiatives must cease to be criminalised and

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persecuted; they must finally be understood by the government as being what they have long since been in the eyes of the public, which is as a natural part of public life and a legitimate expression of its diversity. At the same time, obstacles should not be placed on the creation of new civic movements, including independent labour unions, alliances and federations.

4. That the media and all cultural activity be relieved of all forms of political manipulation, as well as hidden censorship both before and after the fact; that it be open to a free exchange of ideas and that the media independent of official structures that have thus far been active be legalised.

5. That the justified demands of all religious citizens be respected.

6. That all planned and implemented projects which are to permanently change our country's environment and thus preordain the lives of future generations be immediately presented for general evaluation by experts and the public.

7. That free discussion be held, not only about the 1950s, but also about the Prague Spring, the invasion by five states of the Warsaw Pact and the subsequent normalisation. It is lamentable that certain countries whose armies once interfered in Czechoslovakia's development are now starting to dispassionately discuss this topic, while in Czechoslovakia it is still a major taboo, only so that those people from political and state leadership responsible for 20 years of decline in all areas of societal life will not have to step down.

Everyone who agrees with this standpoint should support it with their signatures. (Suk, 2009)

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The main events that led up to the Velvet Revolution began on November 17, 1989 with student groups. The students formed clubs and committees and began to plan actions going forward. They did not expect, however, their work to turn violent. On Friday, November 17, 1989, about 25,000 students and other people gathered in Prague at Albertov to honor the memory of Jan Opletal, a man who was murdered by the Nazis in 1939. This meeting was also set up to recognize the 50th anniversary of the closing of Czech universities before the World War II. (The universities were opened again after the end of the war). The students used this occasion to openly discuss the existing problems and demanded immediate social change in Czechoslovakia. From the Albertov, they then went to the Vyšehrad³⁴ to the grave of Karel Hynek Mácha (b. 1810 – 1836) who was a beloved Czech poet and novelist, a representative of Czech Romanticism and the founder of modern Czech poetry.

Čornej states (2001) that along the way the students carried banners with signs “Down with the secret police,” “Destroy the Communist Party,” or “We do not want one-party rule.” They shouted out: “We do not want Jakeš!” (the General Secretary), “Vivat Havel!,” “Vivat Charter!” The organizers, afraid of coming into conflict with the law and being victims of police action, had asked the City College Board of Socialist Youth Union in Prague to obtain permission for their student assembly to take place. They agreed that the students would be allowed to give speeches but they should stay away from the city center. The plan was to end the demonstration at Mácha’s grave and they would disperse. However, after the speeches and despite the warnings of the organizers, some of the students began to walk toward the city center in the direction of Wenceslas Square. More and more people joined the procession and it was soon about 50,000

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people. But they never did reach Wenceslas Square because the police were already waiting at Národní třída (street). Čornej (2001) reported that the police attacked and brutally beat the protesters, injuring about 160 people (Čornej, 2001). Leoš Krejčí, a 24 year-old who suffered a concussion during the clash with police told his story:

I was returning to my home on Národní třída 28 about 9:00 p.m. to see my pregnant wife. I showed my ID to the police. The Gunnery Sergeant refused to let me go and called a lieutenant who upheld his decision. I wanted to leave so I turned around. Someone hit me. I fell on my knees. It felt like a bag of cement on my head.

When I woke up, they were kicking me, hitting my back with their batons. In my hand I was still holding my ID. When they left me, I ran home. Three meters from my door, another policeman grabbed me by the collar. He threw me down and began to beat me. He yelled that he didn't care where I lived. My legs were weak and my head hurt. (Krejčí, 1989)

This event was a turning point for the Czech people and reports of the violent action against the students outraged the public. The university students became more determined to fight back and they demanded an investigation into the police actions; they called on other students and professors to join them in a week-long strike.

Representatives of university students met with actors in the Realistic Theatre in Prague and provided testimonials about Friday's demonstration. The actors supported the students and invited all Czechoslovak theaters to stop playing for a week. Instead of performances, the actors read aloud their descriptions and opinions about the events of the last few days, and offered their audiences a chance for public discussions.

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Not only were the students outraged and needed to express their opposition to the regime and its practices, but so too were other prominent citizens. Kaiser (2009) describes how Václav Havel handled this situation. He was not in Prague during the events of November 17, but he listened to everything on the radio. The next day he traveled to Prague, where he began to organize additional opposition. He met with representatives of *Charter 77* as well as other groups. All agreed that it was necessary to create an anti-totalitarian movement and to take advantage of the general outrage of society. He named this movement “Občanské fórum” (meaning Civic Forum) and it was held in the Drama Club Theatre. On the following days there was a series of demonstrations, the largest of which took place on November 22 in Wenceslas Square in Prague with more than 200,000 people. Numerous prominent personalities, headed by Václav Havel, spoke to the people, and the demonstration ended with the Czechoslovak national anthem, sung symbolically by singer Marta Kubišová, who had been banned from performing in public in 1968 by the Communist Party.

The demonstrations continued for several days, and on November 24th, the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, Milouš Jakeš and other members of the party leadership resigned. The most powerful demonstration occurred on November 24th in Prague at Letna with about 800,000 people. People came from all over the country to support Havel’s Občanské fórum. On Monday, November 27th, the entire country went on a general strike, and the participants demanded significant social and political changes, new civil rights, and the demise of the Communist Party (Čornej, 2001).

On the basis of previous agreements between the government and the Občanské

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forum, Articles 4, 6, and 16 from the Constitution of Czechoslovakia were cancelled on Wednesday, November 29. These articles formed the anchors of the Communist Party's hold on Czechoslovakia as the principles of education in the spirit of Marxist-Leninism. All was now canceled. In the following days, more dramatic changes took place.

December 10th saw the resignation of President Gustav Husák, and on December 29, Vaclav Havel was elected as President of Czechoslovakia. In June 1990, the Občanské fórum convincingly won the election, which confirmed the emerging democracy (Ježek & Lukeš, 1992).

Except for the 160 protesters who were injured on November 17, 1989, the coup in Czechoslovakia was modest and bloodless. As a result, these events are now referred to as the Velvet Revolution. Czechoslovakia was ready to rid itself of the influence of the Soviet Union, therefore the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance was disbanded in 1990, and then one year later, the country resigned from the Warsaw Pact. The new Czechoslovak government required Soviet troops to leave Czechoslovakia, and the last soldiers left the country in the summer of 1991. On April, 23, 1990, the country was officially renamed the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic (Čornej, 2001).

Czechoslovakia was still one country, but this was the first sign of the efforts of the Czech Republic and Slovakia to separate.

The fall of the communist regime in Czechoslovakia was received with enthusiasm by the populace. Novák (2012) states that the Czechs understood the previous period as a series of lost decades, and that in the period before World War II (and shortly after) Czechoslovakia had been positioned among the ten most economically advanced countries in the world. Production per capita was similar to Germany, Austria, France,

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and Belgium. However, after more than forty years of communist totalitarianism, the economic level of Czechoslovakia was barely at 50% of the level of developed countries (Novák, 2012). Until 1989, the Czechoslovak economy was based on central planning. There was no labor market because the central plan artificially maintained the required number of jobs or generated new ones in order to maintain unemployment at zero. The end of central planning and the emergence of the labor market and economic reforms that changed ownership conditions could only result in major changes in employment. Economic reform was left in the hands of economists led by Finance Minister Václav Klaus (b. 1941). For the rest of 1990 and 1991, he planned a scenario of economic reform in which he defined a primarily macroeconomic framework, defined as restrictive monetary and fiscal policy (zero growth in the amount of money and a small surplus state budget). Change of ownership was defined in three ways: small-scale privatization, partial restitution and a large-scale privatization (Šafaříková, 1996).

After the election in 1992, there were growing tensions and contradictions between the Czech and Slovak countries, and so the two split into separate countries on January 1, 1993: the Czech Republic and Slovak Republic. The first sign of the potential for this separation occurred in 1990, when it was apparent that Slovakia was pressuring to be independent. Vodička & Cabada (2003) describe the reasons for the breakdown:

The main causes of the collapse of state came about as a result of the differences in political culture of Czechs and Slovaks and especially Slovakia's desire for political emancipation. This emancipation was to be completed by establishment of an independent Slovak state. (Vodička & Cabada, 2003, p. 162)

It should be added that the division was completely peaceful without any violence

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or fighting. It was simply an agreement between the Czech and Slovak regional government bodies who were elected in 1992. Vodička and Cabada (2003) suggest that main reasons behind the collapse of the unified state into two countries came as a result of the different political cultures of Czechs and Slovaks and the strong desire for political emancipation by the Slovak nation that also had a weaker economy. Since 1993, both countries have been independent, and the relationship between the two is friendly. It is even an unwritten policy that the first foreign trip of any newly elected Czech president will be to Slovakia, and vice versa.

Education in the period between 1989 and 1992

The fall of the socialist regime foreshadowed a number of fundamental changes that would occur. In education, after more than 40 years, it became apparent that it was time to overcome the ideological barriers of a universal education that were based on the defined framework of Marxist-Leninist philosophy. Examining different streams of pedagogical thought from Western Europe and the North America were priorities for the new government. With the opening of borders, the teachers had the opportunity to go abroad and to observe other types of schools. And, in Czechoslovakia, some teachers from abroad were able to share their experiences as they were invited to teach at Czech schools. However, shifting curriculum and pedagogy is complex and this took time to study and implement. Teachers were keen to learn about what was going on abroad, rather than continue to promote a system that had been in existence for more than 50 years (Václavík, 1995).

Changing political and social conditions brought some modifications to the school system. However, talks about changes in the school system were long-term, and changing

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the basic laws governing educational processes dragged on, and were not completed until fifteen years after the revolution. Until 2004, the Education Act of 1984 was still valid. Instead of relinquishing the old Education Act, portions were amended at least fifteen times in the post-revolution period.

The management and administration of education before 1989 was highly centralized and the powers for education were divided into several ministries. The leadership of the Communist Party directly or through the Ministry of Education centrally set education policy, curriculum, and the regulations of the educational process. Based on one of the first laws, which were adopted in the post-revolution period (Law of State Administration and Self-Education No. 564/1990 Coll.), the administrative power was concentrated in the hands of the Czech Ministry of Education, and school authorities were established for the regional management of education. One of the first major amendments adopted in 1990 created a legislative basis for the first major system changes in the Czech educational system. These included:

1. canceling the system of single "uniform" school and establishing the possibility of differentiation of education according to the abilities and interests of children,
2. repealing the provision requiring a uniform ideological orientation of education,
3. newly introducing the emergence of non-state schools, private schools, church schools, and no longer a state monopoly of schools, which were until this time funded by government. New non-state schools were funded by private organizations or churches, etc.

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To be a teacher before 1989 meant that one was monitored by the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. The Communist Party determined who could study to be a teacher and who could not. Teacher education was highly ideological and all teachers were required to take several courses in Marxist-Leninism as well as methodology classes. After November 1989, everything changed dramatically and became chaotic as the people learned how to deal with the sudden onslaught of freedom. There were reports of some schools cancelling classes for weeks while the country was involved in debates and demonstrations. The change required necessary reforms to education, not only in ideological content, but also in terms of teacher pre-service training and continuing education. However, the Act regulating Educational Staff was not approved until much later in 2005 as the country came to grips with all of the sudden changes. (Because this chapter deals with year 1989-1992, the changes of 2005 will be described in more detail in Chapter 7). As a result, educational reforms in education after the Velvet Revolution were gradual and it was not until 2004 that the first real Education Act was created. Nothing major changed for music education except for one critical modification in June 1990, when the Education Act was amended. This change affected the Peoples' Schools of Arts. *The Little Czechoslovak Encyclopedia* of 1986 describes the role of the Peoples' Schools of the Arts as including:

Extracurricular facilities in Czechoslovakia, art schools including basic artistic fields: music, dance, art, literature and drama serve to develop the artistic talents of individuals. The schools are responsible for the education of youth in terms of artistic forms of leisure studies. They provide aesthetic education, advisory, and consultative assistance to schools, or ensembles and is able organize their own

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artistic events. (p. 805)

In June 1990, the People's Schools of the Arts were renamed Basic Arts Schools and were classified as educational institutions; thus, they were given more importance and better positioning in the educational system. However, the lasting impression even today is that arts schools still provide a form of leisure activity (or non-formal education) (Kudrlová, 2011). In the Basic Arts School, students are provided a one-hour, weekly, individual lesson on an instrument (or singing), and one hour per week instruction in group music theory. In the later grades, students perform in orchestral ensembles or sing in the choir.

The four choral music educators interviewed for this study provide their perspective on their experiences during the Velvet Revolution and the emergence of democracy.

In 1989, Marek Kopelent was 57 years old and still worked as an accompanist for the dance department. During the events of 1989, he was an active participant in the Velvet Revolution. On November 18th, he attended the concert of the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra in Prague at the Rudolfinum. A statement was read at this concert that signaled no further cooperation with Czechoslovak Radio or Czechoslovak TV. In the meantime, the chief conductor, Václav Neumann, and the Orchestra were invited to the Ministry of Culture to perform live for Czechoslovakia Radio. Neumann refused, as did conductor, Zdeněk Košler. This decision was greeted by the concert audience with thunderous applause. At this concert, Kopelent spoke with several musicians about the future, and from his initiative, the Civic Forum of Musical Artists was formed. On November 23, 1989, the Association of Czech Composers and Concert

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Artists met with representatives of the Civic Forum and Central Committee of the Association, and on November 28, all resigned from the communist-based organization. On February 6, 1990, a new organization of musical artists was founded, called the Association of Musicians and Musicologists.

In February, 1990, together with his colleagues, Kopelent formed an association called Atelier 90, which included a small group of Czech composers who had suffered under the yoke of communist censorship. In this group were Jan Klusák (b. 1934) and Petr Pokorný (b. 1932 – 2008). Kuznik (2010) who wrote about Kopelent in his book about these composers, cites Kopelent who noted that their intent was to examine progressive trends in the wider musical world so they could distance themselves from communism.

Kopelent also received an offer to serve as music consultant in the Cultural Affairs Office of the President of the Republic, Vaclav Havel, because of his significant experience as founder, leader, and administrator of the renowned ensemble, *Musica viva Pragensis*. He worked with Havel from 1991 until 1992 when Czechoslovakia split into the Czech and Slovak Republics. He describes this time at Prague Castle (the house of government) as revolutionary because Havel surrounded himself with artists there (M. Kopelent, personal communication, June 17, 2013). The year 1990 was a significant milestone because Kopelent was hired to work as a teacher at the Academy of Music, where he was appointed professor one year later. In 1991 he also received the *Ordre Chevalier des Arts et Lettres* from the French government (Matzner, 2009). It seemed that for all of his suffering during the 40 years of the communist regime, Kopelent was finally able to receive the acclaim that he had earned.

