RICE UNIVERSITY

Contemporary Music in Czechoslovakia Since 1945: An Analysis of Piano Sonatas by Jiří Gemrot Composed During and After the Communist Regime

by

Jitka Fraňková

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

Doctor of Musical Arts

APPROVED, THESIS COMMITTEE:

Richard Lavenda,
Thesis Director, Professor
Composition and Theory

Robert Roux, Professor
Piano

Marcia Citron,
Lovett Distinguished Service Professor
Musicology

Lora Wildenthal
Associate Professor
History

HOUSTON, TEXAS

APRIL, 2008
ABSTRACT

The Communist Party dominated the country of Czechoslovakia throughout most of the second half of the twentieth century. In addition to maintaining tight political control of the country to prevent the emergence of any threats to its power, the Communist government also exercised significant power over the society’s cultural organs and influenced their output to favor works that it felt supported its revolutionary ideology. The power of the Party was not constant, but went through two oscillations of relative strength and weakness, which affected the extent to which it was able to impose its will on the country.

In the music world, in periods when the regime was weak, non-orthodox musical ideas found their way into Czechoslovak society through various conduits. When the regime was strong, these routes seemed to close, the people and organizations that opened them were marginalized, and the penetration of these new ideas diminished.

This study examines the effect that the policies of the Communist regime in Czechoslovakia had on music composition, through analyses of two piano sonatas by a living Czech composer, Jiří Gemrot. These sonatas were written in different times, one during the end of the Communist period, the other several years afterwards, and so are potentially affected by the composer’s changed attitudes towards composition with the fall of the Communist Government.

The analyses conclude, however, that there was not a significant change in the composer’s technique between the times of writing the two sonatas, suggesting that he was not greatly affected by Communist attempts to maintain music orthodoxy in Czechoslovakia. It is further suggested that although the composer had exposure to, and
the opportunity to compose in, progressive compositional styles, Gemrot’s musical inclinations led him to write in a compositional style that, while non-orthodox, was not deemed threatening to the cultural ideology of the Party.
Acknowledgments

I would like to thank first my thesis advisor, Dr. Richard Lavenda, without whose constant help and support this paper would never have been possible. I'm especially grateful for his patience with the difficulties of working with me across an ocean. I would also like to thank my piano professor Dr. Robert Roux for all the time he spent with me in piano lessons, for sharing his experience and wisdom with me, and for making me a better pianist. I will always be grateful to him for guiding me through my career at Rice University. I feel that the entire faculty, staff, and student body at the Shepherd School of Music has played an important role in bringing me to this point, and so I offer my heartfelt gratitude to all who have befriended and helped me at the school.

I would like to thank my husband, Michael, for ongoing and constant support, especially through the tough times. His infectious optimism always lifted my spirits whenever I needed it. My wonderful mother-in-law deserves a huge amount of credit for her heroic efforts in proofing my paper. In addition, all of the members of both of our families deserve recognition for all their support throughout this process. Their assistance with this paper and with the intricacies of the English language was invaluable, as were their sympathies and understanding. Getting through the rough spots would have been impossible without them.

To all those in the Czech Republic who assisted me in gathering the information and doing the research for this thesis, you have my deepest appreciation. To Ivana Zuranová in Czech Radio in Prague for access to their archives, and additionally to Prague Spring Festival, Czech Music Fund, Czech Music Information Center for their assistance and records, and to all who met with me to share the history and stories of Czech music, I
thank you all. In particular I would like to thank Jan Kachlík from The Institute of Musicology, Prague, for his very extensive interview with me on the subject of the history of contemporary music in the Czech Republic and the former Czechoslovakia.

And of course, a very special thanks goes out to the subject and case study of my thesis, Jiří Gemrot. His willingness to spend long hours with me and his tolerance for a million little questions, as well as his broad knowledge of recent Czech musical history are what allowed this paper to be written. Additionally, his enthusiasm, humor, and sympathetic outlook, made this work a joy. I doubt I could have picked a better possible window into the world of contemporary Czech composers. Děkuji Vám, Jiří.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**ABSTRACT** ................................................................. ii

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS** ............................................... iv

Chapter

I. **INTRODUCTION** ....................................................... 1

II. **CONTEMPORARY MUSIC IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA AFTER WORLD WAR II** ........................................... 6

III. **MUSIC IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC AFTER 1989** ........ 34

IV. **BIOGRAPHY OF JIŘÍ GEMROT** .............................. 53

V. **ANALYSIS OF JIŘÍ GEMROT’S SECOND PIANO SONATA (1985)** .................................................. 64

VI. **ANALYSIS OF JIŘÍ GEMROT’S SIXTH PIANO SONATA (2007)** ................................................ 111

VII. **CONCLUSIONS** .................................................. 161

Appendices

I. **BIBLIOGRAPHY** ...................................................... 165

II. **LIST OF GEMROT’S COMPOSITIONS** .......................... 169

III. **SCORE OF GEMROT’S PIANO SONATA NO. 2** .......... 172

IV. **SCORE OF GEMROT’S PIANO SONATA NO. 6** ........... 173
Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

European music, with its long history, provides an incredible spectrum of styles. These always seem to be in motion: some composers work to bring a style to its peak, and to maintain its prominence, while others seek new sounds and forms which would spur further developments. These changes usually took place simultaneously or very close to each other in time. In other words, while one style was on its way to the top, at the same time other composers had the urge to try something new. Naturally, many of them were criticized for their new concepts of melody and harmony, and new rhythmic ideas or musical forms. Very often, composers who we see today as very important for the development in music were not even recognized as such during their lifetimes.

