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Ad honorem Jiří Vysloužil

# **Jiří Vysloužil and His Place in Czech Musicology. Centenary of the Birth of Brno University Musicology Leading Representative**

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## **Abstract**

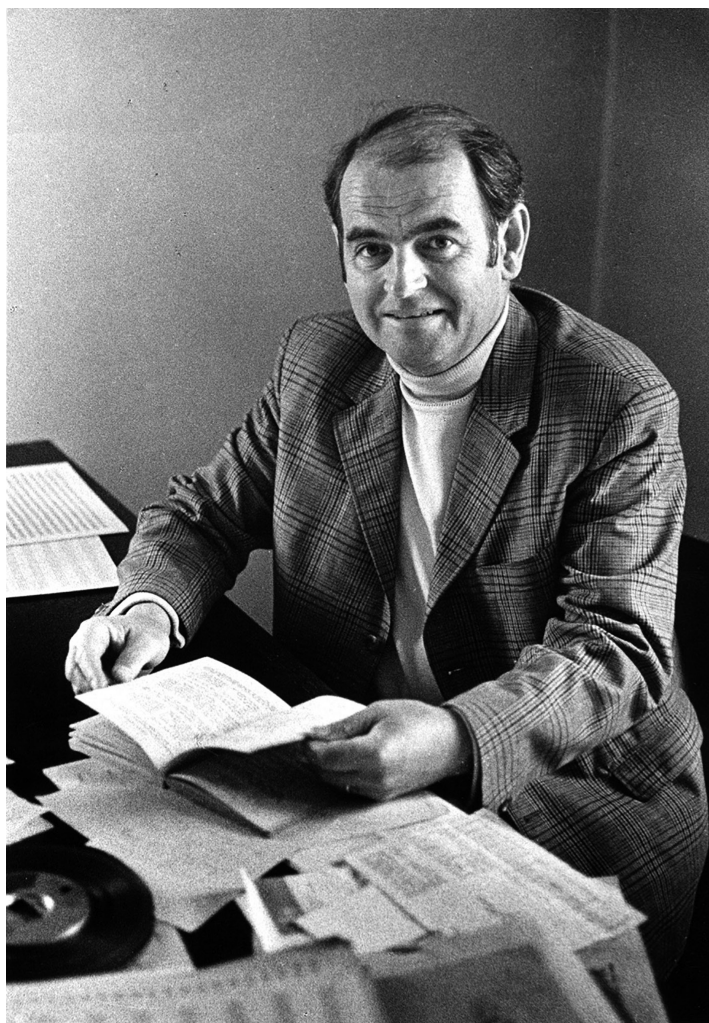
Jiří Vysloužil, professor of musicology at the Faculty of Arts, Masaryk University, would have celebrated the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth on 11 May 2024. He is one of the main representatives of Brno musicology as he devoted his major scholarly works to music lexicography, 20<sup>th</sup> century music, Alois Hába, Karel Husa, Leoš Janáček. Furthermore, his organizational activities are also valuable. During his lifetime, he educated and influenced a long line of his students, his successors.

## **Key words**

Brno, musicology, Jiří Vysloužil

**I.**

In 11 May 2024, we have remembered the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Jiří Vysloužil, a leading Czech musicologist who shaped and influenced Brno university musicology from the 1960s until his death in 2015. Therefore, this issue of *Musicologica Brunensia* is dedicated to him, presenting the following article as a preface of sorts. More than a scholarly study, it is a summary of the musicologist's contribution and a retrospect at his activities at his alma mater and beyond. Considering the bibliography contents below, it is convenient to publish this article in English, so that the legacy of Vysloužil's work can be more easily disseminated beyond the borders of our linguistic area.



**Fig. 1** Jiří Vysloužil.

Jiří Vysloužil was born in Košice, Slovakia, graduated from the real grammar school<sup>1</sup> in Brno-Husovice (1943), followed with forced labour deployment during World War II in the branches of the Reich-German companies in Kuřim, Brno and Rájec-Jestřebí. Since his early years, he studied violin privately, followed also with piano, viola and music theory.