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Jiří Chvála was 56 years old in 1989, and still artistic director of the Kühn Children's Choir which was part of the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra. The choir was successful and experienced few restrictions by the Communist Regime; it travelled regularly abroad, not only to the countries of Eastern Bloc, but also to the Western countries and Japan. Chvála recalls that the year 1989 marked a huge change for everyone. The Czech Philharmonic Orchestra (CPO) began to rid itself of all the smaller organizations that had been added after World War II until 1989. Besides the Kühn Children's Choir and the main Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, there were a number of smaller ensembles, such as the Smetana Quartet, Czech Nonet, Prague Madrigal Singers, soloists of the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, the Prague Philharmonic Choir, and the Kühn Children's Choir. By 1992, all of the smaller ensembles, including the Kühn Children's Choir, were forced to leave the orchestra. It was a significant change because, when attached to the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, the choir had had free access to rehearsal and performance facilities and the staff was fully paid by the CPO. The choir received some financial grants from the government but those were filtered through the Prague Philharmonic Choir. This dramatic change created new issues for Chvála and the choir that will be discussed in the next chapter. In any case for Chvála, the one positive outcome that came with the separation from the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra was that the choir had to become autonomous and could decide its own future. (J. Chvála, personal communication, June 17, 2013).

Blanka Kulínská was 54 in 1989. During the time of normalization she and her husband, Bohumil Kulínský, were joint conductors of Bambini di Praga. She recalls that the period of normalization was likely the optimal time for the choir's development. She

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and Kulínský had a dream of building a choir school where all the children would be trained in musical theory, vocal technique, playing instruments, etc. and they could focus on artistic excellence. Unfortunately, her husband died in 1978 (age 78) before they could realize that dream. Their son, Bohumil Kulínský jr. (b. 1959), succeeded his father as her co-conductor.

The Velvet Revolution provided the opportunity for them to build the Bambini di Praga Choir School, which Blanka Kulínská along with her son opened in Prague in 1990. The school offered a six-year supplementary training program in which the children (ages 5 to 15) studied their distinctive systematic teaching method in intonation and choral singing. The children worked hard to audition for a place in the main touring Bambini di Praga choir. They also offered classes in recorder, English, and Physical Education (Vítová, 2002). The Bambini di Praga choir school eventually expanded to 800 students. Kulínská recalls that at the first auditions of the school, there were huge queues because everyone was doubly excited about the political changes and so full of expectations (B. Kulínská, personal communication, July 1, 2013).

Jiří Skopal was age 42 at the time of Velvet Revolution. In 1989, Skopal was Professor and Chair of the Department of Music Education at the University of Hradec Králové and artistic director of Jitro and Boni Pueri. Skopal sensed the gradual relaxation of the repression as 1989 approached. In 1988 and 1989, Jitro went twice on concert tours to Western Europe. He began to see the imminent signs of democracy, especially in the behavior and open communication with the people, which seemed to come about because of the growing general awareness that the situation of the communist regime was unsustainable. The transformation to democracy for Skopal meant that they could travel

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abroad to western countries more often and without the concerns of being watched, and in both 1990 and 1991 he traveled twice with Jitro to the United States.

Skopal recognized that change was truly needed but he felt sorry that the people completely rejected everything, even that which had been positive with the socialist system, such as social security, promotion of culture, and support of leisure activities. In retrospect, he knew there were many weaknesses in the system but was sorry to lose the positives they had experienced. For example, until 1989, he had not had to worry about concert dress, money, payments for renting the rehearsal rooms for his choirs. However, the freedom for the people and democracy were important, although the citizens had to learn quickly how to take care of themselves on their own. (J. Skopal, personal communication, June 23, 2013)

Summary

The Velvet Revolution will always be seen as a pivotal event in the history of Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic. Some scholars compare its impact to that of the national revival in the 19th century (Augustin, 2013), when, in 1620, there was an increasing Germanization of the Czech territory, which resulted in the demise of the Czech language. German had become the main language at Prague University and in the cities, and the Czech nation was gradually losing its identity, just as it did during the period of communism. It seemed in both periods that many of the people had resigned themselves to domination, ceased to be interested in politics, and gradually stopped fighting for change. In the 19th Century, the National Revival restored the Czech language and renewed the internal pride of the nation; similarly, in November, 1989, the Velvet Revolution was the result of the Czech people taking back their identity and their

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country. Marek Kopelent is an important example of a musician who was persecuted during the communist regime after he publicly stood against the regime, especially after the occupation of 1968. Even after knowing that he was blacklisted by the regime, he continued to meet in secret with other dissidents to create underground organizations that worked against the system that controlled everything within the entire country. The communist regime saw Kopelent as a concern and were correct in their assessment because he never gave up his dream of working toward a free Czechoslovakia. Later his leadership was recognized when he was named as an advisor to President Vaclav Havel at Prague Castle.

In interacting with the four music educators of this study, it is apparent that all four of them welcomed the Velvet Revolution with enthusiasm, high expectations, and hopes for a positive change. But, after earnest, open and honest conversation and reflection, I sensed a hint of disappointment which will be described in the following chapters.

The Velvet Revolution brought an end to the rule of the Communist Party with the election of the new president, Václav Havel. Free elections in 1992 eventually resulted in the peaceful division of Czechoslovakia into two independent states. With regard to education, it was clear that fundamental changes were required. However, these changes happened very slowly. From my observations, education was not a priority because of the necessity of immediate political and economic reform. Although changes in education happened much later, and will be discussed in the next chapter, one major change in music education took place. The People's Schools of the Arts were changed to become Basic Arts Schools. The change was not just about the name, but their overall

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position in the entire school system was strengthened.

Chapter 7:

The Czech Republic after 1993

Historical Overview

This chapter documents the political, economic, and educational developments in the Czech Republic from 1993, the time from when the Czech Republic became an independent nation, to 2011, when the first democratic president after the communist period, Václav Havel, died. In 1993, after centuries of domination by other nations, an independent Czech Republic was founded on January 1st, 1993, as Czechoslovakia peacefully divided itself into the two sovereign countries of Slovakia and the Czech Republic. Václav Havel, the president of Czechoslovakia in 1989, was re-elected as the first president of the Czech Republic in 1993, and remained in that role for two, five-year terms, providing about thirteen years of continuity to post-communist Czech lands. The death of Václav Havel on December 18, 2011, brought an end to the first era of an independent Czech Republic and brings to an end this part of the story of the Czech Lands. So influential was Havel, that even some years after leaving the presidency, Havel was still renowned locally and globally as an influential and respected political commentator.

The peaceful division of Czechoslovakia into two countries was the result of differing political and economic movements as each country identified with its own sovereign issues, and ultimately decided that each wanted all of its national decisions to be addressed separately so each could act with full independence. While the majority of countries as well as the United Nations recognized the Czech Republic as an independent country, a few did not. Lichtenstein, for example, did not recognize the Czech Republic

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as a sovereign country until 2009.

The most significant reforms of this period were economic in nature. Wurst (2013) characterizes this period as a time of dynamic development, the transformation of social traditions and values, and the reintroduction of democracy. Berounský (2013) notes that even now there is still some discussion as to whether this division of state from the Czech point of view was a loss or a gain. On the one hand, one might suggest that without the separation there still might have been a successful transformation of the economy accompanied by fewer problems, because together, the two countries would have been bigger. On the other hand, the new country realized a significant change in its geopolitical position and political weight due to being such a small state. However, the Czech Republic's real advantage was in the continuation of the leadership of the transformational Prime Minister Václav Klaus (Berounský, 2013), who before the split of Czechoslovakia had been the Minister of Finance, and then became the first Czech Prime Minister, and later the Czech President. There was therefore some continuity. Aubrecht and Kaderka (2007) reported that from 1993 to 1997 Prime Minister Klaus directed a fundamental transformation of the economy from a planned to market economy. As mentioned above, the process was built mostly on the restoration of private enterprise, restitution, privatization, price liberalization³⁵ and deregulation, renewal of the banking sector, and redirection of exports to the West. Wurst (2013) describes some of the most significant challenges during this period:

- The transition to a market economy from the previous centrally planned economy created a polarization within society; in a short period of time, there were a few exceptionally wealthy people who, as a result of the changes, earned huge

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amounts of money, and the ordinary citizens who mostly earned nothing.

- The new economic order created challenges with the collapse of many financial institutions and many people lost most of their savings.
- The banks were privatized and the consequences of activities of their leaders meant a considerable loss for the Czech economy, which the Czech justice system never tackled.
- There was suddenly high unemployment which the vast majority of the population had not previously experienced. Unemployment occurred mainly due to the closing of large companies and the over-employment that had previously occurred.
- Practices in the 1990s after independence were highly corrupt.
- Economic transformation brought many problems, among which the most frequently discussed are the impact of multinational companies on the Czech economy, the unsuccessful attempts at privatization and the economic failures of banks. (pp. 38-39)

Wurst (2013) also provides, as a counterbalance to the previous list, some of the positive consequences of the transition from communism to capitalism that included the successful transformation to a market economy, the avoidance of significant inflation, the acceptance of the Czech Republic into NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) and the European Union, an eventually increased standard of living, and the increase in sense of security of the state and its citizens.

However, the Czech Republic was initially impacted heavily by a sudden and significant rise in unemployment. During communist rule, the regime had ensured jobs

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for all its supporters, even causing over-employment. However, that changed with the free market economy. By the mid 1990s, the country had begun to grow its GDP that was cut short by the international economic downturn. Then there was a political crisis in 1997 when the government of Prime Minister Klaus lost power. Between 1998 and 2006, there were four prime ministers, Miloš Zeman (b. 1944), Vladimír Špidla (b. 1951), Stanislav Gross (b. 1969) and Jiří Paroubek (b. 1952) who were all members of the Social Democratic Party. During this period, the political spectrum shifted to the left, and state policy was then determined by the Social Democratic Party, which restored economic growth but at the cost of increasing the national debt. Then, in 2006, the government swung to the right with the election of prime ministers Mirek Topolánek (b. 1956), independent member Jan Fischer (b. 1951), and Petr Nečas (b. 1964). Aubrecht and Kaderka (2007) state that until rapid changes of government that began in 1998, the Czech Republic had become the second most successful post-communist country during the entire transformation, after Slovenia.

An important milestone for the Czech Republic was its entry into NATO in 1999. NATO had been founded in 1949 as a political and military alliance and its main objectives were the collective defense of its members and the preservation of democracy and peace in the North Atlantic. It was signed first by twelve countries (the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, France, Portugal, Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, Italy and Iceland), whose membership required the recognition and acceptance of human fundamental values, such as the rule of law and human rights. Novák (2011) writes that Czechoslovakia expressed a desire to join NATO in October 1991, along with Poland and Hungary. At that time, however, NATO was fearful of

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expanding further to the east because it could anger Russia. Fidler and Mareš (1997) explain that the Madrid Declaration on Euro-Atlantic Security and Cooperation, adopted on July 8, 1997, led to the acceptance of the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland as the first newly adopted countries into NATO. The document was ratified by April 23, 1999 at the Summit on the 50th anniversary of NATO.

The other major international link that the Czech Republic successfully negotiated was joining the European Union (EU). The EU was established in 1993 under the Treaty on European Union, better known as the Maastricht Treaty, which followed the European integration process from the 1950s. The EU aimed to create a common market, as well as an economic and monetary union, the promotion of development and economic growth, employment, and competitiveness while improving living standards and quality of the environment across all of Europe. The EU adopted fundamental principles of free movement of goods, persons, services, and capital, as well as common EU policies in areas such as competition, common external trade policy, and agriculture (Hošková, 2013). According to Horák (2013), January 17, 1996, was when Prime Minister Klaus made an official request for membership in the EU. In July 1997, the European Commission approved the opening of negotiations with the Czech Republic and accession talks began in 1998. On April 16, 2003, the Treaty of Accession of the Czech Republic to the European Union was signed in Athens by the new President Václav Klaus, who had succeeded Havel. It should be noted that the election of President Václav Klaus was controversial and required three rounds of voting for his re-election. Although he is cited by many to have made significant contributions to the economic and democratic transformation of the country, he stood in Havel's shadow, and was not

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revered as Václav Havel was.

According to the Constitution of the Czech Republic, however, the Czech people had to ratify the intention to join the EU in a referendum. More than 55% of the population voted with 77.3% supporting EU accession. On May 1, 2004, the Czech Republic became one of ten new member states of the European Union, along with Estonia, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia. In 2007, the Czech Republic became a member of the Schengen Area which allowed people to freely cross borders in all EU countries. The Czech Republic (in contrast to neighboring Slovakia) chose not to join the European Monetary Union and did not adopt the Euro as its currency. Instead the country retained the Czech Koruna. In 2009 the Czech Republic took its turn holding the rotating presidency of the EU for six months.

At the end of the first decade of the 21st Century, the Czech Republic was affected by the global economic crisis. Řežábek (2009) notes that the first phase of the crisis (from August 2007 to September 2008) had minimal impact on the Czech economy; the Czech financial sector seemed to be well prepared. However, the second phase of the crisis (September to November 2008) hurt the Czech financial system due to a regional decline of confidence, and according to Řežábek (2009), it led to a slowdown in exports, investments, and also slower wage growth.

Wurst (2013) also comments on the development of society as a whole as it relates to the economic situation. The initial joy and enthusiasm of the citizens in welcoming democratic reforms gradually changed to the realization that contemporary society was facing numerous problems, such as corruption in state-owned enterprises and contracts, high unemployment, and political elites who used their political power to slow

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down the start up of the economy and labor market, which further deepened the economic, social, and economic problems. Although the onset of democracy in 1989 happened quickly, change was slow over the first two decades.

Wurst (2013) describes the Czech Republic's transition to democracy as a crisis, not economically and politically, but mainly for society. Valach (2009) points out that historical experience shows that Czech society lacked the leadership of strong charismatic, moral, and solid figures, such as the first Czechoslovakian president T. G. Masaryk, or first Czech president Václav Havel. The Czechs lacked a leader who was able to represent the people and the national interests, and to fight for them in crisis situations. Václav Havel was trusted by the nation during the Velvet Revolution, but once he left the presidency, there seemed to be no one who could unite the nation in such a way during this period.

Education from 1993 to 2011

Along with the political and economic changes that impacted all of Czech society after 1989, so too did Czech schools begin to change. The Education Act of 1984 was still valid, and instead of relinquishing the old Education Act, government amended it at least fifteen times in the post-revolution period, which meant that it became fragmented and confusing over the years (Václavík, 1995). Most of the changes, however, occurred after 1993 and affected compulsory school attendance as well the entire system of secondary and university education. A significant amendment to the Education Act was implemented in 1995 and impacted both pre-school and elementary school education. The amendment divided the elementary school into two divisions: Grades 1 – 5 and Grades 6 – 9. It also set the length of study at secondary schools (gymnasiums) to four,

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six, or eight years starting after Grade 5, Grade 7, or after Grade 9. Some students were able to enroll in the gymnasium after Grade 5, others after Grade 7, and the remainder after Grade 9. Such decisions were made by students and their parents and depended on which programs the students were following and which gymnasiums provided them. It is generally perceived that more talented students attend the longer periods in the gymnasiums. This is confirmed by Sucháček (2013) who notes that the “results of pupils who spend six or eight years in the gymnasiums are significantly better than the results of students in elementary schools when using any testing methodology” (p. 52).