This raises an important question: When new ideas in music emerge and develop into new musical styles, how do we recognize their importance and possible impact on future musical developments? How do we know that this particular experiment will not have just a short life time and will be soon forgotten? It has often been a difficult task to recognize at the moment of inception whether something should be accepted as a “natural” and necessary development or whether it should be dismissed as a passing musical fad. Is it even possible from within the contemporary musical culture to recognize the potential importance of an emerging musical style?

We can see from the history of music that only time will prove the importance of new ideas. However, for this to take place, the society must be open to new ideas, to
new music. If these ideas are neglected, interrupted or forbidden for any reason, the natural development and change in music will be postponed at best, stunted at worst. Retarding the development of the arts through some external agency, such as governmental or religious proscriptions, can have serious consequences for a society. How this affects individual artists becomes an interesting, relevant topic, particularly now when less than twenty years have passed since the fall of Communism in Eastern Europe, and many artists from the former Communist Block have seen a large expansion of their artistic freedom.

This dissertation will present two piano works by a contemporary Czech composer, Jiří Gemrot.1 Born in 1957, Gemrot is considered one of the leading Czech composers of his generation. He has composed many significant works for orchestra, chamber ensembles, voice, and solo instruments, both during the Communist period and after its overthrow in 1989. Gemrot has composed six piano sonatas, two during the Communist period, and four after 1989. Two of these sonatas will be analyzed, one from each period, in order to investigate if the socio-political milieu prevalent during the Communist era, and then its cessation, had any influence on Gemrot's work.

Jiří Gemrot is a good candidate for this sort of analysis because he was a director of the recording department of Czechoslovakian radio from 1982 until 1986, and then was a record editor in the Panton Publishing House from 1986 until 1990. Additionally in the Post-Communist period, in 1990 Gemrot returned to his position as director in chief of recordings at Czech Radio Prague, and now holds an official position in the Union of Czech Composers and Concert Artists and its Young Group.

1 The information concerning Jiří Gemrot in this dissertation was acquired through a series of personal interviews by the author beginning in August, 2006.
He therefore is an excellent source of information pertaining to the rules, regulations, and customs of recording and publishing the works of contemporary composers in Czechoslovakia in the late Communist period, as well as in the Czech Republic in the aftermath of the Velvet Revolution.²

In order to provide perspective on the situation in which Gemrot studied and worked, this dissertation will discuss the development of contemporary Czech (Czechoslovakian) music in the period spanning from the end of the Second World War until the present day. Some observations will be made about the developmental similarities and differences between Czech music and that of contemporary music in Western countries. Additionally, this paper will review the situation of Czech contemporary musicians who had to live under the communist regime, whether and how they adapted their compositional style to these difficult political circumstances, and whether they were influenced by Western composers once they were able to hear that music.

Further, this paper will address the experiences of Czechoslovakian musicians after the fall of the iron curtain. What changed in their lives and their compositions after they experienced this greater freedom in their creativity? Was exposure to Western music and the incorporation of Western styles only possible after the fall of the Communist Party, or were there periods of time, still under the regime, where strict rules became looser and Western music could find its way into the country? If so, did that perhaps change the direction of at least some composers’ styles and compositional techniques?

² The peaceful overthrow of the Communist Regime in 1989 is popularly referred to as the “Velvet Revolution.”
Unfortunately, the Communist domination of Czechoslovakia between 1948 and 1989 has led to certain difficulties in researching and understanding the musical history of this country. While in reality the freedom of artistic expression in Czechoslovakia was quite limited in any meaningful sense, the official stance of the Communist government towards musical life was ambiguous. This led to the situation in which it was common knowledge among the artistic community that there were widespread restrictions on which styles and materials were permissible and which were not. Unfortunately, however, there is no official documentation of these proscriptions.\(^3\) Therefore, it is impossible to find any evidence or list of banned artists or prohibited artistic styles. Restrictions on art and artists were maintained by the dissemination of information by word of mouth within the artistic community as to whom or what was in or out of favor. In this way the Communist regime was able to control the art without having to leave evidence of their methods or intent.

This situation, while in general effective in ensuring that the dominant artistic culture did not deviate from the Communist party's wishes, was ambiguous enough that there was from time to time confusion as to what was permitted and what was not. On these occasions, for example when a regional festival, not knowing that a particular composer was out of favor, played the composition of a composer whose work had been banned, those crossing these invisible lines found themselves facing the very real, if unwritten, consequences of the transgressions.

While situations like this seem to illustrate the nature of Communist control over the arts during the twentieth century, the lack of clear documentation has thus far proven to be an insurmountable hurdle to establishing a comprehensive written record.

\(^3\) See, for example, the Archives listed in Appendix I herein.
of this era. Such a task would require the combined and focused efforts of a generation of Czech musicologists and music historians. While there has been in the Czech Republic a considerable interest in these studies, the broad scope of the work involved in combination with the difficulty in finding trustworthy source material has proved too daunting for any sustained efforts in that direction. Obviously, such work is beyond the scope of this paper. All the same, it is necessary to understand the rough outlines of the social milieu to draw any conclusions about the work of individual artists who were active at this time.

