

A HISTORY OF
**MUSIC IN THE
CZECH LANDS**

EDITED BY

Martin Nedbal, Kelly St. Pierre
and Hana Vlhová-Wörner





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**||YEAR OF
||CZECH||
||MUSIC||
||2024||**

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Chapters marked * were translated from Czech, German, or Slovak by
Martin Nedbal

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Wörner and Martin Nedbal

Czech and Slovak ethnic groups have lived side by side for centuries, though they were separated by various state borders, such as that between the Austrian and Hungarian parts of the Habsburg monarchy. For many nineteenth-century Bohemians and Moravians, Slovakia represented a “close Other,” both familiar and alien.¹ At the same time, one could consider Slovakia a “time capsule,” preserving an earlier developmental stage of the culturally and nationally more advanced Czech “older sibling.”² Nationalistically minded nineteenth-century Slovaks drew inspiration and encouragement from the Czechs, and some of them, including poet Jan Kollár, viewed Czechs and Slovaks as a single Western Slavic tribe. Close ties between Czechs and Slovaks had existed for a much longer period, however, because Slovak Protestants of the Augsburg Confession used the Czech of the *Bible kralická* (“Bible of Kralice”), the first complete Czech translation of the Bible from the original languages, as their official language since the early seventeenth century.³

In the nineteenth century, Hungarian elites stopped viewing the Hungarian nationality as a supra-ethnic political concept and embraced a modern nationalist approach: Hungarians were those who identified with the *magyar* ethnicity. As a result, Slovaks and other minorities of Hungary subscribed to modern ideologies of ethnically defined nations that were increasingly at odds with the policies of the central Hungarian government.⁴ Compared to the developments in the Czech lands, where the idea of a Czech nation became widespread by the

This chapter was translated from Slovak to English by Martin Nedbal.

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¹ See Lucia Kvočáková, *Cesta ke slovenskému mýtu: Konstrukce identity slovenské moderny v kontextu ideje čechoslovakismu* (Prague: Charles University, 2020), 24–26.

² Marta Filipová, “Peasants on Display: The Czechoslovak Ethnographic Exhibition of 1895,” *Journal of Design History* 24 (2011): 32.

³ See Elisabeth Bakke, “Czechoslovakism in Slovak History,” in *Slovakia in History*, ed. Mikuláš Teich, Dušan Kováč, and Martin D. Brown (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 247–68.

⁴ Adam Hudek, *Najpolitickéjšia veda: slovenská historiografia v rokoch 1948–1968* (Bratislava: SAV, 2010), 21.

In a collection of essays from prominent music scholars both in the Czech Republic and abroad, this book provides a nuanced overview of major topics connected to the history of musical culture in the Czech lands (Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia) from the Middle Ages to the present. Whereas most previous English-language musicological scholarship on the Czech lands focused solely on music that was understood as ethnically Czech, this book also considers musical cultures of non-Czech groups that lived, and sometimes still live, in the geographical area, most importantly people of German, Jewish, and Romani backgrounds. Spanning over a thousand years, this book combines innovative approaches to present nuanced perspectives on a complicated musical tradition. This is the first overview of music in the Czech lands to provide such an inclusive view of the region's musical developments.

Martin Nedbal is Professor of Musicology at the University of Kansas. He has authored two monographs: *Morality and Viennese Opera in the Age of Mozart and Beethoven* (2017) and *Mozart's Operas and National Politics: Canon Formation in Prague from 1791 to the Present* (2023).

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