At the turn of the millennium, a national debate about education was held that led to the creation of a document that would foreshadow the future development of education and other educational institutions from a national perspective. This document, called the “National Program of Education Development in the Czech Republic,” was released in 2001, and was commonly referred to as the White Paper. This document provided an analysis and evaluation of the different areas of the education system and formulated the main conceptual lines crucial to its further development; it outlined the necessity for educational change and set targets for further development of educational policies. The Main Strategic Guidelines of Educational Policy in the Czech Republic were outlined as:

1. Implementation of Lifelong Learning for All
2. Adaptation of Educational and Study Programs to the Needs of Life in a Knowledge Society
3. Monitoring and Evaluation of the Quality and Effectiveness of Education
4. Support of the Internal Transformation and Openness of Educational Institutions

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5. Transformation of the Role and Career Perspectives of Educational and Academic Staff
6. Transition from Centralized Administration to Responsible Participation in Decision-Making (Kotásek, 2001).

The White Paper brought about necessary changes in legislation because of the fragmented and confusing School Act, and the need for revision. Two new laws based on the White Paper were released in January 2005, namely, Law No. 561/2004 Coll., on Preschool, Primary, Secondary, Vocational and other education (Education Act) and Act No. 563/2004 Coll. on Pedagogical Staff. The main goal of education became the necessity for students to develop the life skills to contribute in the modern world, specifically to learn, to communicate, to solve problems, to work collaboratively with others, and to be held accountable for one's actions and behavior. Education was responsible to impart knowledge, skills, and personality development that would be applicable and useful in a wide range of occupations. Graduates should have the knowledge and skills to adapt to change, retrain quickly, and should be motivated to engage in lifelong learning. One of the most significant changes was the introduction of general educational programs (general curriculum at common levels for all children in schools) and school educational programs (individual plans made by each school), which resulted in two levels of curriculum. There were general educational courses that served as a foundational framework, and were mandatory for all the schools, as well as individualized programs created by each school.

The main difference between the previous curriculum and the new general educational programs was that the former curriculum had been exactly the same for all

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schools in the Czech Republic. The curriculum was based on average conditions, average levels of students, the traditional settings of subjects in the curriculum, and in fact, were exactly the same for all schools. It had not taken into account the abilities of individual students and was not adaptable to the needs of schools and students. The framework of the new General Educational Programs, in contrast, de-emphasized subject matter and turned attention to the nature of the students in the school and the learning outcomes. Basic requirements for students in primary and secondary schools were established that were further elaborated on, and individualized by each school using its own school curricula to match the specific conditions of schools, teachers' experiences, and student situations. Each school was now responsible to develop curriculum within its own community and environment. The real substance of the amendment, however, could be found not only in the possibility of change within the document, but also in the approach to students, and the motivation to ensure a positive learning environment; the new curriculum created space for active involvement in learning and teaching through inquiry learning, experimentation, and informal learning.

Nováková's (2014) research based on interviews with thirteen teachers interviewed in 2013/14 showed that the majority of these teachers perceived the reform and creation of new educational plans as more paperwork for them. Even after the reform, many said they taught the same as before, perhaps with different names for terms and conditions, but using the same method. A surprising finding was that many music teachers were still using the previous curriculum because it was how they had learned and in their opinion, it worked better.

Teacher wages had been low and it was hoped that the various reforms would

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improve the situation. From 1993 to 2000, teacher salaries were below the average wage in the Czech Republic, and increases paralleled the growth of the average wage. There was a desire by the post-revolutionary governments to ensure a higher rate of growth of wages for teachers compared with the general growth of average wages in the country. For example, in 1998 the average teacher salary was 11 945 CZK which was 98.2% of the average wage. However, the situation changed at the turn of the millennium, and by 2001, teacher salaries reached almost 105% of the average wage, and in 2003 has average teacher salary exceeded 110% of the average wage. On the other hand, beginning in 2006, teacher salaries began to fall and by 2008 were back to the levels of 2001.

After the onset of democracy, the only major change in the system of music education was that the Basic Art Schools were reconstituted from the People's Schools of the Arts in 1989. Tichá (2011) describes music education in the Czech education as it developed into 2011:

Nursery schools are not compulsory for children. However, in the general educational program for nursery schools, there are five areas that include music education – Child and his body, Child and his psyche, Child and the other child, Child and society, and Child and the world. Primary schools (Grades 1 to 9) are the first level of basic education and compulsory school attendance is required. Art and culture represents one of nine educational areas, and includes music and art. Teachers of Grades 1 to 5 should be trained in music. Gymnasiums offer general secondary education. Art and culture is also one of nine educational areas. Educational courses are held in Music and Fine Arts. These courses are included as a compulsory part of education. There are three different lengths of

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gymnasiums, consisting of four-year cycles after Grade 9, six-year cycle after Grade 7, or an eight-year cycle after Grade 5. Students can choose music or art in Grade 1 and 2 in a four-year cycle, in Grades 6 and 7 in a eight-year cycle or in Grade 4 and 5 in a six-year cycle. Students can select these subjects also in the following final two grades of gymnasium, and it is possible to select these subjects as part of their graduation exam.

The Basic Art Schools do not provide formal education; rather they provide basic education in music, art, dance, literature and drama. While preparing students to study in high schools and universities of artistic or pedagogical focus, or to study at conservatories, it is not a prerequisite for students to audition to these schools. The Basic Art Schools also prepare students for non-professional artistic activities, such as to be amateur musicians. To be accepted to the school to the preparatory study the students have to pass auditions to prove they are talented musically, if they want to be accepted directly to Stages I and II or into adult education. Their final examination may take the form of a graduation performance or art exhibition.

Conservatories provide arts education in music drama, and dance and prepare students for professional careers in the arts as performers. Teachers in art schools study the arts at university or faculties of education.

Secondary vocational schools and lyceums provide vocational education. Depending on their specialization, they provide either direct training in an artistic field (arts and applied arts), or pedagogical education (secondary pedagogical schools and lyceums), or aesthetic education as a general base for exploring the

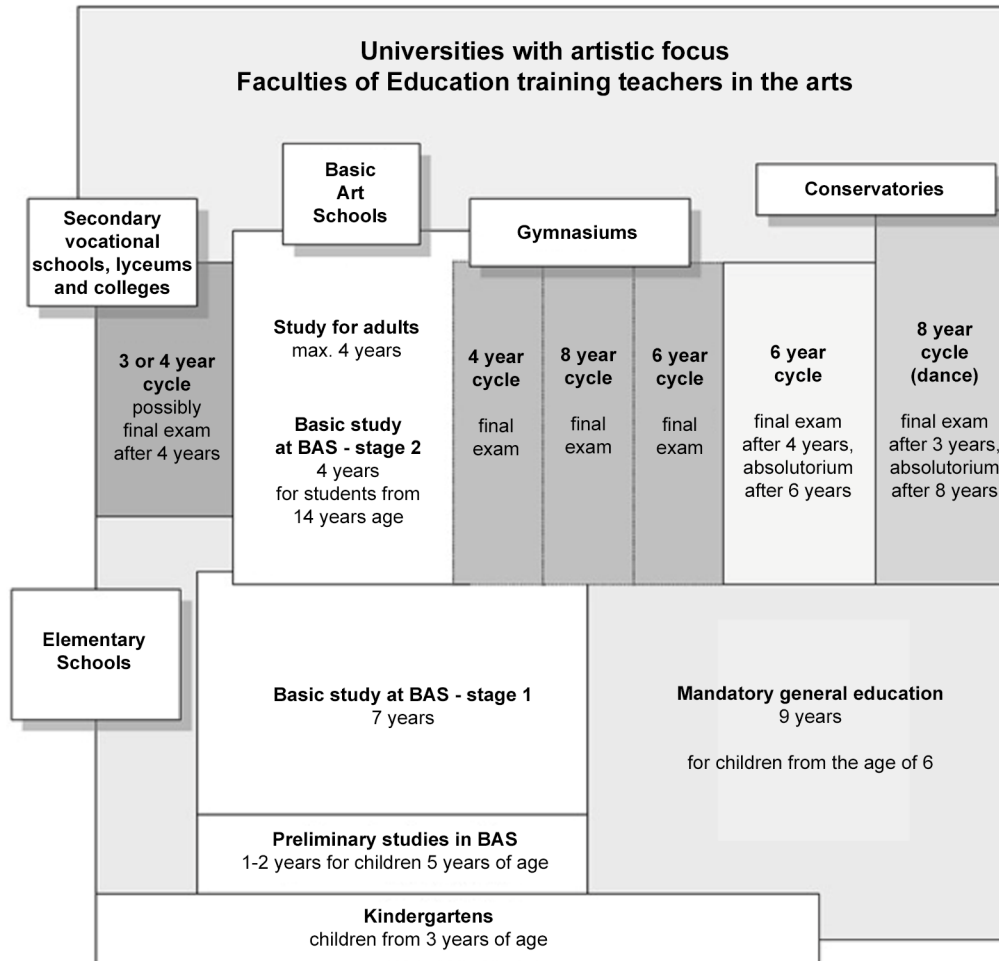
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art and culture and for consolidating and deepening the knowledge of this area, which was acquired in elementary schools (especially literature and general cultural overview).

Universities with arts programs or faculties of education create graduates who will work in artistic professions (performers—artists, designers, composers, conductors, actors, etc.) or as teachers of art disciplines in different types of schools. (Tichá, 2011, pp. 55-59)

The previous lengthy citation illustrates clearly the place of the arts in the educational system and shows that the two most prominent places of music education occurred in the primary schools with deeper music education occurring in the Basic Art Schools. The table below shows the organization of music education within the educational system as described above.

Table 3: Artistic fields in different levels of education



Kudrlová (2011) emphasizes the importance of the return of the Basic Art Schools after 1989. She draws attention to the great tradition of music education in the Czech lands, and in her view, during the time of normalization, when the People’s Schools of the Arts were created, how these schools played an important role even when they were perceived simply as a leisure activity. Because children did not have many other options, the People’s Schools filled a necessary void. Although in 1990 they returned to their original status as educational institutions, Kudrlová (2011) states that public opinion continued to view the work of the Basic Art Schools as leisure activities, rather than

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educational institutions.

The Basic Art Schools provide a means to help young people to fulfill and enrich their lives as they undergo complex changes as they grow up; these activities provide them with a different language through art to learn about human nature.

The Basic Art Schools provide an individualized approach that helps shape a young person to become a better person and involved in the community. Another mission is to help students discover and develop their values and priorities. They help students understand themselves. They provide a broader perspective on the world through artistic awareness of life itself. Students of arts schools learn what it means to be diligent, work hard, and achieve well-deserved success. (Kudrlová, 2011, p. 71)

Kolafa (2011) concluded that by the beginning of the 21st century, Czech arts education had over the past 200 years stabilized to become an interdependent functional three-stage system, with Basic Art Schools as the lowest level, then conservatories and the secondary art school, and the academies and art universities at the highest level. At present, even though the Basic Art Schools offer optional educational programs, they currently receive 80% of their funding from the state, reflecting a fundamental principle of equal access to education. Teachers are required to have professional and pedagogical training, appropriate to the level of education offered. There are about 500 Basic Art Schools in the Czech system, ensuring accessibility to the population. Kolafa (2011) points out that these schools teach all four disciplines of music, dance, art and drama, which is not true in other European countries, and claims that “experience shows that the system of basic art education in the Czech Republic in comparison to other European

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countries is exemplary, shows sophistication, functionality and possibilities of meaningful cooperation with literary schools, cultural institutions and public administration. For many European countries this system is considered as a perfect model” (Kolafa, 2011, p. 50). It is duly noted that this claim is made by a Czech researcher who may have a somewhat biased opinion.

Marek Kopelent, who was 60 years old in 1993, had worked as a teacher since 1990 at the Music Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague. From 1991 to 1992, he served as musical advisor in Cultural Affairs to the President’s Office, but this function ended with the dissolution of Czechoslovakia. After his re-election in January 1993, President Václav Havel created a new team of bureaucrats and Kopelent no longer worked there. While teaching at the Academy of Performing Arts, Kopelent experienced some frustrations with the system. He found that educational reforms occurred very slowly and were met with resistance. For example, Kopelent describes how he tried to introduce a new subject about modern interpretation and compositional techniques, and although he developed workshops and invited foreign scholars, his colleagues and student were disinterested in the topic. When asked how he would assess the current state of music education, Kopelent skeptically responded that he has observed a downward trend. He noted that many teachers in the regular primary schools have little training or love for music. He worries about the influence of modern times, when instead of playing and practical training, children spend their time on computers. He finds there is very little singing in schools now. This is partly due to the fact that in the 1970s and 80s the foundation of music education was built on singing. Kopelent seems to feel the impact of the influences from western countries and the growing neoliberalist proponents who are

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calling for greater emphasis on essential skills for the job market and not arts education. the neoliberal emphasis on job training leaves little room, or prestige, for music and the arts in education. According to Kopelent, the status of music education is parallel to the position of classical music which is not held in high esteem at present.

With regard to previous times however, Kopelent considers the current period of his life as the freest to compose and he sees many possibilities for teaching. The second best period of life for him was during the 1960s when he worked in the publishing house and was able to promote new music. With regard to his pedagogical success, Kopelent believes he did a good job of teaching as evidenced by the successes of his former students. Roman Novák, Michal Macourek, Martin Marek, Ondřej Štochl, Michal Trnka, Tomáš Pálka, and Jan Pták are all successful composers. For example, Novak won 2nd prize in the 1995 International Composition Competition of the Prague Spring Festival; Macourek won 1st place in the 1998 International Composition Competition of the Hellenic Ministry of Culture, and 2nd place in the International Composition Competition in Lyon 2000. In 2001, Kopelent received the prestigious Herder Prize, which is awarded for one's contribution to the cultural understanding of European countries; the prize provides a scholarship for young students and was presented to Kopelent's student, Sylva Smejkalová. With regard to his own success, Kopelent suggests that he is proudest of his vocal compositions (M. Kopelent, personal communication, June 17, 2013). He describes his works as the combination of several compositional styles which resulted in a new hybrid compositional style of music. In recent years, Kopelent, at age 80, has been reflecting deeply on his own compositions and examining the formulation of his compositional principles (Matzner, 2009).

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In 1992, Jiří Chvála, at 59 years of age, began experiencing significant changes with the Kühn Children's Choir as he left the sponsorship of the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra. Even after leaving, the choir received funds from the Ministry of Culture for its operation through the Prague Philharmonic Choir. However, in 1996, Chvála was given notification from the Prague Philharmonic Choir that the choir would have to leave because the Prague Philharmonic Choir could not afford to share its finances any longer. Thus the choir was completely without funds until a former member proposed the development of a foundation to ensure operational survival. To manage to continue, the choir had to set membership fees to pay for the rehearsal rooms as well as artistic and administrative employees. Thus, the onset of democracy meant for Chvála that the choir had to rebuild everything from scratch. Chvála describes how difficult it was, but how grateful he was for his collaborators who worked for the choir as volunteers. On the other hand, Chvála acknowledges, that regardless of the situation, the level and quality of the choir remained excellent. When they were a part of the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, they were seen as privileged, but now he had proven that those achievements were well deserved. Although this was difficult, the choir was successful in becoming a non-profit organization that exists to this day. In the 1990s, opportunities to travel abroad improved and the Kühn Children's Choir toured to the United States on three occasions, as well as to Canada, Great Britain, Singapore, and South Korea.