The core of this paper will be a musical analysis of Gemrot’s Piano Sonata No. II and Piano Sonata No. VI, which were composed two decades apart. I will be looking for changes in: Gemrot’s compositional style, adherence to or deviance from the ideal sonata form, and expressions in his musical language. I will study and perform these pieces, and the experience will be used to gain insight into the aspects listed above. I interviewed Jiří Gemrot and obtained his view of these works, as a composer and as a pianist. The dissertation attempts to understand how his perceptions of the social and political climate affected him as he composed these sonatas, and to determine whether there are any discernible differences between the composer’s creation of a composition under the communist regime and under the new situation of artistic freedom.
Chapter II

CONTEMPORARY MUSIC IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA AFTER WORLD WAR II

To understand fully musical developments in Czechoslovakia after 1945, it is necessary to review at least briefly some of the previous developments in the music, compositional styles, and composers of the so-called Czech compositional schools. These are represented mainly by music of Bedřich Smetana (1824 – 1884), Antonín Dvořák (1841 – 1904), Zdeněk Fibich (1850 – 1900), their students Josef Suk 1874 – 1935), Oskar Nedbal (1874 – 1930), Otakar Ostrčil (1879 – 1935), and further by the composers Josef Bohuslav Foerster (1859 – 1951) and, of course, Leoš Janáček (1854 – 1928). The musical language of these artists reflects the music of the great figures of late romanticism, including Johannes Brahms (1833 – 1897), Gustav Mahler (1860 – 1911), Peter I. Tchaikovsky (1840 – 1893), and Richard Wagner (1813 – 1883) in opera. However, nationalist tendencies and their expression in music began to play an important part in the output of Czech composers as a powerful symbol of Czech identity within the Austro–Hungarian Empire. Dvořák had begun the turn towards folk elements – tunes, rhythmic ideas, etc. (Slavonic Dances Op. 46, Op. 72, String Quartet in Eb Major Op. 51, Slavonic Rhapsodies Op. 45). Janáček took this idea further with intensive studies of not only Moravian folk songs, but also of human language and its intonation. Tunes of the language - as he called his written sketches - became his

---


specific style, which is apparent in all of his music, not only in his vocal compositions. Internationally recognized, Janáček’s distinctive musical language became an inspiration for many composers throughout the twentieth century.

Czech music between the two wars consists of three major compositional streams. The first branch of composers was still very strongly tied to the previously established Czech style, even though it was influenced by Impressionism, folk songs, social poetry, and jazz elements. To this group belonged, for instance, Jaroslav Křička (1882 – 1969), Karel Boleslav Jiráč (1891 – 1972), Jaroslav Řídký (1897 – 1956), Boleslav Vomáčka (1887 – 1978) and others. The second group of composers was inspired by the Expressionists and adopted many techniques of the Viennese School. Their music features increased atonality. The main protagonist of this group is Alois Hába (1893 – 1973) together with his brother Karel Hába (1898 – 1972), as well as Alois Hába’s students, Karel Reiner (1910 – 1979) and Karel Šrom (1904 – 1981). Alois Hába also contributed to musical developments with his new idea of quarter-tone music, which will be described later in this chapter. Several composers who preferred Neoclassicism represent the third category. The main composer of this style in that period was Bohuslav Martinů (1890 – 1959) but others, such as Emil Hlobil (1901 – 1987), Pavel Bořkovec (1894 – 1972), Emil František Burian (1904 – 1959) and Iša Krejčí (1904 – 1968) also contributed significantly to Czech music history, though none

---


became as internationally well-known as Martinů. In addition to Prague, Moravia was also a very important center in music at that time. This is mainly thanks to the Organ School, which was established in Brno by Janáček in 1882.\(^9\) Many of his students represented the music scene of Moravia between the two wars. The compositional styles in Brno were similar to the tendencies among the composers centered in Bohemia. While some of the composers there were influenced by Mahler and Max Reger (1873 – 1916), for instance Jaroslav Kvapil (1892 – 1958), others turned to Neoclassicism - Vilém Petrželka (1889 – 1967) and Impressionism.

**AFTER THE WAR, 1945 – 1948**

The victory over the Axis Powers and the end of the German occupation of Czechoslovakia is usually seen as the beginning of an important new period of social developments in Europe. Unfortunately, this hard-won happiness for millions of people, who survived one of the worst wars in human history, would soon once again be smothered by the fear and insecurity that accompanied the Communist regime and affected many people in Czechoslovakia.

The time after World War II meant a new beginning for Czech music.\(^{10}\) It is important to understand that in practical terms, musical life during the war was extremely limited. In September 1944, the German occupation authority banned all musical performances and closed all concert venues in the country. The performance of

---


\(^{10}\) After World War I and the breakup of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Republic of Czechoslovakia was formed from the regions Bohemia, Moravia and Slovakia. This country was dissolved briefly during World War II when a Nazi puppet government in Slovakia declared independence and Bohemia and Moravia were forced to become German Protectorates. After the war the country of Czechoslovakia was reformed and remained a union until two years after the overthrow of the Communist Regime in 1989. In 1991 the country was peacefully divided into the Czech Republic and the Republic of Slovakia.
every type of music was forbidden and brutally persecuted. It is no wonder that people in Czechoslovakia – composers, and performers, but also the general public - were eager to make and listen to music as soon as the Occupation was over.