In 1945–1949, Vysloužil studied musicology at the Faculty of Arts of Masaryk University in Brno under Jan Racek and Bohumír Štědroň (PhDr. 1949, graduate thesis *Problémy a metody hudebního lidopisu*).<sup>2</sup> In philosophy and aesthetics, he was a student of Inocenc Arnošt Bláha and Mirko Novák, in history of Josef Macůrek, in ethnography of Antonín Václavík. Jan Racek broadened Vysloužil's knowledge with new cultural horizons and led him to a systematic study of folk song in the then State Institute for Folk Song in Brno (1947–1950).<sup>3</sup> Later, Bohumír Štědroň awakened Vysloužil's interest in musical lexicography. In 1959, Vysloužil received the title of Candidate of Arts (CSc.) with thesis *Leoš Janáček a lidová píseň*<sup>4</sup> and the title of Doctor of Science (DrSc) with thesis *Alois Hába* in 1974.

After a short activity at the Vít Nejedlý Military Art Ensemble<sup>5</sup> in Prague (alongside composers Jiří Matys and Svatopluk Havelka) and at the Music High School in Kroměříž, where he taught music history, aesthetics and folklore studies, Vysloužil was appointed an assistant professor of new music history and folklore studies at the Janáček Academy of Performing Arts in Brno (JAMU) in 1954. There, he became a useful colleague of the rector Ludvík Kundera and the dean František Kudláček as vice-dean of the music faculty.

On behalf of Ludvík Kundera, Vysloužil founded and headed the Cabinet for Art Theory. He published the proceedings of the JAMU and was involved in the organisation and programming of scientific and pedagogical conferences. From the mid-1950s, he lectured on 20<sup>th</sup> century music. Together with Ctírad Kohoutek, he led a seminar of contemporary music, for which, as library manager, he acquired literature and scores of New Music, completely unknown at that time among Czech composers of the post-war generation. Additionally, he devoted himself to music journalism and criticism. In 1958, he met composer Alois Hába, with who he kept regular personal contacts, transforming into a years-long working friendship from which Vysloužil benefited enormously. He was involved in many ways in Hába's work and invited him to give lectures at JAMU (1966).

In 1963, at the invitation of Jan Racek, Vysloužil applied for a vacant position of assistant professor at the Department of Musicology and Art History of the Faculty of Arts of the then Jan Evangelista Purkyně University.<sup>6</sup> In 1964, he received the title of docent

1 Reálné gymnásium, a former type of high school with more balanced emphasis on natural sciences and humanities.

2 *Problems and Methods of Music Folkloristics*.

3 Name of Institute of Ethnology of the Czech Academy of Sciences, Brno department in 1919–1953.

4 *Leoš Janáček and Folk Song*.

5 Armádní umělecký soubor Víta Nejedlého, abbreviated AUS or AUS-VN, a central army art ensemble that existed in 1943–1995.

6 Name of Masaryk University in Brno in 1960–1990.



**Fig. 2** Working meeting near Velké Meziříčí with (left to right) Peter Andraschke, Jiří Fukač, Rudolf Pečman and Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht (1969).

and paralelly was appointed head of the department at the suggestion of Jan Racek as his successor. He lectured on the history of Czech and European modern music, music folkloristics and aesthetics. He conducted a proseminar and diploma and postgraduation seminars, tutored postgraduate students and educated several students at the faculty, including several foreign students. As editor-in-chief, he strived for scientific profiling of the faculty musicological journal *Studia minora Facultatis Philosophicae Universitatis Brunensis. Series musicologica*. In 1972, received the title of professor. Named professor emeritus in 1990, he worked at the Faculty of Arts as an external teacher since then.