Chvála described the transition to democracy as difficult for most because the demands on the people were suddenly different. During the communist era there was a kind of existential certainty, and Chvála did not have to worry about much in his position. The arts were heavily supported by the communist regime and those in positions of

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power in the arts world were favoured. However, after the revolution, things changed suddenly and nothing from before applied in the field of culture. Chvála comments on the major social changes, not just for his choir, but also at the university. Before the revolution, he was head of the department of conducting at the Academy of the Performing Arts in Prague. After the revolution, all such functions were open to election and Chvála was pleased that he was elected to be the head of department again. He felt fortunate to be in the same position of trust after the revolution as he had experienced before the revolution.

When asked how Czech music education changed after the onset of democracy, Chvála stated that it remained virtually the same. The wide network of People's Schools for the Arts during communism where parents had to pay only a small fee for tuition did not change with the wide availability of Basic Art Schools. These schools, he feels, are among the great achievements and legacies of Czech music education. But he did comment on three welcome changes related to: i) travel and improved contact with foreign countries after the Velvet Revolution. His students could freely travel around the world and receive the professional experience they needed for their future profession; ii) teachers from abroad brought huge improvements to his students which never could have occurred in the past; and, iii) the internet has opened up the literature putting an end to the previous limitations of access.

At the end of 2011, the Kühn Children's Choir celebrated its 80th anniversary and Chvála, aged 78, still remains as its artistic director and active conductor. His dream is that, when he retires, the choir will continue working with a new successor and continue to be successful (J. Chvála, personal communication, June 17, 2013).

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In 1993, Blanka Kulínská was 57 years old and led Bambini di Praga with her son, Bohumil Kulínský, jr. They opened their private choir school in 1990 and had hundreds of students, with more and more students auditioning each year (B. Kulínská, personal communication, July 1, 2013). From an administrative perspective, the new school operated as a limited company because that was the only option available in 1990; it was not linked to the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and was not bound by existing curriculum in public schools. In contrast, the other choir schools which were established later (e.g., Boni Pueri Music School in 2006, Jitro Choir School in 2010) were built on the model of the Basic Art School (Martinec, 2011).

During the decades of its existence, Bambini di Praga earned almost a regal status and reputation. Few people would have ever considered that the Bambini empire could be shaken. However, at the end of 2004, something so unexpected happened that it shook not only the choir itself, but also indirectly hurt all children's and youth's choral singing in the entire Czech Republic. In November 2004, just a few days before leaving on a concert tour to Japan, Bohumil Kulínský jr. was arrested and charged with sexual abuse of 49 choir girls from 1984 to 2004 (Hrazděra, 2009). Kulínská remembers that after this, instead of children lined up in queues to audition, there was only one child. Everything completely changed as society became hostile to the school after the media sensationalized the case. Bambini di Praga was forced to cease its activities in 2011 and the formerly renowned choir school closed. Ironically, Blanka Kulínská, now retired, returned in 1992 to become the conductor of the Czech Radio Children's Choir once again.

When asked what had changed from her perspective about music education,

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Kulínská responded: very little. The way that she started with the establishment of the Bambini di Praga continued the same after the revolution, and resulted in the establishment of the private school. However, she did note a change in the musicality of children, which, according to Kulínská, seems to be becoming inferior every year as family and societal traditions of singing folksongs has come to an end for most of society. Kulínská describes modern education as disappointing. While Kulínská was never a member of the Communist Party, she claims that the education during communism and immediately after the revolution was better. She described her experience with the students in the United States when she travelled there in 1990 immediately after the Velvet Revolution. Until that point, she believed that the US was the “promised land, the land of miracles, the land of freedoms.” But she found that was not true. During a tour they visited several schools and had the chance to be part of some classes. The knowledge of her Czech children greatly surpassed the American students.

Like Chvála, Kulínská finds it difficult to describe the most positive time period of her life. She explained that the only real injustice she experienced was in the 1970s when she was fired from Czechoslovak Radio. But the result was positive because she and her husband created Bambini di Praga; and, although not a member of the Communist Party, she was not in any way hindered. It bothers her that so many people completely described the communist period as absolutely wrong, instead of choosing what was positive and what worked (B. Kulínská, personal communication, July 1, 2013).

At the age of 45 in 1993, Jiří Skopal was the choirmaster of Jitro and Boni Pueri, and head of the department of music education at University of Hradec Králové. Both of

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his choirs had become successful, not only within Czech Republic, but also abroad, as he toured regularly throughout Europe, to the United States, and Asia. In 1996, he left Boni Pueri and devoted himself to Jitro. In 1994, he was given a professorship at Charles University in Prague, the highest academic achievement one can receive in the Czech Republic. His research for this achievement involved the didactics³⁶ of music education and choir conducting.

Skopal concurs with the others in his evaluation of the communist era and the coming of democracy. During communism, his choir did not have to worry about funding as all activities were strongly supported by the government. After the revolution, the state stopped all funding. Skopal felt this was the right thing to do, however, many choirs and ensembles simply disappeared. Only the strongest and most established organizations survived. For Jitro, this meant that the choir had to find and rent new rehearsal space, and had to collect school fees from children to survive. The expenses grew every year so Skopal began looking for new space so he could devote 99% to the music, rather than dealing with the organizational matters of the choir. One would have thought that he could use the space at the university, but the music department of the University of Hradec Králové was also housed in rented rooms, which could not accommodate the demands for the choir. Skopal finally managed to find a building that the choir still rents from the city of Hradec Králové.

Based on his experiences in education at the university, Skopal was able to compare what he thought had changed in education. Previously, the rule was that the students who wanted to be music teachers would be required learn to play an instrument or sing, and audition to enter university. However, that has now changed and the quality

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of entering music students seems weaker. He senses this may be occurring due to the wider range of programs and disciplines competing against each other, and because of graduation requirements now placed on students to be job-ready upon graduation which devalues arts education. At the same time, to be a teacher is not an economically interesting occupation, and therefore schools are lowering the requirements to lure teachers. He observes that there are only a few school choirs now, and the singing in schools is poor; children have limited vocal range. It bothers him that education now prioritizes freedom and play for children, rather than hard work. Skopal feels that when the children learn to work, they learn to be conscientiousness, to do things properly, and to feel pride in completing the hardest tasks. He feels that the modern schools have forgotten these important learnings, and it is a weakness. Young people now have no endurance or commitment; they flee their unfinished work, feeling they should not have to do this in a democracy (J. Skopal, personal communication, June 23, 2013).

Summary

This chapter has dealt with the most recent period of 1993 to 2011 in the Czech Republic. Although initially in considering the topic of this dissertation, it seemed that the most controversial time for music education would be the period of communism, it has become clear that in democracy, there is some debate about that according to the music educators interviewed.

If we summarize the political situation after the dissolution of Czechoslovakia, it is necessary to review the economic reforms which were in the hands of Finance Minister Václav Klaus, who became the new Prime Minister and then, later President of the country. The main descriptor of economic reform in Czech Republic can be summarized

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as privatization, which was set in place to jump start the economy, provide economic growth, and grow the private sector. An important milestone was the Czech Republic's entry into NATO which was important to ensure the protection of the state, and later joining the European Union, which brought the free movement of persons and goods within Europe. By 2011, the Czech Republic had two presidents. The first was Václav Havel, the second one was his successor Václav Klaus. Havel was a former dissident and playwright, who was internationally renowned, a highly recognized personality, and was perceived very positively. In contrast, Klaus did not receive the level of public recognition like Havel. There is no doubt that the key Czech leader after 1989 (and even now from the current perspective) remained Havel, and therefore with his death ends a significant historical period for the Czech Republic.

In general, educational change happened very slowly until 2005 when the fixed curriculum was abolished and the framework of the general educational programs, the basis of which allowed schools to create their own individualized educational programs, was established. However, music education saw its biggest change in 1990. The Basic Art Schools, which worked at the time of communism were called the People's School of the Arts and were to provide informal leisure activities, became recognized in 1990 as educational institutions. Even so today, they are still recognized and function as leisure education.

This chapter has described a system of music education (basic art schools, conservatories, universities) that was, and remains, well developed and unique on a European scale. However, the four music educators interviewed would argue the truth of that statement when comparing music education in the past and today. They agree that no

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positive fundamental changes occurred in the public system, and would suggest that the level of teaching education (and not only in the musical field) is getting worse. They blame the onset of democracy with too much freedom for students and easing of the rules and standards.

The next chapter provides an overview and analysis of the findings of the previous chapters.

Chapter 8:

The Impact of Democratization on the Political, Economic, Social, and Educational Systems in the Czech Republic from 1948 to 2011

The introductory chapters of this study presented an overview of the foundations of music and music education in the Czech lands before 1948. From Chapters Three through Seven, I provided a description of the historical, economic, and social contexts of developments in Czechoslovakia and later the Czech Republic. The earlier chapters began in 1948 with the domination of the Communist Party and followed the historical, economic, and social contexts through the 1960s with its relaxation of communist restrictions accompanied by the return of cultural development and the pursuit of a better life for the public, to 1968 when the troops of the Warsaw Pact invaded Czechoslovakia and returned the country to communist domination during twenty years of normalization. The earlier part of the study culminated with the 1989 Velvet Revolution, leading to the onset of democracy, and the division of Czechoslovakia into two independent countries at the end of 1992. The last chapter covered the history of an independent Czech Republic from 1992 to 2011. While the previous chapters described the developments in Czechoslovakia and later in the Czech Republic from 1948 to 2011, this chapter provides a summary analysis of the information gathered before answering the research questions asked at the outset of the study.

As readers will recall, the end of World War II saw a divided Europe with Czechoslovakia situated on the western border of the Eastern Bloc and dominated by Russia and the Soviet Union. The ultimate control of Czechoslovakia occurred in 1948, when the Communist Party assumed power and Czechoslovakia lost its autonomy in a

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period of totalitarianism. A hint of democratization came in the 1960s when controls were relaxed after the first years of harsh and pervasive conditions. This more relaxed period culminated in the events of the Prague Spring of 1968, which ushered in the possibility of a resumption of democratization and democratic principles within the communist state. The process of democratization was halted in August 1968 with the occupation of Czechoslovakia by the Warsaw Pact Army. Those troops remained in the country until the end of the communist period in 1989. The gradual process of apparent democratization immediately reverted to normalization which reintroduced the repression of the people and the tightening of the political principles of communism and totalitarianism. The end of 1989 brought the fall of the communist regime in Czechoslovakia and in other Eastern bloc countries. In Europe, this meant the abolition of barriers between Western and Eastern bloc countries. Czechoslovakia began to experience the process of democratization which was significantly different from the Prague Spring in 1968, because this time the communist regime and influence in the country were almost immediately and completely abolished. This allowed Czechoslovakia to begin its development toward Western-style democracy. This newly-acquired freedom reawakened the patriotic ideals in the individual Czech and Slovak nations that made up Czechoslovakia, which led to the division of Czechoslovakia in 1993 into two independent states, the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic. The Czech Republic politically gravitated to the Western countries and to European integration and, in the following years, became a member of NATO and the European Union.

Economically, with the onset of communism in 1948, the Czechoslovak economy

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had been forced to adopt the Soviet planned economy system and all private farms, industries, and companies were nationalized. For society, the advantage was that the planned economy eliminated unemployment. People who supported the system gained social security but lost their freedom to speak against the system. In education, this resulted in the cadre reviews (written profiles of family backgrounds which indicated whether the family members were supporters of the communist regime or not). Students could not freely choose what they wanted to study. School placement was not based on their abilities or examination results, but on their family level and political background. Children of politically persecuted persons could apply to university, for example, but were not admitted. The planned economy proved ineffective and dysfunctional, and was one of the reasons for the fall of the communist regime in 1989. The malfunctioning economy caused economic and technological backwardness compared to other countries in the Western world. The year 1989 promised to be a time of political, economic, and social transformation as the country moved from the existing planned economy to a new free-market economy. However, with the privatization of state property, there were ensuing concerns of corruption and significant unemployment.

In reviewing these changes, social change was perhaps the most interesting and controversial. While communism provided a sense of security with regard to employment, the people were enslaved to the regime. They required permission to travel abroad and were unable to access the educational programs they wished. In the first twenty years after 1948, the communist regime required active participation in the Communist Party and severely punished all who stood against the regime. In the 1950s, many dissidents were subjected to political trials, executions, and exile. Censorship was

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also introduced and many of the people fled the country. The second wave of emigration occurred after 1968 with normalization. However, the regime relaxed its persecution of opponents of the regime who were no longer executed in fabricated trials. Dissidents were instead fired from their jobs and their lives made difficult by the regime. The state encouraged political passivity among the masses, although some people continued to work underground to subvert the communist regime and played a significant role in the success of the Velvet Revolution in 1989 and the promise of democratization. The process of democratization after 1989 resulted in freedom for society, but problems emerged from an economic perspective. There was significant corruption and rising unemployment rates. The communist regime had brought a similar standard of living for all residents, while democracy created enormous disparities between different groups of people and the creation of the rich, middle, and poor classes.

Although the former totalitarian regime influenced education through the inclusion of Marxist-Leninist principles in the curriculum and the aforementioned cadre reviews that prevented the free choice of education and occupation, music and choral singing in particular retained its tradition in Czech culture, and enjoyed a prominent position, through the creation of People's Schools of the Arts that promoted musical involvement as a form of leisure pursuit among the populace. The government realized that, by allowing children and the masses a measure of freedom to collectively develop their musical skills and abilities and to participate in 'strictly' musical events, they would be less likely to engage in politics. And, because alternative leisure activities for children were generally limited, the music schools provided significant learning activities and many children became involved. The communist regime supported and promoted these

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activities by providing choirs with material and financial support. For the children, the schools provided an escape from the harsh realities of life during communist times, while conductors were provided with the perfect base for their activities and could devote their attention to making and teaching music. After 1989, when from the government's perspective, the primary educational importance of music as a leisure activity ceased, everything changed dramatically. Choirs were no longer supported by the state, and a series of educational reforms were approved. The biggest reform was in 2005, when the fixed curriculum was abolished and was replaced with the framework of the general educational programs (see Chapter 7). Whereas choral music education had previously functioned outside the fixed curriculum, this new framework of general educational programs helped the choirs to be part of the state music schools and several specialized private choir music schools were established. These changes resulted in political, economic, and educational upheavals that served to bring a sense of instability to the country which dampened the enthusiasm for freedom. While the majority of the people enjoyed their new-found independence, choral music education which was steeped in centuries of tradition, encountered problems as government support dwindled or evaporated.