Musical life experienced an eruption of feverish activity after the war. The government authorities of the freed republic were very much aware of the importance of the musical arts in social life. With incredible enthusiasm, within a short time many concerts were organized and new musical associations were established. As an example, by October 1945, the Prague Academy of Performing Arts was established. Two years later another major educational institution opened for the first time, the Janáček Academy of Music and Performing Arts in Brno, which became a very important musical center in the country. From September 1946, several newly established Pedagogical Faculties offered higher education to all teachers, including teachers in music education (Pedagogical Faculty in České Budějovice, Pedagogical Faculty at the Charles University in Prague, Pedagogical Faculty in Olomouc, Pedagogical Institute in Liberec).

In 1946, composers began to be active again and reunited in The Syndicate of Czech Composers, which soon became a forum for debating the problems of the development of Czech national culture. New compositions were carefully read, analyzed, and accepted with healthy criticism. One of the major social events of 1946 was the new Prague Spring Music Festival, which was held then for the first time (this

13 Archive of the Czech Music Information Center in Prague.
14 Archive of the Prague Spring Festival.
idea had first been realized several years earlier in 1939, when a series of nine concert and opera events occurred and was called by the name of their ‘spiritual father’ Václav Talich\(^\text{15}\). The festival’s activities were not interrupted during the Communist era and remain successful to this day.\(^\text{16}\) Additionally there were positive developments with several orchestras and ensembles in Czechoslovakia, mainly the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, the National Theater Orchestra in Prague and its opera productions, the Talich Chamber Orchestra and other music institutions.

However, all these positive developments were unfortunately accompanied by a very sad turn of events. Even before the Communist takeover, there was significant political fallout from the behavior of people (real or perceived) during the war. False accusations of collaboration during the occupation were leveled against several musicians and academic scholars.\(^\text{17}\) One of the most important and popular personalities of the Czech music scene, Václav Talich (who was responsible for turning the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra into an excellent internationally recognized orchestra), was immediately called off his conducting post at the National Theater Orchestra (Opera) after being accused of collaboration with the Nazis, and was imprisoned for some time. The authorities made his life more difficult still. They constantly interfered with the activities of his newly established Czech Chamber Orchestra.


\(^{16}\) The Prague Spring Festival in 1946 was held from May 11\(^\text{th}\) till June 4\(^\text{th}\). There were fifty concerts performed over twenty-five days (orchestra concerts, chamber music concerts, solo recitals). The program included standard classical repertoire as well as contemporary music (American and French). Of particular interest was a concert series of Czech contemporary music performed on four consecutive Tuesdays (called *The Musical Tuesday of The Union of Composers and Artists*), which presented music by living contemporary composers of that time as well as composers from the first three decades of the twentieth century. The Prague Spring Festival in 2007 presented fifty-eight concerts. The programming seemed to be almost identical to its first year. The Czech contemporary music series was no longer a distinct part of the program, but Czech contemporary compositions were included in several concerts.

Orchestra, formed mainly with young players from the Music Conservatory in Prague.18 Another important person on the music scene, Karel Boleslav Jiráčk, faced similar difficulties with the new government authorities, which led to his emigration to the United States. More details concerning the lives of both artists will be discussed further in the section on music after 1948. Clearly, nationalist sentiments ran high during the immediate post-war period.

It is therefore perhaps understandable that after the war Czechs turned first towards nationalistic music. This consisted not only of music from the past, such as compositions from Smetana, Dvořák, Janáček, Suk, Ostrčil, and Jaroslav Ježek (1906 – 1942), but also the music of several living composers whose music had obvious nationalistic aspects. From the older generation, Foerster and Vítězslav Novák (1870 – 1949) were popular composers; among the younger generation Řídký, Martinů, Hába, Bořkovec, Krejčí and Miloslav Kabeláč (1908 – 1944) were well liked, to name just a few.19 Additionally, music composed in the concentration camps (mainly Terezín) – by composers including Viktor Ullmann (1898 – 1944), Hans Krása (1899 – 1944), Pavel Haas (1899 – 1944), and Gideon Klein (1919 - 1945) – was brought to light after the war.20 Works written under the Nazi - German Protectorate without a hope of being published were performed to an enthusiastic response. For example, the performance of Kabeláč’s cantata Neustupujte (Do Not Retreat, 1939) met with a rapturous response. The work impressed with its fighting spirit, immediacy, and compositional excellence. It cited the Hussite chorale Kdož sú boží bojovníci (Ye Who Are Warriors of God).

Between the end of the war and 1948, Czech music returned to the compositional tendencies from the inter-war period, the so-called era of Czech Modernism. Some composers continued in the old, traditional compositional school of Nováček, which was influenced by Neoclassicism. These included Jiráček, Řídký, Bořkovec, Jaroslav Doubrava (1909 – 1960), Petrželka, Osvald Chlubna (1893 – 1971), and Jan Zdeněk Bartoš (1908 – 1981). Their musical language was not heavily transformed during this time. Even though they are important in the development of the Czech music in Czechoslovakia, they did not contribute as significantly to the international music scene such as did their predecessor, Janáček, or their younger contemporary, Martinů, already living as an émigré in the United States. The younger generation of composers such as Kabeláč, Jan Hanuš (b. 1915), Klement Slavický (1910 – 1999), and Václav Trojan (1907 – 1983) were turning to a more modern language in their music. However, this promising new direction was soon to be interrupted by the political turnaround in 1948.