The creative scientific atmosphere of Vysloužil's alma mater determined the direction of his further activities. A two-month study stay in the then West Germany in the spring of 1968 proved to be an important developmental moment. At the Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht musicology seminar at the University of Freiburg, Vysloužil benefited from the systematically oriented Freiburg School. Therefore, he applied the acquired methodology in the upcoming project *Slovník české hudební kultury*<sup>7</sup> as a factual counterpart to *Československý hudební slovník osob a institucí*.<sup>8</sup> In 1966, Vysloužil proposed its concept and advocated for it before the expert committee. As the head of the Cabinet for Music

<sup>7</sup> *Dictionary of Czech Music Culture.*

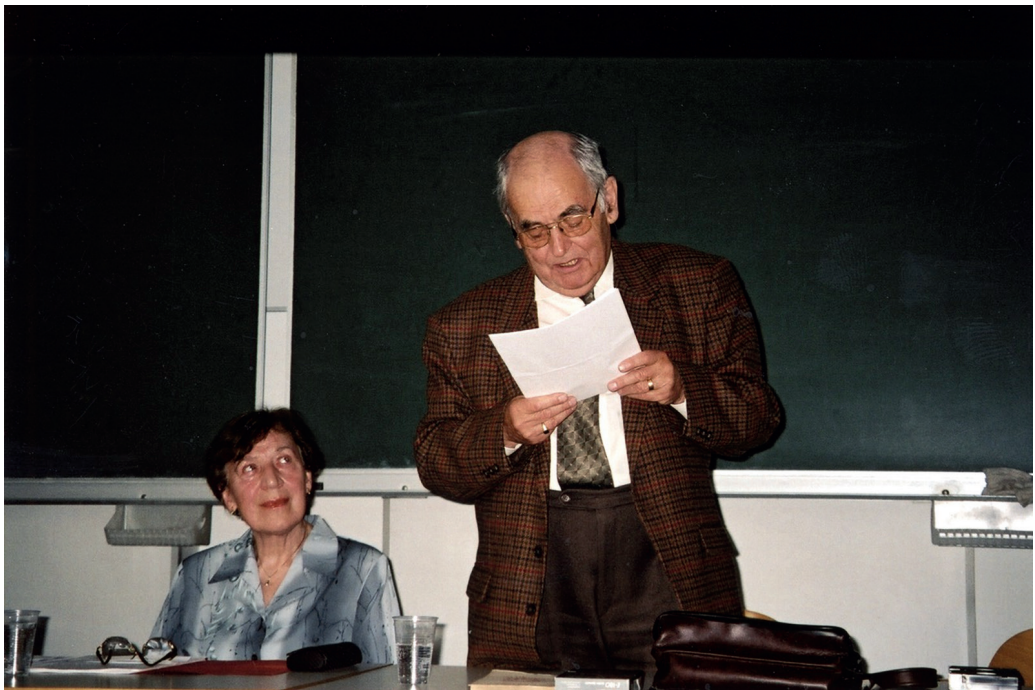
<sup>8</sup> *Czechoslovak Music Dictionary of Persons and Institutions.*

Lexicography, he and his team of colleagues managed the editorial work until 1990, when his long-time close colleague Jiří Fukač took the position.

In 1968 Vysloužil was appointed chairman of the musicological committee of the International Music Festival Brno. At that time, Brno Musicological Colloquium became an important international centre for meetings of musicological schools of the West and the East thanks to the regular participation of profiled personalities, despite the politically controversial conditions in the totalitarian state. This is evidenced by the colloquium proceedings published first by Rudolf Pečman and then by Petr Macek.

On the initiative of Jiří Fukač, Vysloužil was appointed chairman of the committee of the International Music Festival Brno in 1976. He held this position until 1989, when he was succeeded by Arnošt Parsch, the long-time secretary of the institution. The team of experts successfully defended the relatively independent artistic line the festival which had been maintained since its inception in 1966.