Prior to beginning this study, this author wrongly assumed that democracy was unproblematic and that communism had had an overwhelmingly negative impact on the country and the people. Given the situation with choral music, there is no doubt that this assumption was somewhat naive. On the one hand, if communism is associated with bondage and oppression, it would be similarly naïve to assume democracy, although associated with freedom, to be unproblematic. The question arises as to what extent

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democracy allows real freedom when many, perhaps a majority of, people are living in worse conditions than they had experienced under the communist rule? This research has discussed those findings from a political, economic, and social perspective, and the musician educators interviewed have supplemented this information with their descriptions of their own experiences and eye-witness accounts of political or musical developments. The following comparative summary and analysis of their accounts provides a personalized framework that can better help readers to understand those developments.

A comparative summary of the life stories of four interviewed personalities

Marek Kopelent is an example of a musician, composer, and educator who vehemently opposed the principles of the communist regime. He was a student at the onset of communism, and even in his youth, could be described as a steadfast national who was not willing to sacrifice his beliefs and talent as a musician and composer for the occupying forces. There is no doubt that he sees himself as a critic, and during both communism and democracy, he has not been afraid to speak openly against what he felt was wrong. The period during the 1960s, when the rigidity of the regime became more relaxed, coincided with his entry into the world of work. This was a time of further cultural development in the country, as illustrated through the development of new wave Czech films and the return of freedom of speech and the press with the publication of new newspapers and magazines. At this point, Kopelent had a good job as an editor in a music publishing company, and was also successful in gaining international commissions for writing music. Nevertheless, he remained a politically active dissenter. With the arrival of the Soviet troops in Czechoslovakia in 1968 and the suppression of the people,

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his major problems with the regime began. Because he chose not to hide his opposition to the occupation, he came under scrutiny by the communist regime, and, as a result, lost his job. Kopelent was unable to find work for several years because he believed that the communist regime ensured he was blacklisted and not hired. Besides of work restrictions, he was also denied permission to go abroad to hear premieres of his own compositions. Had he been seen as a dissident from 1948 until the occupation, it is highly likely that he would have been imprisoned, exiled, or executed. The communists, however, learned from the significant opposition and resistance to those methods, and after 1968, they forced the opponents to emigrate or destroyed their quality of life, which is what happened to Kopelent when he was interrogated and then fired from his job, with no new position to go to. During this period of the planned economy, we learned in earlier chapters, the Soviets actually over-hired in order to ensure everyone a job; however, this was not the case for dissidents.

Kopelent describes the period of normalization after 1968 as the worst period of his life. Vondrová and Navrátil (1997) characterize the main objective of normalization as a process of the Czech people's involuntary return to the norms of the Soviet regime, which validated life in the Soviet member countries. Mencl (1990) explains that the aim of normalization in Czechoslovakia was to bring the country and the USSR back to a slow recovery through Neo-Stalinism, which was intended to continuously dull the population and lead them into apathy. At the same time, the process created progressive destruction and the transformation of both institutions and people in high positions. Kopelent provided two examples of this in his testimony. Kopelent was unable to find a job until 1976, when he was hired as an accompanist in the dance department of the

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People's School of the Arts in Prague Radotín. He also stated that after 1968, the original Association of Czech Composers and Concert Artists was disbanded; a completely new organization was established and only proven and loyal members of the Communist Party were admitted. As 1989 approached and once again political tensions began to ease, Kopelent was allowed into the Association of Czech Composers and Concert Artists in 1983. In 1988, for the first time in almost 20 years, he was officially given permission to go with his wife to Italy for the premiere of his work, *Messaggio Della Bonta*, which was commissioned by the Italian Roman Catholic Church on the 100th anniversary of the death of humanitarian priest, Don Bosco. After the Velvet Revolution, he gained an academic position at the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague, where he worked as a professor of composition.

Kopelent was politically active during the revolutionary events of 1989 and was seen as a leader after the Velvet revolution when the governance was given to people who during the time of normalization, were persecuted and suppressed. Another of these persons was playwright Václav Havel, who became the Czechoslovak president at the end of 1989 and named Kopelent as his musical adviser at the Prague Castle for two years.

In comparing his life under forty years of communist rule and the last twenty years in a democracy, he indicates that his life changed when he began to teach at the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague. At the same time, he acknowledges the period of normalization as a positive personal experience because he wrote some of his most important works during that time (M. Kopelent, personal communication, June 17, 2013). Kopelent's story is important for this study because it shows how people lived who were

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under direct surveillance of the communist rule. He provides a living example of how the regime limited and restricted people's actions, and also shows how these people had the opportunity after the onset of democracy to regain their former stature in the cultural world.

Kulínská and Kopelent had several things in common. Like Kopelent, she was never a member of the Communist Party, and apart from her work as a famous choral conductor in the country, she never served in any exposed leadership position. However, Kulínská was not a woman who spoke openly against the communist regime, nor did she feel she had reason to do so. Since childhood she had been a member of the Children's Choir of the Czechoslovak Radio where she gradually became a choirmaster. What is critical is her realization that the choir provided a major benefit for the children who had few options for other activities; so singing was often the only thing they did. Having children committed to this singular activity, coupled with the support of the Communist Party that allowed them to travel abroad, provided the organization with free rehearsal rooms, concert dress, etc. The choir became excellent and achieved high artistic goals. This was the case of many other choirs that were established or functioned during communism. Kulínská's case shows that children involved in music education had fewer restrictions from the Communist Party, with the exception of the change in repertoire that supported the communist ideals. The choirs would perform pioneer songs, and sacred music was supposed to be eliminated. Communism, according to Marxist theories, often involved a rejection of religion, which had a huge impact on faith within the Czech society. According to Novotný (2011), in 1946, the first systematic research on religion in the Czechoslovakia showed that eighty percent of the Czechoslovakia population said

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they believed in God, but the worship services were regularly attended by only 20% of people. Freedom of religion after 1948 was gradually officially replaced by atheism and Marxist ideology. The activity of churches was gradually suppressed and the official number of people who declared they were Christian declined over the years to only 15% in 1983 (Novotný, 2011, pp. 21-22). Kulínská, however, notes that even though sacred music was not supported, she did not eliminate sacred music in her choirs. All of these religious restrictions eventually disappeared for all choirs by the period of normalization, but it is worth noting that the persons interviewed in this study indicated that they had heard that such restrictions were more rigidly enforced in Eastern Bloc countries closer to Moscow. It is likely that Czechoslovakia, with its borders on the western front, had fewer controls and a more lenient regional communist leadership that was more interested in political dissidents than in church goers.

Kulínská's most difficult times began in 1972 and 1973 when negotiations related to any foreign concert tour for the Czechoslovak Radio Choir became more complicated. Kulínská and her husband were fired from the Radio in 1973 and they established *Bambini di Praga*, which was similar to the Children's Choir of the Czechoslovak Radio in terms of personnel, repertoire, and concert tours. *Bambini di Praga* was not restricted and, like Kühn, could sing repertoire without any restrictions and travel abroad. Kulínská evaluates this period for the choir very positively. Regarding concert tours abroad, both Kulínská and Jiří Chvála participated in several concert tours organized by the communist management company Pragokonzert. Allowing travel abroad brought several advantages to the communist regime: from an economic perspective, the choirs earned income which went directly to Pragokonzert, which organized all the tours; and, the

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outside world perceived that the situation in the USSR must be positive given the high level of artistry and value for music. Kulínská took advantage of the fall of communism by opening a private choir school that became highly successful, both artistically and economically. However, the 2011 arrest and conviction of her son forced the closure of the school and program in June of that year. This was obviously Kulínská's worst period of her life, but this had little to do with the political situation. Although she was not a member of the Communist Party, she had a wonderful job and few problems with the communist system. Currently, she is the conductor again of the Children's Choir of Czech Radio, but complains that now, instead of having hundreds of children for auditions, they are fortunate to have about five. Times have changed significantly with the democratization of the country and, like the other conductors, she notes that fewer children are interested in singing in choirs these days, having many other activities from which to choose. She finds herself accepting children into the choir who cannot sing, but whom she hopes in the future will learn to sing well. The decline in support for music and arts is also observable globally in various democracies as it becomes more difficult to recruit students into music programs in schools and universities because of the neo-liberal valuing of mathematics, sciences, and other school subjects that are deemed more important to future economic success than music and the arts. The situation in the Czech Republic is slightly different because, during communism, music education was seen as a supplemental leisure activity, and because it was one of only a few opportunities for children, along with sports, which were supported by the government and by the people. Now, with additional opportunities for leisure time, significant technological advances, the influx of popular music(s) that threaten to drown out traditional folk and classical

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arts, and intense competition for students, Kulínská worries that the important traditions of Czech choral music may well be in jeopardy in the future. In comparing children during the time of communism and now, she finds today's children outspoken, they know their rights and take advantage of them, instead of knowing and fulfilling their responsibilities. She feels that this is a negative impact of democracy in that the children no longer strive to work hard and learn self-discipline. In reflecting on the educational system, Kulínská commented that she wished teachers would work harder to support children's learning, to seek excellence, and to increase educational standards.

In examining the stories of the three choral directors, one might be persuaded to view them as unreconstructed formalists who perceived music as an object and hence politically neutral. By all appearances, it was their intention to attend to the discipline in singing, and of singing, at the expense of music's social meaning, which has perhaps left them at a loss to understand the current social developments affecting them. In these postmodern times especially, choral directors need to analyse why there is a lack of interest in choral singing among many children and their parents. They should also continue to question whether, by emphasizing skill development and appreciation of classical or quasi-classical music in terms of objects to be understood and appreciated strictly for their own sakes, segregated from politics, history, and other modes of experience that are important to their understanding, the singers in those exceptional choirs (and even now) in a sense had no voices of their own (O'Toole, 2005). Children in those choirs were not likely to have realized that the Soviets promoted musical and other forms of excellence (and including classical music) as forms of political propaganda demonstrating the superiority of the communist system to the world. Nor were they likely

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to have learned that totalitarian governments valued the intense discipline of musical or other organized groups because it was thought to render them politically passive by diverting their attention from the world and its problems. It is crucial for more researchers to continue to examine how, in this postmodern age, today's parents and children often reject the intense discipline of formalism with its perceived snobbery and elitism, viewing classical music as irrelevant to their lives. Thus, a significant part of the problem is how to recapture students' interest in music that they may not see as relevant to their own learning needs or experience. According to Kulínská, this is the most serious problem in the educational system today. (B. Kulínská, personal communication, July 1, 2013).

Like Kulínská, Chvála remains a renowned Czech choral conductor of the Kühn Children's Choir. He began his collaboration with Kühn Children's Choir in 1958 and worked under the artistic direction of Markéta Kühnová. He became an artistic director of this choir after Kühnová's retirement in 1967, one year before the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia. He evaluates the 1960s before the invasion as a period of relaxed restrictions on society in Czechoslovakia; he describes the special atmosphere within the country that promoted rapid development of culture and cultural thinking, because people were finally able to speak aloud and to be creative once again. With censorship lifted in 1968, there appeared to be an attempt to democratize a system within the confines of communism. Compared to Kopelent, Chvála had no problems with the communist regime; he was fully committed to his role as choirmaster and educational activities, and at the same time, before 1968, the Communist Party supported both financially and politically. One wonders if one of the reasons why the communists supported him was

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because he avoided music that might offend the authorities, which perhaps might be seen as a form of self-censorship for his own preservation and that of his choir. If so, this might have been comparable to what was happening in the United States during the anti-communist hysteria of the early Cold War, when American music teachers associated with the beginnings of the aesthetic education movement in the late 1950s, such as Bennett Reimer, were literally afraid to do any music that might be perceived as a threat to the authorities or the religious right (Woodford, 2012). Moreover, Reimer and his contemporaries apparently failed to realize that the aesthetic education movement, with its slogan of “music for its own sake,” was similarly politically driven. To quote Reimer, although obviously aware of political developments occurring during those years in the wider society, he and his contemporaries “lived in our sheltered world of the [music education] profession. . . . Our tight musical world seemed cut off from national issues, even though I strongly believed in the positions of the left and voted that way in all elections” (personal communication to P. Woodford, March 12, 2009). Decades later, in the 1990s, Reimer and other proponents of aesthetic music education were challenged by feminist and other critics (e.g., Koza, 1994; Elliott, 1995) who contended that it was based on politically conservative, Eurocentric, and patriarchal values and assumptions that were harmful to women and minorities. In Chvála’s case, however, and while early in his career potentially contentious music was discouraged by the authorities, he was later ‘allowed’ to program music that was ill-favoured by the Communist Party and did not suffer any adverse consequences.

Chvála commented how the Soviet occupation in 1968 sent a shock wave through the entire country as most of the people were on vacation. Many children were at the

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Pioneer camps while choirs were usually holding singing camps. However, once the shock wore off, both Kulínská and Chvála continued to work normally and rehearsed regularly, with the support of the regime. Both were pleased to find that during the period of normalization, music education, especially singing in choirs, was supported by the communist regime. These conductors had few artistic issues with the Communist Party; their choirs were not restricted in traveling, nor were they limited in their repertoire. For example, the Kühn Children's Choir recorded Dvořák's *Stabat Mater* in 1952, and performed the *Te Deum* by Hector Berlioz in Milan in 1969. The *St Luke Passion* by Krzysztof Penderecki was performed in 1987 at the Prague Spring Festival. On the contrary, all of their activities were supported. Chvála, in retrospect, summarizes that the choir had its own world of existence. The Kühn Children's Choir was supported by the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra and had excellent conditions for its activities. It was in 1989 and after the Velvet Revolution that choirs began to experience the negatives of being part of a free country.

The transition to democracy undoubtedly brought new possibilities that included new freedoms: free expression of speech and movement for all citizens, and also the ability to establish private business. With *Bambini di Praga*, Kulínská and her son transformed the choir into a profitable and even more famous private choir school. They saw the opportunity and created a sound business plan and did not experience the hardships that others did. Under the protection of the Czech Philharmonic, Chvála did not have to make any changes at first. However, in 1992, the Kühn Children's Choir was forced to leave the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, and while they were sponsored by the Czech Philharmonic Choir until 1996, they soon had to stand on their own feet.

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Previously, they had free use of rehearsal space and paid staff, but now were forced to begin again. This is one of the key moments to compare the position of music, choirs, and work with children and youth in the communist era and in democracy in the Czech Republic. On one hand, communism limited standards of living and traveling, but provided significant and steady support for leisure activities of children and young people. On the other hand, democracy brought freedom of speech, private enterprise, and freedom to travel, but reduced support for leisure activities; choirs and other similar organizations had to learn how to survive.