A particularly significant composer at this time was Iša Krejčí, who became one of the most important advocates of Neoclassicism in Czechoslovakia. He was able to develop a personal musical language within this style. He modelled his music on a Mozartian idiom with harmonies enriched by dissonances. The melodies were usually straightforward and simple, however they appear very witty and resemble folk music in some ways. Krejčí used classical compositional forms. His compositions were transparent, with a charming character, while the slow movements include meditative and lyrical moods. To his best known compositions belongs his opera Uproar in Efes

---

22 Ibid.
from the German occupation years (1939 – 1943). Even though Krejčí's compositions are known for their witty and light style, he also reflected the tragic moments of his own life in several of his compositions, such as in *Fourteen Variations* based on the folk song *Good Night* for a large orchestra (1952 – 1953), written after the death of his wife.

Another important personality from this time was composer Alois Hába, mentioned above, who after the war was able to continue to teach his microintervallic technique at the Conservatory and Academy of Music in Prague. He had already established the department of compositional studies of the quarter- and sixth-tone systems at the Prague Conservatory in 1922. His compositional output reflects intensive study of the tone materials of the Wallachian and Slovak folk songs, as well as non-European music systems. These studies inspired him to create several microintervallic systems which he used in his own compositions. He also explained his theory of quarter tones in *The harmonic basics of quarter tones' system* (1922), where he included the special notation system for this compositional technique as well. Hába later extended his technique to the sixth- and fifth-tone system and participated in developing concepts and the realisation of special instruments required for his music (quarter – harmonium, piano, trumpet, clarinet, among others). Because of significant technical difficulties in performance, these compositions never became a frequent part of the concert repertory. He had already established the department of compositional studies of the quarter and sixth tone systems at the Prague Conservatory in 1922. He continued this activity after the war at the newly established Music Academy in Prague. Even though he taught many Czech and foreign students (among them Václav Dobiáš, 23

---

1909 - 1978, Jiří Pauer, 1919 – 2007), the quarter tone compositions remained experimental studies for most of his students, and Hába, even though internationally recognized for his novel compositional techniques, is seen as a singular phenomena in twentieth-century music history without his music being played very often.

1948

In February, 1948, a political turnaround occurred which completely and almost immediately changed the situation in the music scene. This turnaround, of course, was the Communist coup. The activities of the previously mentioned Talich Chamber Orchestra were completely restricted and the orchestra was dissolved. Several traditional music periodicals and publishing houses were closed down as well. The Syndicate of Czech Composers experienced changes in its leadership positions. It was renamed the Association of Czechoslovak Composers in 1949, and was explicitly reoriented towards a simplified approach to music. The organization of the Prague Spring Festival was also strongly influenced by these governmental changes, which made it impossible to get well-known progressive compositions from other countries included in the concerts. Absolute conformity was required in exchange for the opportunity to create and perform music. This meant a major regression in the development of contemporary music in Czechoslovakia under the influence of the Zhdanov doctrine in culture.

---

25 Archive of the Czech Music Information Center in Prague.
26 Soviet artistic and literary doctrine. The role of literature and art in Soviet society was redefined in 1932 when the newly created Union of Soviet Writers proclaimed socialist realism as compulsory literary
In the following years, optimistic mass songs, devotional cantatas, and stylistically anachronistic symphonies and chamber music compositions were preferred, and they were prevalent in the musical scene in Czechoslovakia. Composers who followed this path of social realism after 1948 include Dobíáš, Seidl, and Rudolf Kubín (1909 – 1973). Of course, the majority of composers struggled with this social–political situation, which offered only a limited range of possibilities. Many composers were not allowed to perform at all.

Many composers who did not want to compose in the new politically preferred style turned towards the musical language of Neoclassicism. Doing so did not provoke the authorities to the extent that their music would be restricted, and offered at the same time - at least to some extent - an opportunity for personal realization in composition. This also helped to maintain an independent path of national musical culture and a balance between their professional desires and the political expectations (e.g., Krejčí, Viktor Kalabis, 1923-2006). For some composers the situation became unbearable, and several decided to leave their home country and lived elsewhere as emigrés. Prominent among these were Karel Husa (b.1921), Jirák, and Václav Nelhybel (1919 – 1996).
Bohuslav Martinů was already living in the United States; many younger composers, who wanted to study with him, expected his return to his country. However, he did not return to Czechoslovakia because of the Communist government, which was a great loss for the country. Of course, had he returned to the country, he would not have been able to develop and crystallize his personal style, as he did in the United States.

**LATE 1950s TO 1968**

This difficult situation lasted for almost a decade. The political situation was slowly improving at the end of the fifties, and the previous restrictions started loosening up. Several progressive composers and musicians took advantage of the situation (as a second impulse of enthusiasm since the end of World War II). Concerts of new music were organised, new ensembles were formed for new music, and the appearance of articles about new music increased.²⁹ New musical experiments progressed very slowly in Czechoslovakia, but thanks to several composers, as well as artists and musicologists, this music began finding its way in the country.