As a leading Janáček scholar, Vysloužil was appointed by the Supraphon publishing house as a chairman of the Editorial Board of the complete critical edition of the musical works of Leoš Janáček in 1976. Many titles were soon realized under Vysloužil's leadership in close collaboration with Jarmil Burghauser. Graduates of Brno universities, also Vysloužil's students, were involved in the project as editors. The particularly productive editorial duo was Miloš Štědroň and Leoš Faltus – the latter was appointed chairman of the Editorial Board in 1990, of which Vysloužil was then made an honorary member.



**Fig. 3** Vysloužil giving lecture on Smetana's *Libuše* at the University of Vienna (2001).

The quantity of his production is recorded in three bibliographic lists. Some of the texts were presented at foreign universities and congresses (Germany, Austria, Switzerland, USA, France, Finland, Sweden, former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania).



**Fig. 4** Vysloužil in his later years.



## II.

Vysloužil's initial academia interest was mainly oriented towards folklore and ethnography. He published *Lidové písně z Hustopečska*<sup>9</sup> by Hynek Bím (1950) and subsequently an important edition of Janáček's folkloristic works (*Leoš Janáček. O lidové písni a lidové hudbě*, 1955).<sup>10</sup> Upon his appointment at Jan Evangelista Purkyně University in the 1960s, Vysloužil's musicological interests gradually shifted especially towards music lexicography, which had been traditionally prominent in Brno. Therefore, he built on earlier lexicographical projects in Brno, namely *Pazdírkův hudební slovník naučný*<sup>11</sup> (1929, 1937-) and *Československý hudební slovník osob a institucí* (1963, 1965) and began editorial work on an extensive project *Slovníku české hudební kultury* in close cooperation with Jiří Fukač, completed in 1997. Furthermore, we must mention Vysloužil's contribution on several foreign lexicographical projects (*MGG*, *New Grove* and most importantly *Lexikon zur deutschen Musik Kultur: Böhmen, Mähren, Sudetenschlesien*) as well as the inception of the popularizing two-part *Hudební slovník pro každého* (1995, 1999).<sup>12</sup>

Additionally, his interest in 20<sup>th</sup> century music was significant. From Igor Stravinsky through Schoenberg to the compositional work of Anton Webern, his studies formed the basis for the title *Hudobníci XX. storočia* (Bratislava 1981).<sup>13</sup> He also studied the work of Alois Hába and later of Karel Husa. Both resulted in monographs that benefit from personal ties of Vysloužil to living artistic figures. In collaboration with Lubomír Spurný, they made the internationally acclaimed *Alois Hába: A Catalogue of the Music and Writings* (2010). With his wife Věra, Vysloužil prepared an edition of Hába's *Nauka o harmonii*<sup>14</sup> from 1942–1943.

As an editor, he contributed to the first volume of selected writings of Richard Wagner (*Wagner o hudbě a umění*, 1959)<sup>15</sup> and monography dedicated to Ludvík Kundera (1962). Also, we must mention selection of his essays *Muzikologické rozpravy* (1986)<sup>16</sup> with his key scientific works from 1970s. Essential publication is *Dějiny hudby na Moravě* (2001, with Jiří Sehnal).<sup>17</sup>

## III.

Rightfully, Jiří Vysloužil belongs among the main leading figures of Czech post-war musicology. From the 1960s onwards, he shaped and formed the substance of Brno university

9 *Folk Songs from the Region of Hustopečsko.*

10 *Leoš Janáček. On Folk Song and Folk Music.*

11 *Pazdírěk's Educational Dictionary of Music.*

12 *Music Dictionary for Everyone.*

13 *Musicians of 20th Century.*

14 *Theory of Harmony.*

15 *Wagner on Music and Arts.*

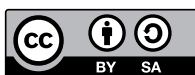
16 *Musicological Discussions.*

17 *History of Music in Moravia.*

musicology. His scientific, pedagogical and organisational legacy has influenced and is influencing the next generations of his students and successors.

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