Chvála was also involved in pedagogical work at the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague and experienced great social changes from communism to democracy. Before the revolution, he held the esteemed position as head of the conducting department. After the onset of democracy, executive positions in major organizations across society were investigated, and those who had had anything to do with the communist regime were forced to quit. The Academy of Performing Arts managed this by holding elections for all heads of departments; Chvála was relieved to be re-elected and felt the same confidence from his department as he had before the revolution. Chvála suggests that his greatest contribution to music education has been the opportunity to continue the traditions of choir founder, Jan Kühn, whom he considers as one of the greatest Czech choirmasters. He believes that Kühn would be pleased with his legacy 80 years later. He is also proud of the fact that, during his life, he initiated the impetus for writing a number of new compositions, especially for choirs and instrumental accompaniment.

With regard to the future of music education, Jiří Chvála has this message for the

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future music teachers. “A music teacher’s work is not easy. On the one hand, there is the technical and crafts side which is very important. But more importantly is the role of bringing out the emotive language of music. It is important to find a balance along this continuum.” Chvála feels that often in the past his choir excelled on the technical side but, more importantly, he feels that the worth of music-making is the sense of joy and satisfaction which he saw when his former students come back to visit him. “These are moments when the students are not pretending to show positive emotions and when the teacher can find out whether his work brought something to his students’ lives, or not. And this is true, which works not only in choirs, but in all activities” (J. Chvála, personal communication, June 17, 2013). This perceived sense of only ‘joy’ is potentially problematic, however, because if music-making is only about joy, then teachers might be overlooking some of the most expressive music composed, which might not be pretty or joyful at all (Woodford, 2005, 2014).

Jiří Skopal’s story provides a good ending point. Compared to the other three persons, Skopal was from a generation younger and thus it could be expected that his point of view would be different. Nevertheless, there are a number of commonalities, especially with Kulínská and Chvála. Skopal had few issues with the communist regime. His only obstacle was in 1977, when as a doctoral student, he applied for a position at the University in Olomouc. He lost the position because at that time he was not a member of the Communist Party. As a result, he found a position in Hradec Králové at a smaller university which was not so important to the regime, where he has worked all of his professional life. In 1977, Skopal took over the children's choir Jitro and, in 1982, together with his wife Květa, founded the Boys Choir Boni Pueri which he led until 1996.

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At that point, he stayed as the artistic director and choirmaster with Jitro which he continues today.

Like Kulínská and Bambini di Praga, his choir was not part of any large organization but they were supported by the communist regime. Skopal recalls that everything was provided for his choir, including rehearsal space, concert clothes, and salaries for artistic staff. Concerning the repertoire, Skopal states that he had no restrictions in the repertoire, in terms of prohibitions, except for performances for the National Day, the communist congress, or other events associated with the regime. There the choice of repertoire had to be adapted to the performance of pioneer songs, such as *Dopis pro pět světadílů* (Letter for Five Continents) by Petr Fiala, *Dělnická hymna* (Workers' Anthem) by J. K. Náchodský, or *Zpíváme míru* (We Are Singing for Freedom) by Emil Stašek. Skopal did comment that although he knew that the performance of sacred music was discouraged, he continued to program as he wished, but was always anxious about reactions by the regime. He commented that he read in an official communist newspaper that the leadership of the communist party had attended a performance of *Messiah* in Slovakia with a foreign delegation. Skopal noted that he kept a copy of that article in case he was ever questioned about his repertoire. If he was questioned, he would pull out the article showing that the communist members in the highest positions had attended that performance in order to defend his own choices. He was never questioned and never had to use that article.

While Skopal's and Kulínská's experiences were similar during communism, his story is more similar to Chvála's during democracy. Skopal went with his choir in 1990 and 1991 for a concert tour to the United States, where he felt that the transformation to

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democracy provided widened opportunities to travel abroad to western countries more often and easily. However, after the revolution, the state stopped taking care of the arts organizations and all had to learn to become financially independent. Skopal remembers that many choirs disappeared. Like Chvála, Skopal experienced hard times and had to start over from the beginning to get the choir financially settled. Skopal and Chvála both taught at the University. Skopal became department head in 1986. Again, like Chvála, Skopal was able to keep held his position after the Velvet Revolution, which shows that he was not there because of some political decision, but because of his peers' recognition of his artistic quality. This function was given to him for merit and knowledge, and not for political or ideological reasons.

Skopal did not experience any significant harsh periods in his life. He would say that he was lucky to have a university position and to be around great people with whom he collaborated well and enjoyed working. His frustration concerns the current training of future teachers. Previously, the regulations required that future teachers had to learn to play an instrument; however, at present applicants to teaching are not required to take exams in music to gain entry to the university which contributes to the reduced level of music education. To future teachers he would advise the following:

Everywhere there are children who can learn, and it's up to us whether we will be able to create something artistically special with them. From my own experience, I know that regardless of where a choir director is, s/he can manage to develop a great choir. It is important to believe that children are the same everywhere and it is up to us whether we can get them excited about music and learning or not. Maybe in the future we will have a choir in each school, but the outcomes will

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depend on us, the teachers (J. Skopal, personal communication, June 23, 2013).

As already suggested with reference to another musician interviewed for this study, this is both a controversial and romantic idea that some critics would say ignores cultural realities and differences by assuming that children everywhere are the same when this is an arguably Eurocentric and classist perception.

In summarizing the findings from the personal interviews, the major findings are contentious. It turns out that conditions for these music educators and their choirs (and likely coaches and athletes in sport activities) were in some important respects (e.g., funding) better in Czechoslovakia during the communist era than after the Velvet Revolution. The onset of democracy offered new freedoms and conditions for much of the population, but music education programs lost their exclusivity and importance, due in part to increased competition from other activities that emerged but, perhaps more significantly, to the internet and other technological advances that opened up the world of popular music and culture to Czechs. Although Kopelent continued to write and teach, and the other three interviewees maintained excellent choirs, they were forced to develop business plans and become separate entities in order to survive, and were no longer able to devote their energies solely to teaching and making music. While some might suggest that being forced to create a business plan for the choirs is not problematic, the number of successful choirs and children who sang in those choirs has diminished significantly since 1993. Unfortunately, there appear to be no current official statistics of choirs and choir members since the first years of democracy; thus findings are mostly based on individual chronicles and testimonies of choirs and conductors. For example Vondráčková (2012) states: “Generally, . . . interest in the pursuit of choral singing has decreased.

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Contemporary choirs rarely exceed the number of forty-five members. Ensembles which began activity before 1989 are now halved, and some even slowly disappeared” (p. 89).

Having provided a summary analysis of findings from the research, this second half of this chapter responds to the questions posed in Chapter One in which I asked six questions about choral music education.

1. How did communism impact/influence choral music education in the Czech Republic?

The Czechoslovakian educational system was in a relative state of maturity when Czechoslovak society became communist. Průcha (2006) states that after 1918 there was intensive development in education. According to him, the educational system in Czechoslovakia in the 1920s and 30s was among the best of the systems in all of Central and Western European countries, and followed on traditions begun during the Austro-Hungarian Empire in previous centuries when, in the 19th Century especially, education in the Czech lands was among the most advanced in the monarchy (Kuzmin, 1981).

Right after the first communist government was established in 1948, there was a new law issued that created a uniform educational system that repressed individualism of both students and teaching staff in favour of allegiance to the regime. Besides the necessity to teach according to communist and Soviet doctrines (such as Marxist-Leninism), there was a significant change in access to education, which was not derived from the abilities of individual students, but by the political or "class origin" of the parents. Those were changes that inherently persisted throughout the forty years of communism. According to Průcha (2006), although this was a known fact, it undoubtedly harmed both individuals and society as a whole. However, the outcomes cannot be

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objectively assessed because the exact numbers of people who suffered educational discrimination are not known, nor are the consequences of such discrimination for their careers and life paths. At the same time, though, and is explained in more detail shortly, we must remember that the communist government's commitment to choral music education had tremendous benefits to many thousands of children over a considerable period of time. It would be overly simplistic and inaccurate to depict the communist government's interest in choral music education in purely negative terms.

Průcha (2006) reflects also on the established system of uniform education and acknowledges that this can be seen as a positive step in the development of education. Unfortunately, the content was problematic in that the content of education was strictly regulated by Marxist ideology. However, an important question arises. Did music and other teachers really teach in accordance with Marxist ideology? Was anyone watching them to make sure they did not teach anti-communist ideas? From personal experience, I can attest that it would have been almost impossible to teach anticommunist doctrines or to otherwise challenge the status quo, because it would have become known, and those teachers would have lost their jobs, at the very least. The regime knew how to make life difficult for the individual and the entire family. Travel might have been restricted and their children might not have been allowed to study in certain schools.

Czechoslovak education under communism suffered because of another negative feature of the curriculum, that of scientism, or the unhealthy obsession with science over all other subjects. The curriculum was overloaded by theories of sciences and disciplines leading to congestion of curriculum with specialist concepts and terms. Basically, the curriculum was not adapted to the individual needs and cognitive abilities of the students

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of the relevant ages.

Průcha (2006) also noted that an increase in the numbers of teachers was another positive feature of the development of education under communism. For example, in 1958-59, there were 51,890 teachers (with 1,331,070 students) in primary schools in Czechoslovakia, while in 1988-1989, there were 62,007 teachers (with 1,283,640 students). This reduced the pupil-teacher ratio in those years from 25.6 to 20.7, which likely supported the enhancement of the quality of educational processes. These numbers placed Czechoslovakia before 1989 on the same level or even higher as some of the most advanced OECD countries today (Průcha 2006).

In the first part of the communist period, music education experienced major changes. Music Schools, which were private or municipal, were nationalized in 1951. Their main goal became unified musical education that defined the art of music making available to people in the spirit of Socialist Realism, preparing gifted students to be part of ensembles or to study at the Conservatory of music to become professionals (Dehner, 2006). In 1948, there were also two primary university-level schools established; the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague was founded immediately after the end of the war in 1945, and the Janacek Academy of Performing Arts in Brno was founded two years later in 1947. For the high school music students, there were conservatories, and children in the elementary and secondary schools had two hours of music education per week that consisted of music theory, music history, and some singing. Before World War II, there were a number of private music schools in Czechoslovakia, but once under the influence of the Soviet Union, they were nationalized.

During the 1960s, during the release of political tension, people began to pay

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more attention to culture and arts, and the nationalized music schools began to transform the People's Schools of the Arts. However, those schools were reclassified into educational facilities during the period of normalization, but only for leisure activities. Because there were not many leisure activities for children and youth during communism, music was one of the few things what the children could do at a high level and, with few other activities possible, many children showed a great interest in music, playing an instrument, and especially singing in the choir. As already explained, however, the communist authorities were willing to allow people to exercise their freedom in music, but only because it was understood that this would distract them from politics.

Teacher education also went through a transformation at this point. Průcha (2006) provides a brief summary, noting that before the onset of communism there was progressive Act No. 100/1946 Coll., which established faculties of education within the universities to educate teachers all types of schools, including primary schools. In September 1, 1953, faculties of education were converted to Higher Pedagogical Schools, eliminating university education for teachers for primary schools (Grades 1-4), who were trained only at secondary pedagogical schools, while teachers for Grades 5-8 were trained in two-year higher pedagogical schools. This meant that these teachers graduated after 13 years of schooling and became teachers by the age of 19. This changed in 1964, when university training was restored for all teachers.

- 2. Specifically, what were the impacts of government policy on choral music education for children and on children's choirs which were founded during communist times?**

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In this study, three nationally-recognized Czech choir directors were interviewed to offer commentary and perspective on events that shaped choral music education in the country. At present, there are no known official statistics as to the number of choirs in the Czech Republic before 2007, when the Czech Union of Choirs started registering choirs for its official catalogue. Their statistics indicate that, in 2014, there were 1187 choirs registered with the Union. The numbers of choirs from 1948 to 2007 are impossible to estimate because few schools kept any records, nor was there a central agency keeping statistical records. Because many of the choirs existed as private or public institutions, it is not even possible to filter the data from tax registers or other government comprehensive statistics.

While it is impossible to provide specific statistics in this study, the most renowned Czech children's choirs established before the communist era were the Kühn Children's Choir, established in 1932, and the Children's Choir of the Czechoslovak Radio, established in 1945. *Jitro* (1973), *Bambini di Praga* (1973), and *Boni Pueri* (1982) were all founded during the communist period. Because the communist regime created music schools as leisure activities during a time when other activities for children were limited, music education programs actually expanded among the general public. Previously, private music education before the World War II had been quite costly for families and learning to play an instrument belonged to only those with money. The communist principle of equal economic conditions for all could not be achieved in the private sector, and so the music schools were nationalized and later transformed into the People's School of the Arts to implement this principle. Thus, while this initial form of musical education was inexpensive and not always necessarily of a high level, it was

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available to the general public. There is little doubt that, from the communist point of view, education was part of the propaganda apparatus used to raise proper socialist citizens who would serve the socialist country well. Choral music education played a key role in contributing to the development of good community citizenship directly and indirectly by training children to not ask tough questions. As a child involved in the children's choral movement with Jitro during communist times, however, I do not believe that it shaped my ideas, or others ideas, about communist citizenship. The program was demanding and intensive with many rehearsals and tours; it provided an alternative to being a member of such activities as the Pioneer Club.

A significant motivation for children joining the music schools was undoubtedly the opportunity for them to travel abroad. Performing choirs did not have many limitations in organizing concert tours and travelling abroad as the normal population did. The best choirs could even travel outside the Eastern bloc countries, for example, to Western Europe or Japan. This was seen as a significant motivation for parents, who themselves were not allowed to leave the country, to allow their children to participate in these choirs.

Finally, and as already suggested, there was another significant reason why the choirs were so successful. The communist regime, particularly in the period of normalization, worked hard to get the population into a position where they were not actively interested in politics, and politically passive. They therefore supported all other activities, such as sport, culture, and gardening. And this was a significant development for choral singing. Children's choirs were fully supported by the communist regime through salaries for teachers and conductors, by ensuring free rehearsal space, equipment,

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concert dress, etc. The conductors interviewed in this study recall that there was nothing for them to be worried about. They were only required to look after the music and the education of the children. As for organizing of the concert tours abroad, particularly into the Western world, they were permitted by the Communist Party for two main reasons. One was the presentation of the Czechoslovak culture abroad, demonstrating to the outside world the Soviet commitment to excellent education for the children through artistic excellence. The second reason was purely economic. All of the professional foreign concert tours were organized through communist management, Pragokonzert, and their artists and choirs brought back to the state treasury considerable income.

3. What differences were evident in children's choral music education during and after communism?

With regard to repertoire, the author assumed before beginning this study that children's choirs were restricted in selecting repertoire and had to sing only communist-approved or pioneer songs. Interviews with conductors have shown that this was likely not the case. Certain restrictions did take place immediately after the onset of communism at the Children's Choir of the Czechoslovak Radio, where the selection of repertoire was influenced by the overall programming of the radio. Otherwise, the conductors did not indicate many limitations or restrictions. These conductors indicated that their choirs were independent, and communist or pioneer songs were not in the general repertoire of the Czech choirs, unless they were asked to perform at official occasions for which their repertoire had to be approved. Teaching methods and touring remained similar before, during, and after communism.