Around that time, several Czechoslovak composers also became known abroad, and some of their output was composed for international organisations, festivals, or particular ensembles. As an example of these events, Kabeláč, who had already drawn international attention before 1945, composed numerous works for performances outside of Czechoslovakia.³⁰ One of his important international premieres was the performance of the *Osm invenci pro bicí nástroje op.45* (Eight

---

³⁰ Archive of the Czech Music Fund in Prague.
Inventions for Percussion Instruments) in Strasbourg in 1965. This particular composition was written for the percussion ensemble Les Percussions de Strasbourg, with which Kabeláč collaborated in later years, and some of his works were dedicated to this ensemble.

Another valuable aspect of the somewhat relaxed political situation was the possibility for Czech composers to invite foreign composers who were internationally recognized, such as Krzysztof Penderecki (b. 1933) and John Cage (1912 – 1992), to teach and perform in Czechoslovakia. This proved very inspiring, of course, especially for the younger generation of composers. The slowly reemerging freedom also allowed for younger composition students to study abroad with great composers. It was obviously very valuable for young students to study and learn directly from composers whom they had known only theoretically. So, for instance, one of the talented younger composers at that time in Czechoslovakia – Ivana Loudová (b. 1941) – went to Paris, where she studied with Olivier Messiaen and André Jolivet and also had the opportunity to work at the experimental studio Centre Bourdan, attached to ORTF (Radio – Télévision France). Another composer, Pavel Blatný (b. 1931), participated several times at the Festival of New Music in Darmstadt, and received a stipend for one year of study at the Berklee School of Music in Boston. These increasing possibilities motivated and inspired all Czech composers, not just the younger generation, to feel a sense of freedom after the dark decade of the fifties.
ENSEMBLES OF NEW MUSIC – PRAGUE

Composers finally felt free to write music in which they did not have to surpass their ideas or personal style. They were greatly motivated by the fact that their music could be played again by newly founded ensembles, many of which only performed contemporary music (Komorní harmonie, Musica Viva Pragensis, Sonatori di Praga, QUaX). All of these groups contributed significantly to the contemporary music scene in the sixties. The public could now get to know the new international compositional directions, as well as the compositions written in the fifties, which had not been allowed to be performed (such as Stockhausen’s Kreuzspiel which was played in Ostrava in 1961). The music of Czechoslovakian composers active at that time also began to be performed.

An ensemble of brass and woodwinds instruments – Komorní harmonie (Chamber Harmony) – was established in 1959 by the now renowned Czech conductor Libor Pešek. This ensemble successfully presented many contemporary pieces composed for nontraditional instrumental ensemble groups. Later in the sixties, this ensemble began to perform at the Prague Spring Festival, and afterwards made several appearances in Western European Countries, including Austria and Germany.

From the very beginning, this particular ensemble was connected to the composer Jan Klusák (b. 1934), who had already shown his unique talent for composition and his personal touch during his studies at the Prague Academy of

---

Music. He was first influenced by Neoclassicism (as were many others at that time), mainly by the music of Stravinsky and Prokofiev, and by Czech composer Krejčí. Klusák was first attracted to new compositional styles when he heard a performance of Berg's *Wozzeck* in Prague in 1959. He then began to study the music of the Second Viennese School, which was reflected shortly after in several of his compositions by the use of dodecaphony and serialism (*The First Invention* — for chamber orchestra which appeared in Paris in 1963, and *Variations on a Theme of Gustav Mahler*). Later he adopted some principles of aleatoric and minimalism. However, all these new concepts were an inspiration for his own creations, changing and crystallizing his personal style and musical language, rather than being applied as strict theoretical parameters. Klusák represents one of the most important composers of that time in Czechoslovakia. His progressive thinking and composing motivated other composers to follow new voices in contemporary music. His works, however, elicited negative reactions from critics who conformed to the regime. For example:

Je smutné, že mladý a nadaný skladatel tu v honbě za originalitou propaguje reakční sebevražednou filosofii. [...] vždyť se tu působí uměleckými prostředky ke křížení mladých charakterů. (It is sad that a young and talented composer who wants to be original promotes reactionary suicidal philosophy [...] what occurs there is the distortion of young characters by using artistic resources.)

Further, in a letter to Klusák from the music critic V. Felix, Felix writes:

Když jsi dokázal dát tak působivý hudební výraz pocitu samoty, bezvýchodnosti a nesmyslnosti života, jak je možné, že ses dosud

---


neoběsil? (When you were able to express musically in such a compelling way the feeling of loneliness, indeterminateness and the senselessness of being, how is it even possible that you did not hang yourself yet?)

These examples reveal the difficulty for composers wanting to break through with new ideas, and show how conservative and closed were the minds of the majority of critics and audiences. It also demonstrates how people’s thinking was influenced by the years of fear of being punished for agreeing with anything progressive. New music finally began to appear in Czechoslovakia, but much later than in the West. Of course, to accept this new direction and compositional freedom fully was, at first, impossible for the music critics and representatives of cultural life in Czechoslovakia, since for them it seemed wrong to abandon completely older compositional styles and traditions. However, some composers and musicians overcame this fear and, thanks to them, new music and new ideas began to appear in Czechoslovakia.

