

Music in the Czech Lands

Music has played a uniquely central role in the history of the Czech lands, and this course is designed to explain why this is so by following the development of music here since the Middle Ages. It begins with a survey of Czech history aimed at analysing the broad social and cultural changes affecting Bohemia and Moravia over the centuries. It goes on to deal with the country's unusually rich folk music tradition, which has been of great importance in the development of its musical life and has had a profound influence on many of its leading composers. The history of music from the Middle Ages on then follows, with the emphasis on the many links between musical life and musicians here and the rest of Central Europe, the role of national feeling in the development of the musical tradition, and the place of ethnic and other minorities.

Seminar tasks

Before each seminar, students are required to read the assigned readings, which provide background information and serve as the basis for class discussion. In addition, the following books are essential reading for those interested in the particular subjects.

Related articles in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. London, 2001 (available for MU IP-addresses at www.grovemusic.com)

Newmarch, R. *The Music of Czechoslovakia*. Oxford, 1942, 1969.

Štěpánek, V. and Karásek, B. *An Outline of Czech and Slovak Music*. Prague, 1964.

Tyrrell, J. *Czech Opera*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

Tyrrell, J. *Janáček: Years of a Life, I (1864-1914), II (1914-1928)*. London, 2006, 2007.

Time and location

The lessons will take place on Wednesdays from 6.20 p.m. to 7.55 p.m. in room J31 of the Faculty of Arts, building Jaselská, entrance via Gorkého 7, downstairs, out through the courtyard to the building opposite, third floor. Teaching starts on 22 September 2010, last lecture is on 8 December 2010. **Attention:** There are no lectures on Wednesdays 29 September, 27 October, 17 November.

Examination procedure

Two essays of 1000-2000 words each are to be submitted by e-mail to Jan Špaček. The particular topic should be discussed in advance.

(1) Deadline 31 October 2010. Subject matter: History and music of the Czech lands before 1848, folk music.

(2) Deadline 15 December 2010. Subject matter: Any concerning Czech music, targeted or comparative. Specialized themes are preferred to those more general.

Jan Špaček can be reached preferably by e-mail or during his office hours (Wednesdays 11-12, room J121), by appointment at any other times.

Other course activities

Possible visits to the National Theatres in Prague, Brno, Bratislava and Staatsoper in Vienna. Details will be specified according to students' interest. Suggestions:

- (1) Dvořák's *Rusalka*, Prague, 7 p.m.: 29 Sep, 1 Oct, 2 Nov, 5 Dec
- (2) Smetana's *Libuše*, Prague, 28 Oct, 7 p.m.
- (3) Dvořák's *Rusalka*, Bratislava, 17 Dec, 7 p.m.
- (4) R. Strauss' *Salome*, Vienna State Opera, 8 p.m.: 16 Oct, 21 Oct
- (5) Janáček festival in Brno, 16-28 Nov, www.janacek-brno.cz

Teacher responsible for the course

Mgr. Jan Špaček, e-mail: spacek@phil.muni.cz, more contacts: <http://is.muni.cz/person/23816?lang=en>