The fall of communism gradually resulted in the end of state-guaranteed support;

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musical groups were abandoned and had to manage for themselves if they were to succeed. Bambini di Praga was an example of a choral organization that used the new political situation to its advantage when Kulínská opened the private choir school in 1990; they developed a six-year supplementary training program for children from 5 to 15 years in the systematic teaching of intonation and choral singing. The children also learned to play recorder and studied English and Physical Education. In the beginning, they had 400 members in the school which expanded to 800. Kulínská and her son made a timely decision and their rise after the Velvet Revolution was meteoric. It was a business plan that would never have materialized during communism (although it must be noted that, after Kulínská was fired from the Czech Radio, she and her husband were resourceful enough to create an entirely new choral organization during restricted times). The community choirs that were unable to exploit the new capitalist situation did not survive. Those that did survive experienced significant differences as a result of the new influences of Western culture after the Velvet Revolution. The motivation to join a choir in order to travel around the world, for example, was no longer so appealing as more and more opportunities opened up in the capitalist society. Of course, the conductors needed to respond to this change by adapting their repertoire. There was a wave of Western pop music that children started to access via the internet that was added to choral music repertoire. Children now had more choice, and pop was suddenly available in huge quantities, and in a few more years via the internet there were several new arrangements of musical melodies, pop-songs, and African-American spirituals which were until then almost unknown.

4. What impact did the isolation of choral directors and teachers from the

outside world have on choral music education for children?

As already mentioned, the music educators interviewed for this study seemed not to suffer as much as the general population from limited contacts with foreign countries because their ability to travel with their choirs was not as limited. Kopelent said during his interviews that in 1969 he received a scholarship under the Berliner Künstlerprogramm and was allowed to spend an entire year in West Berlin. During normalization, when his activity was restricted, he still was in contact with the western world but not allowed to travel abroad. At the same time, his compositions were being performed in other countries, although he was not allowed to hear them until 1988 when, for the first time, he was officially allowed to travel with his wife to Italy for a premiere of a commissioned composition. It is impossible to predict how his compositional style might have been altered had he been allowed to share compositional styles with his contemporaries across Europe, or even to hear his own music performed.

Skopal maintained good relationships with other musicians and ensembles from the Eastern Bloc, such as the choir from Dubna in Russia, or choirmaster and composer Vytautas Miškinis from Lithuania, and other conductors from Tallinn. These relationships remained strong even after the Warsaw Pact Armies invasion in 1968. Although he was concerned about the nations that occupied Czechoslovakia, he separated his work from politics, and remained friends on a personal level regardless of their background.

The most significant problem attributable to their isolation in Czechoslovakia was the difference in technological advancements and the standard of living compared to the western countries. Czechoslovakia was delayed behind the global development about five

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to fifteen years which became quite obvious after the onset of normalization in 1968. It is important to note that, in the field of music education, the country was also delayed behind the West as there was little attention paid to more progressive ideas related to race, gender, and more generally to cultural and musical diversity. For the choir director, thus far, it was important to maintain a high performance level, but sophisticated levels of technical and musical excellence and the purity of vocal tone associated with western choirs are not necessarily valued by, or authentic to, some cultures and groups. This raises the question and challenge of how Czech choral directors are to reconcile popular and world musics with the traditional European choral repertory and associated practices. The question also arises about whether this evasion of more socially and culturally progressive ideas by choral directors thus far might be attributable to their training as unreconstructed formalists that may have caused them to continue perceiving performance as an elite skill while also neglecting to take into account how musical agency is inevitably shaped by social, cultural and political contexts? We live in a constantly changing world, and Czech choral conductors and teachers should adapt curriculum and repertoire to today's world rather than continue to live in the past.

5. How did music education change after 1989 when Czechoslovakia switched its attention and then orientation to the Western countries and the United States?

From the interviews and the literature, there is a general perception that became apparent after 1989 that it was time to overcome the ideological barriers of a unified education system that were based on the defined framework of Marxist-Leninist philosophy. Therefore, the first major amendments of the Education Act, which were

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adopted in 1990, struck down the "uniform" school system and established the possibility of differentiation of education according to the abilities and interests of children. This was motivated by neoliberal ideas imposed on the country by their involvement with such organizations as the World Trade Organization and the World Bank. According to Horsley (2014),

The United States' position as a global influence on economic policy was further solidified in the 1990s after the fall of the Iron Curtain and collapse of communism in Eastern Europe. Beginning in 1989, many countries in this region restructured their governments and economic models, and presently are continuing to do so. In fact, the fall of these communist countries and their subsequent transformation into economically liberal states has been upheld by some as a validation of the liberal economic model over its socialist counterpart. (p. 123)

This new emphasis on individualism and educational choice perhaps helped to undermine the collective foundations on which choral music education had been built. The changes also allowed establishing private schools or church schools. The year 1990 brought a major change for the music education when the Peoples' School of Arts changed their names to the Basic Art Schools and were then reclassified as educational institutions. These changes resulted in more importance for these schools within the entire education system. With the opening of the borders, many teachers took the opportunity to go abroad to observe other types of schools; as well, teachers from abroad were invited to come to teach in Czech schools and shared their new techniques. But what about ideas? Were they still trained and working in an hermetically sealed

environment?

Although general education experienced significant changes until 2011, music education was influenced by its own history and many years of Czech tradition. Kolafa (2011) writes:

Experience shows that the system of basic art education in the Czech Republic compared to other European countries is exemplary in many aspects such as in sophistication, functionality and possibilities of meaningful cooperation with literary schools, cultural institutions and public administration. For many European countries this system is considered as a near perfect model. (p. 50)

The system of musical education in the Czech Republic is different from the U.S. system. Šotová (2012) summarizes the systemic difference thusly:

While in the Czech Republic, a talented student can devote himself exclusively to the study of his field at fifteen years of age, in the U.S.A. it is not possible until eighteen years of age after the completion of compulsory schooling. The American student may focus at the Secondary and High School, while the students in the Czech Republic must attend specialized institution–Basic Art School. (p. 66)

6. What impact did democratization, neo-liberalism, European re-integration and capitalism have on music education in general and choral music education in particular?

In the 1990s, the government of Czechoslovakia and later the Czech Republic changed from a planned economy to a market economy. The reform was built on the restoration of private enterprise, restitution, privatization, price liberalization, renewal of

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the banking sector and redirection of exports to the West. Pisek (2011) states that privatization is one of the pillars of the neoliberal model and one of the most visible mechanisms that dismantle the welfare state. Neoliberalism in education has several fundamental principles. Štech (2007) emphasizes the freedom of public competition, diversity, and freedom of choice, and in market economies, education needs to be understood as a commodity. Because communism in the Czech Republic changed the demographic behavior, which is reflected in the lower number of students in music schools than in the past, those schools more often now compete for students. This is especially noticeable in larger cities where there are more schools, so parents and students have a wider choice of learning opportunities. The aim of the school is to attract as many students as possible, because every single student means more money for the school from the state budget (Korčičánová, 2013). Skopal was one who expressed his concerns about changes in priorities that came with the onset of democracy. Education opened up many freedoms for students and he worried that students never had the opportunity to learn the self-discipline required to work hard and learn. Skill development and performance alone, however, are not sufficient by themselves to educate children for a life in music, as when restricted in their learning to the notes and their interrelations, or to performance practices alone, children are not likely to learn about as much about music's significance in their lives. As Woodford (2007) remonstrates,

Students need to learn and understand how the real world works, including how music and music pedagogy can be used and abused, by whom, and to what ends.

This can involve raising students' consciousness about various social problems in

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which music is implicated, including, for example, how and why consumer culture actually discourages singing and music making among the great majority of people. (p. 5)

Skopal takes this discussion further into the realm of consumerism by claiming that this is one principle in contemporary Czech democratic music education that does not work at present, and worked much better under the time of communism. Woodford would agree with Skopal about consumerism; however, that was not an issue in Czechoslovakia before 1989 because there was no outside advertising to sway youth and to shape their needs and wants. The advent of democracy and neo-liberal thinking also brought a greater range of leisure activities for children. Kulínská noted how, in recent years, there were fewer children auditioning for the various choirs, and those who did audition were not interested in working at learning because easily distracted or diverted to other pursuits.

Summary

These research findings present differing and controversial views about the impact of communism on choral music education. Kopelent is representative of those who dared to speak against the regime and lost their rights and privileges to fulfill their lives in society. They were unable to create excellent ensembles if they spoke out against the regime, such as occurred with Kopelent and his excellent ensemble, *Musica viva Pragensis*, which stopped its activities when Kopelent was required to leave the ensemble. If someone was seen as dissident, the person could easily be replaced by another, cooperative musician, as was evidenced in the creation of jobs and leadership positions in the various state-run organizations. On the other hand, Skopal, Chvála and

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Kulínská became choirmasters who masterfully created new choirs and achieved artistic excellence, and kept their heads under the radar, doing what they loved. They served the regime by having excellent performing ensembles that made the regime look good, and as a result the regime allowed them the liberty to continue their work with the choirs and perform their own repertoire with minimal surveillance. As mentioned previously, something similar happened in the United States during the early Cold War, when music teachers and composers and musicians had to be careful not to create, teach, or do anything in the school that might be perceived as overtly political.

One might question whether the choir directors interviewed for this thesis created their choirs for the learning and protection of the children, or perhaps for their own self-preservation and survival during harsh times. The author of this dissertation believes that these two aspects are inseparable. As a result of the interviews which exposed their deeply personal beliefs, the author sensed that the driving force for all three of these personalities was a desire to continue and preserve the powerful Czech choral traditions by creating excellent choirs. Again, this depends on how one defines excellence. If we assume that these choral directors are unreconstructed formalists who still just wanted to make music and achieve a level of aesthetic excellence for art's sake, they really have no means to defend themselves against those who criticize their art or would cut music education altogether (since neoliberals contend that classical, popular, or other music are just niche markets and thus music is just a matter of individual taste and a consumer choice). While it might be difficult for some to imagine how such high profile choral programs foster critical consciousness in children, it is equally arguable to say that providing performance opportunities of the highest level to children and youth allows

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them to deeply and critically feel and understand certain kinds of music in society at a much higher and internal level than by only hearing it. There is no doubt that developing high-performance ensembles helped secure the conductors a more secure position within the communist regime, but this seems supplementary rather than their primary purpose. And this was not known until later when one could reflect on the experience. This discrepancy could be the subject of further research which is discussed below.

Conclusion and Recommendations for Further Research

Conclusion

In this study, I examined the fundamental question: *What was the state of choral music education in the Czech lands from 1948 to 1989, and from 1989 to 2011?* Answers to this primary question were sought through historical research, but especially through the testimony and eye-witness accounts of four prominent Czech musician educators, including three esteemed choral directors and one composer educator who lived through those often tumultuous years. Needed historical and political context and background leading up to World War Two was also provided in order to provide an historical baseline for assessing the impacts of political and other developments on choral music and music education during the post-war period, and particularly as Czechoslovakia and then the Czech Republic transitioned from a communist to a democratic system of governance. Among the findings of this historical and qualitative study was that, despite the political and economic turbulence of the past half century and more, Czech choral music education under communism nevertheless experienced relative stability—even prosperity—in terms of the quality of musical instruction available to children and adults alike. In very recent years, however, as the Czech Republic has become progressively

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more integrated into the European Union, there is reason to worry that globalization and democratization may be contributing to a decline in participation and rates of enrolment in some choral music education schools and programs. After the pivotal Velvet Revolution in 1989, some choral schools were unable to adapt to the new capitalist environment and closed their doors, while others, and for a variety of reasons explored in the last chapter, including a societal shift toward individualism over collectivism and the availability of a host alternative 'leisure' activities for children that have become available as a result of the lessening of societal restrictions, have witnessed a decline of interest among many children. Further, as some of the choral directors interviewed for this study opine, fewer of today's children and students know the value of hard work. A concern was also expressed about the quality of music teaching now that applicants to music teacher training are not required to pass exams to enter the field of music education. The interviewees for this study indicate that the weaker requirements and standards for music teachers at present have also resulted in reduced musical literacy in their students.

Nevertheless, and despite these problems and legitimate concerns, Czech choral music education continues to excel in a variety of ways and to be a source of pride for Czech choral musicians. In significant part, this can be attributed to the institution of a special state-funded system of Basic Arts Schools (established in June 1990 from the People's Schools of the Arts) which complement the broader state educational system. The Basic Arts Schools stand at the intersection of informal community-based activities and the formal educational institutions, and they continue to be responsible for educating future musical amateurs and developing professional artists who continue their studies in

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the conservatories and then later at the university. These Arts Schools provide a principle of equal access to music education, not only in the sense of providing basic, uniform education, but also providing affordable music education for those who are interested. This is a system that on a European scale, and even on a World scale, is significant and unique, and has been retained from before World War II, through communism and still exists in the newer democracy.

The conclusion of this dissertation, however, is not that communism or democracy is necessarily better for Czech choral music education. Rather, it is that each affords its own advantages and problems. Obviously, during the communist regime there were negative outcomes for those who actively opposed the regime. On the other hand, though, and owing to government support and societal expectations, choral music education reached very high standards while also enjoying considerable popularity among children and adults. Choral Arts received full financial and material support from the regime. The older generation of choral directors and musicians interviewed in this study found the communist system restrictive in some sense but safe and predictable in others. These respondents, for example, reminisced about how, during communism, students were more interested and motivated to learn. As already suggested, democratization, globalization, and European re-integration present their own challenges and opportunities for Czech choral music education.

Implications for Further Research

The transition from life under Communism to Democracy and Capitalism in the Czech Republic remains a stark experience for the older population, while the younger generations perceive the situation mostly through the media. The purpose of this study

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has been to help to address understandings of communism in relation to choral music education while also helping younger generations, and specifically choral music educators, directors and musicians generally, to think more critically about their present social and musical conditions and opportunities. Further research is needed in the field to understand the changes in Czech society affecting choral music education, including the influx and availability of both western popular and non-western musical genres that may undermine or hamper efforts of choral directors to maintain high performance standards, musical literacy, and the choral music tradition. The difference in styles and musical values may sometimes conflict with those of traditional choirs based on the European model. At present, and according to Kolafa (2011), the Czech Republic is known to have a good system of music education that is envied by other European countries. But the system is flawed and is not reaching its full potential. Further research should therefore address the question of how to transform the system to improve efficiency and results for the children in public education. The socialist system of government and public support for music education and choirs perhaps cannot be reconciled with capitalism. It was a different era that is no longer sustainable in this current age of global free trade, technological advancement, and hyper-consumerism. Thus another area of research should address funding policies to ensure the flow of resources into the cultural education and to ensure that performance groups do not find themselves in a constant struggle for funding; rather that they can devote themselves to excellence in holistic forms of music education. Small (1998) sees excellence as involving the people voluntarily doing the best that they can regardless of talent or existing ability, or more simply put, trying to stretch themselves musically. And stretching implies going beyond the traditional music

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of choral groups and structures.