In 1961 another new group of composers and interpreters was formed at the Music Conservatory in Prague. This group, called Musica Viva Pragensis, started as a chamber wind orchestra founded by flutist and composer Petr Kotík (b. 1942). It was later modified to be an ensemble that performed new music only. This group had been trying to bring new Czech and Western music to the public, and beginning in 1963 it became very successful. The artistic director of this ensemble was the composer Marek Kopelec (b. 1932), who also wrote many pieces for this group. Many other composers and artists interested in new compositional directions associated themselves with this group. Some, such as Zbyněk Vostřák (b. 1920), Vladimír Šrámek (1923 – 2004), and Rudolf Komorous (b. 1931), were later unofficially called Pražská skupina nové hudby.

34 Ibid.
(The Prague New Music Group). Their new musical language was influenced by composers such as John Cage. In particular Cage’s concert in Prague in 1964 – which included Merce Cunningham, Robert Rauschenberg, and David Tudor, with the assistance of Musica Viva Pragensis – was very influential and inspiring for the Czech composers. Not surprisingly, this was rather a shocking performance for the authorities.³⁵

Several other ensembles for new music were established, many of which presented Czech contemporary music at international festivals such as in Warsaw, Darmstadt, Graz, Donaueschingen, and Venice. They included the ensemble Sonatorí di Praga, founded by the composer Ladislav Simon (b. 1929) in 1963, and the QUAx Ensemble from 1966 established by Kotík (who later immigrated to the United States and founded the internationally renowned ensemble for new music S.E.M. Ensemble in 1970). Another new group was the chamber group Due Boemi, founded by the bass clarinetist Josef Horák (b. 1931) in 1963. Together with the pianist Emma Kovárnová, Due Boemi presented contemporary music in numerous concerts in Czechoslovakia and abroad, some written by Horák, as well as compositions from international composers (Henri Pousseur, Sofia Gubaydulina and Anestis Logothetis) written particularly for their unusual ensemble.

Another chamber music group that contributed to the performance of contemporary Czech composers mainly abroad was the Novák Quartet, founded in 1955. Even though the Novák Quartet was not an ensemble for new music, it

performed new compositions by Czech contemporary composers. Because of their international career, they were able to present many premieres of recent Czechoslovak works. One of numerous examples is the Third String Quartet by Kopelent, performed the first time at the ISCM Festival in Stockholm in 1966.

**BRNO**

Even though Prague was at that time (as well as historically) considered to be the center of musical events, there were circles of musicians, composers and musicologists in other cities who strongly contributed to the contemporary music scene and were sometimes even more active than the music circle in Prague. One of the main centers was the Moravian city of Brno. A group of composers and musicologists gathered together and established a society called Skupina A (The Group A) in 1963 (composers: Alois Piňos, b. 1925; Josef Berg, 1927 – 1971; Miloslav Ištvan, 1928 – 1990; Jan Novák, 1921 – 1984; and Zdeněk Pololáník, b. 1935; musicologists: Milena Černohorská and František Hrabal). It is important to understand that the entire music scene at that time was controlled by the very conservative Svaz Československých skladatelů (The Association of Czechoslovak Composers). Music was considered the most conservative field among other arts - theater, literature and visual arts - so founding a group like Skupina A was a very brave step towards artistic freedom under the communist regime. Skupina A made the effort to present concerts with contemporary music from the West, which until then was very little known in

---

Czechoslovakia, together with the presentation of new compositions by the Group A composers. They also tried to combine all art fields together in multimedia creations.

One of the important personalities of this group was the composer Alois Piňos. His compositional style was initially based on the traditional school implying Moravian folklore, but he soon began to be interested in new tendencies in music. Having the opportunity to participate in international new music festivals in Darmstadt and Munich, as well as in courses of electronic and *musique concrete* in Prague, he first applied his newly gained knowledge to his shorter compositions. Satisfied with the progress of his new musical language, he turned towards bigger musical forms. At that time he had the idea of a team-work composition. He followed up on this idea and founded in 1967 the so-called Kompoziční tým Brno (The Composing Team of Brno) together with three other composers Arnošt Parsch (b. 1936), Rudolf Růžička (b. 1941) and Miloš Štědroň (b. 1942).[^37] They worked together for seven years composing solo, chamber, vocal and orchestra compositions. They were interested not only in electro-acoustic music but also in multimedia creations which at that time were rare and, of course, in conflict with the regime. Piňos also founded an orchestra called Studio Autorů (The Studio of Authors), which specialized in performances and interpretations of contemporary music.

In 1968 the Russians sent troops to quell the political rebellion in Prague.[^38] The impact on the development of new music was only partial, and slow, at first. The Kompoziční tým presented their works at concerts called Expozice experimentální

hudby (The Exposition of Experimental Music) in Brno, together with contemporary music from the West. The first of these was in April 1969. This concert evoked a lot of interest among the general public, and other composers interested in new music developments, as well as among music critics. These events were a very important impulse for a new phase of music in Czechoslovakia, but were soon interrupted by the political reversal that had occurred in August 1968. The group Skupina A, and their concerts Expozice experimentální hudby, were forbidden by the new regime. Their music was hardly ever played on the radio and was never recorded. Piños is considered as one of the most important composers for the new music developments in the sixties in Czechoslovakia because he set several precedents: he created an orchestra composition with the use of magnetophone tape (Concerto for Orchestra and Magnetophone Tape, 1964), together with his colleges, he made several teamwork compositions between the years 1969-1971, and he also made the first audiovisual creation together with Dalibor Chatrný (b. 1925) - a trilogy - Statická kompozice, Mříže, Geneze, 1970.