Music education in the communist era had the great advantage that there were few other widespread forms of leisure activities. At present, children and youth have numerous choices and music schools cannot easily compete with the lure of popular culture. It is commonly known that in the English-speaking countries in the world, as well as other European countries (the United Kingdom, Germany, Scandinavia), music education encompasses pop and world musics, as well as composition in the classroom. Czech music education is in general still based on music theory and classical music history. Children have access to foreign and Czech pop music and culture through the media (radio, television, internet). Czech education provides them with further education to which they do not have daily access—to classical music and folk songs. Although there has not been a big wave of immigration to the Czech Republic, there are still minority populations and the Czech Republic is multicultural with large Roma and Vietnamese communities. This multicultural reality has had no significant effect on Czech education; nor does the curriculum seem to take into account the influence of the media with which students interact daily. Students should be encouraged to become more critical of all the music they listen to or perform, including pop and classical so that in addition to performing, they learn about aspects such as musical commodification and the politics of music and music education.

According to Woodford (2011), “there can be no significant freedom if the ends are already predetermined or, as already explained, children lack knowledge of and experience dealing with the moral, political, or other dilemmas of the day in which music is often implicated” (p. 14). Governments, policy-makers, and teachers must learn from

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their own history. It is not enough simply to note that music is political. Many teachers do not realize this and teacher education must include this as part of the curriculum so that students have opportunity to become critical thinkers and consumers but also political beings who are aware of how music is both used and abused so they can better defend themselves intellectually while contributing to a better society. Porter (2011) points out how in past political processes have judged the political influences of music and how those values have shaped the curriculum.

It's not only in Czechoslovakia that music became a part of the protest movement, but here the government itself felt threatened by music. As early as the 1950s, Communist Party bosses had recognized music as a voice of dissent. Then it was jazz, both American and Czech, that kindled their fear of the uncontrollable. Josef Škvorecký, a lifelong jazz fan, wrote of the shock of realizing that the Communist Party viewed jazz in much the same way as the German occupiers had viewed it: "perverted, decadent, base, lying, degenerate, the music of cannibals," Jazz by its very nature is free-wheeling, and authoritarianism, by its very nature, needs to have all things confined by rules. In the 1960s, it was rock 'n' roll, a late comer from the West, complete with hippies, psychedelic lighting and a range of bands that played to young audiences much like their Western counterparts. They, too, were disaffected with society's more, dressed badly, wore their hair long and talked of love. In the warm glow of Prague Spring, rock bands filled halls all over Czechoslovakia. (pp. 121-122)

One other aspect of Czech choral music education requiring future study is to investigate how to motivate and attract excellent teachers to music education. Jiří Skopal

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commented on the current problems with teacher education and the compromised music experiences that students bring because of increased competition between universities as they fight for students. There is no doubt that teacher education is an important aspect of the overall quality of education because their level of, and experiences in music education, is then reflected in the education they provide for their students.

Because this work dealt primarily with the situation within the Czech Republic and the former Czechoslovakia, it might be useful to compare these findings with music education in other countries, such as comparing music education during the time of communism with other countries, especially the countries of Western Europe and North America. In addition, this dissertation provides a brief summary from the period of 1948 to 1989 when the Cold War raged and the Eastern Bloc was separated from the western world by the Iron Curtain. Because Czech choirs were allowed to travel abroad, it would be interesting to research how they were accepted by the western world; to examine the level of musical education at the time on the other side of the Iron Curtain; and whether other Eastern European Bloc countries struggled with similar issues related to music education with the onset of democracy. Bute's (2010) dissertation *The challenges of democratization, globalization and European integration for music education in Romania* would provide an excellent point of departure for beginning this kind of comparative research and study.

Another question arises regarding the choirmasters who currently work in the Czech Republic in the field of music or choral education. As excellent musicians, they seem to uncritically accept that classical music is the one true music. As mentioned above, while multiculturalism is an integral part of the current Czech Republic, this

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multicultural aspect is widely missing in Czech music education. As well, there is still a gap between classical and pop music that some Czech educators are now considering. Has the number of Czech children involved in music education programs fallen because society has grown tired of the elitism and snobbishness of classically trained musicians? This topic was elaborated on by Small (1998) who, while loving classical music, expressed how tired he was of the elitism and snobbery. This could be another excellent starting point for further research. Is it time for Czech music education to broaden to encompass and value popular culture in music? And, more importantly, is it time to broaden Czech choral music education by including more music from non-western cultures? There is much literature on pop and world music in western education generally, but little in the Czech Republic literature.

This study began by showing evidence that choral traditions in the Czech lands were strong. Various sources cite how, even when oppressed by other dynasties in early centuries, the Czech tribes relied on their folk songs and choral traditions and culture to reinforce the Czech identity. The music of the Czech lands served to unite the people and to make them feel like a nation of one people. This was a pattern that began as early as the 4th century and lasted through the communist years as the culture-bearers from the arts used their creativity in the arts to ignite Czech passion in the people. Even the communist regime saw the importance of music for the people and choral programs flourished through their support. At the same time, the people yearned for freedom and western-style democracy was seen as a beacon of hope. However, with democracy came free markets, unemployment, and attention to western popular culture which was embraced by the population. It seems possible that democratic ideals combined with

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technological advances have begun to undermine the very foundation of Czech culture and song history.

It is this author's hope that the current study will provide a useful source of information for future researchers wishing to do comparative studies of the history and politics of music education in other countries, and that a significant benefit of this dissertation comes from the personal testimonies of four personalities who lived through the period of this study.

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¹ The term “Czech Lands” is used instead of Czech Republic or Czechoslovakia throughout this chapter, because there was no independent country until 1918. Until that time, the geographic area was controlled by various dynasties. The Czech Lands refer to the geographic areas consisting of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia, all of which make up the country known today as the Czech Republic.

² To clarify, there was a Latin alphabet used in the Czech Lands, but it was used for writing Latin. The Slavic language used sounds that could not be written in this font and the Glagolitic script² was developed and was important in bringing Christianity to the people (Semotanová, 2003).

³ The Marshall Plan was adopted by sixteen countries: France, Italy, Great Britain, Belgium, Finland, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Norway, Iceland, Ireland, Portugal, Greece, Sweden, Switzerland and Turkey.

⁴ Beginning in 1918, the Czech Constitution included an elected President who in turn appointed a Prime Minister. Beneš was the second President after WWII after President Tomas Garrigue Masaryk. In 1946, he named Klement Gottwald as the Prime Minister.

⁵ Victorious February in retrospect was not a victory for Czechoslovak citizens. Rather, it was a victory of the communists and at a time of growing totalitarianism. February 25th was celebrated as an important day and referred to as Victory for the Czechoslovak working people (1948).

⁶ Eleven players were sentenced to 74 years and eight months in total: Modrý for 15 years, Bubník 14 years, Konopásek 12 years, Roziňák and Kobranov 10 years, Jirka 6 years, Červený 3 years, Macelis 2 years, Hainý and Španinger 1 year each, and Stock received eight months during which time these athletes lost the best years of their careers. In January 1955, they were released by President Antonín Zápotocký and after 1968 rehabilitated. Some players returned to play hockey. Modrý, whose health was impacted by his imprisonment in the uranium mines, died in 1963 in the age 46.

⁷ The 'new' music refers to the use of the melody and harmony of a traditional setting from a mass or cantata; however, the sacred words were changed to a text content intended for collective interpretation that was politically manipulated. This use of music was typical of the communist regimes and its propaganda, and came originally from Russia. Cantatas and masses were both common genres for communist propaganda (Havelková, 2004).

⁸ Italian neo-realism, French New Wave cinema, and Free Cinema movies in England were national art movements in film, which have been developed in European countries from the 40th to 60th years. (Ptáček 2000)

⁹ Class origin refers more to the background of the family and its allegiance to the Communist Party. For example, members of the working class were favoured, and their contributions to the Communist Party were noted, and as well whether anyone in the family had escaped the country. (Aubrecht & Kaderka, 2007)

¹⁰ The Czechoslovak Youth Union was an organization established in 1949 by the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia for youth from 15 to 26 years of age. The purpose was to organize young people in groups to immerse them in communist doctrines and to develop leadership in the Communist Party. The Union created the Pioneer Club for children ages 9 to 15. (Šablaturová, 2009, p. 14)

¹¹ The teacher assessment or cadre reports provided the information that indicated to which secondary school or higher education institution a student might be admitted. Students could not freely decide which school they wanted to attend (Wohlgemuthová, 2010).

¹² In the Czech lands, the term gymnasium indicates a high school for the brightest students.

¹³ Music education was provided as one part of compulsory education for the first eight or nine years. Students studying music would attend the conservatory after primary school, and then study at the university. While there were only two university-level academies and two conservatories in Prague and Brno, other conservatories were gradually established in other major cities, such Ostrava, Pardubice, and Teplice. (Šotová, 2012)

¹⁴ Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk was the first Czechoslovakian president in 1918, when Czechoslovakia was established as an independent republic. His nickname later became "Tatíček – osvoditel," or the Father of the Nation. Strictly translated, it means "Daddy, the liberator." In Kopelent's family the memories of Masaryk were very positive and nostalgic, since the period of Masaryk government symbolized enthusiasm for an independent Czechoslovakia.

¹⁵ This movement was founded in 1946 in Prague and was committed to the task of spreading and perpetuating the democratic ideas of first Czechoslovakian president T. G. Masaryk.

¹⁶ A cultural informant was known as a man who cared about cultural events and organized cultural programs in the community or schools.

¹⁷ As noted in Chapter Two, I described how the Czech Lands were continually Germanized for centuries and that German was used in schools and offices to the exclusion of the Czech language. Germanization was suppressed in the 19th Century by the so-called National Revival and the schools started again to teach

in Czech. The French gymnasiums were part of a different project, however, where the goal was to augment the Czech language with greater cultural development.

¹⁸ The choir was first an amateur ensemble, but in 1953 the organization became affiliated with the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra and for its members it became a job.

¹⁹ The Kühn Children's Choir was founded in 1932 by Kühn as a radio choir for schools. The choir's history parallels that of the early years of the Czech Choir which was founded in 1935. At the beginning, the choir was part of the Czechoslovak Radio, but later Jan Kühn left the radio for various reasons and the choir's activity moved in 1945 to the concert stage. An important milestone was 1952, when the choir was adopted as part of the Czech Philharmonic organization. When Kühn died in 1957, his wife Markéta Kühnová became the artistic director. Chvála began collaboration with the choir in 1958 and became the artistic director after Kühnová's retirement in 1967. (J. Chvála, personal communication, June 17, 2013)

²⁰ With the adoption of the Education Act in 1948, Russian became a compulsory foreign language taught in Czech schools.

²¹ Milada Horáková (b. 1901 – 1950) was a Czechoslovakian lawyer and politician, who before the onset of communism was a member of parliament. Even though she left her political career after February 1948 in protest against the communist take-over of the country, she was arrested in 1949, and convicted in a exemplary show trial for high treason and espionage. In June 1950, she was executed.

²² The first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party was the highest position in the leadership of Communist Party. Since the time of Gottwald's Presidency, the role of the President and the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party were held by one person.

²³ Proletarian internationalism is one of the basic principles of Marxist ideology and promoted universal working-class solidarity across the USSR. This principle, in practice, was often misused to control the labor movement by the Communist Party.

²⁴ Out of concern for territorial solidarity and control of the USSR, Moscow formalized an alliance with Central and Eastern European countries based on mutual assistance, cooperation and friendship, and to provide means of intervention should one country stray from communist control. The Warsaw Pact was signed in Warsaw on May 14, 1955 by Albania (which later withdrew in 1968 to protest the entry of troops into Czechoslovakia), Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, the German Democratic Republic, Poland, Romania, and the Soviet Union

²⁵ Normalization refers to the period from 1968 to 1989 when the democratization process in Czechoslovakia was frozen and most of its outcomes were destroyed. This 20-year period is seen as a time of the recovery of Neo-Stalinism, and a gradual dulling of political resistance (Mach, 2013).

²⁶ Traveling abroad and crossing the Iron Curtain at this point were possible only with a special permit. With the relaxation of the political situation in the 1960s, this permit was more affordable. That changed again, however, back to its original state at the onset of the normalization period after 1968.

²⁷ Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (German Academic Exchange Service)

²⁸ After World War II, Germany was divided into four sectors: American, British, French, and Soviet. The first three sectors created the so-called West Germany, and the Soviet part created East Germany. After that, there were two different German states. The capital city, Berlin, was similarly divided. In 1961, the Berlin Wall was built which physically divided the city into two sections, with part of West Berlin territory isolated in the middle of East Germany (Aubrecht and Kaderka, 2011).

²⁹ Tuzex was a network of stores established in Czechoslovakia in 1957 in which people could buy foreign, especially Western goods, which were otherwise not available in the normal public stores. These goods could be bought here for foreign currency or special Tuzex vouchers only.

³⁰ During the national summer holidays from school in July and August, it was usual for the choirs to go to camps during these two months.

³¹ The Council for Mutual Economic Assistance was the trade organization for the Cold War socialist countries of the Soviet bloc. It was the Soviet equivalent of the Marshall Plan.

³² StB is an acronym for *Státní bezpečnost*— State Security.

³³ The People's Militia was made up of workers of the Communist Party. They were first formed in 1948 when the communists feared that the non-communist members of the armed forces would start to actively support non-communist opposition. They were directly under the control of the Communist Party leadership, specifically the Secretary General of the party. The People's Militia played an important role in

the 1980's when they were deployed along with members of the police, against demonstrations (Marjánko, 2001).

³⁴ Vyšehrad is located in Prague which holds the cemetery where many significant national figures are buried.

³⁵ Price liberalization refers to the gradual phasing out, or complete abolition, of norms that regulate or restrict the free formation of prices in the market.


³⁶ Didactics is a synonym of methodology: it is the theory of education, which deals with forms, procedures and objectives of teaching.

Western Education
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USE OF HUMAN SUBJECTS - ETHICS APPROVAL NOTICE

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Principal Investigator: Paul Woodford
Student Name: Jakub Martinec
Title: *From communism to democracy: choral music education in Czechoslovakia (1948-1992) and the Czech Republic (1993-2011)*
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Type: PhD Thesis (Music)
Ethics Approval Date: June 11, 2013
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Documents Reviewed &
Approved: Western Protocol, Letter of Information & Consent


This is to notify you that the Faculty of Education Sub-Research Ethics Board (REB), which operates under the authority of the Western University Research Ethics Board for Non-Medical Research Involving Human Subjects, according to the Tri-Council Policy Statement and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario has granted approval to the above named research study on the date noted above. The approval shall remain valid until the expiry date noted above assuming timely and acceptable responses to the REB's periodic requests for surveillance and monitoring information.

During the course of the research, no deviations from, or changes to, the study or information/consent documents may be initiated without prior written approval from the REB, except for minor administrative aspects. Participants must receive a copy of the signed information/consent documentation. Investigators must promptly report to the Chair of the Faculty Sub-REB any adverse or unexpected experiences or events that are both serious and unexpected, and any new information which may adversely affect the safety of the subjects or the conduct of the study. In the event that any changes require a change in the information/consent documentation and/or recruitment advertisement, newly revised documents must be submitted to the Sub-REB for approval.


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