**LITERARY ACTIVITIES**

In the late Fifties and early Sixties there was significant relaxation of control over literary output in Czechoslovakia. In January 1961, a series of articles discussing new directions in music was allowed to be published in the newspaper Literární noviny (Literary News). Shortly after this, a committee of music experts was established, whose goal was to objectively review the importance and/or usefulness of the new experimental music, and further to offer an expert and explicit judgment. The most significant writers about experimental music were Dr. Eduard Herzog (1916-1997) and
Vladimír Lébl (1928-1987). They contributed many articles to the major music periodicals of that time – Hudební rozhledy (1948-present) and Opus musicum (1969 – present) which then slowly began to allow presentations about new music without strict censorship.\(^{39}\) However, these positive and growing activities were, even then, sometimes countered with opposite and retrograde actions. A great example of this situation is the appearance of the book Současná hudba na Západě (The Contemporary Music of the West) by Jaromír Podešva (b. 1927) in 1963.\(^{40}\) It gave not only a completely false report on new developments in the music of the west; it also made many of these new experiments in music appear to be totally ridiculous.

**ELECTRONIC MUSIC**

A more radical approach to composition in the years 1958 to 1964 began with the unconventional activities of several composers including Kabeláč, Luboš Fišer (1935 – 1999), Klusák, Vostřák, Jan Rychlík (1916 – 1964), Kopelet, Berg, Piños, Ištván, to name but a few. This group of composers tried to express artistically convincing statements with the use of new musical language and to distinguish themselves and their compositional creations from the government’s preferred styles, such as socialist realism, music based on folk tunes, or the even older compositional tradition.

In the early years of the 60’s, many composers were aware of the existence of electronic music. In fact, some of them had already used this new technique. The very

---

\(^{39}\) Archive of the Czech Music Information Center in Prague.

first electronic studio was established in 1960 in Bratislava (the capital of the Slovak part of the country) on the grounds of the National Slovak Television. Four years later, an electronic studio was established in the Czech part of the country, though not in Prague but in Plzeň (Pilsen), at the Radio Plzeň. However, this studio was not open for everyone, and composers had to carefully think about their ideas so they could still offer sufficiently socialist projects.\footnote{Kabeláč, Miloslav. “Práce na elektroakustické skladbě (The Creation of Electro-acoustic Compositions),” \textit{Hudební věda}, vol. IV, Praha: Nakladatelství AV ČR, 1999; Lébl, Vladimír. \textit{Elektronická hudba (Electronic Music)}. Praha: Státní hudební vydavatelství, 1966.}

One of the main figures in electronic music in Czechoslovakia was Eduard Herzog, who was a musicologist, composer, music editor, translator, and recording engineer, among other things. He was able to make contacts with important centers of electronic music in Paris, Utrecht, Cologne, and others on a more official level. Together with Kabeláč, Lébl and Bohumil Čipera (1920 – 1993), he presented several seminars of electronic music held in Plzeň and in Prague.\footnote{Herzog, Eduard. “Skladatel ve zvukové laboratoři (The Composer in the Sound Laboratory),” \textit{Hudební věda}, vol. II-III, Praha: Nakladatelství AV ČR, 1999.} He also organized concerts of electronic music, which he always introduced with detailed analysis for the audience. Composers tried to pick up on what was happening in electro-acoustic music internationally, at its centers in Paris, Cologne, United States, Italy or Warsaw. The Warsaw studio was the first established in the Eastern Bloc, in 1957. Other electronic studios followed in Ostrava in 1966 and at the Czechoslovak Radio in Prague in 1968. This studio, however, was never successfully completed there.
FROM 1968 TO THE EARLY 1980s

The political reversal in August 1968 and the beginning of “Normalization” meant difficult times for the musical and artistic scenes of Czechoslovakia. After reaching the high point of artistic freedom at the beginning of 1968, the new political situation dramatically influenced the artistic scene. Since music was at first not the primary field designated for destruction by the renewed authoritarian ideals of the Communist regime, it was possible for a short period of time to present compositions written in reflection of the political events. These usually were presented under different, less controversial names, so that the censors would not catch on.

However, at the beginning of the Seventies activities in the music scene were significantly affected by the new political enforcement. All the new music ensembles were restricted from performing and therefore dissolved, such as the ensemble Musica Viva Pragensis, the Brno concerts of new music Expozice experimentální hudby, the new music composer’s groups (Skupina A), and many others. The reaction of the composers was similar to that after the year 1948, when the Communist Party had taken over. Some musicians again chose emigration as one of their options. For instance, this was the choice of the composer Jan Novák (1921 – 1984). Others turned to the more politically preferred compositional styles, which meant once again music composed either in the old traditional style or in keeping with the Zhdanov dogmas, which, for a brief period, had been possible to avoid.

Many composers’ activities were prohibited, mainly for their anti-communist political attitude. These anti-communist feelings could be made public in many ways:

---

43 In the history of Czechoslovakia, Normalization is a name commonly given to the period from 1969 to about 1987. It was characterized by initial restoration of the conditions prevailing before the reform period led by Alexander Dubček (1963/1967 - 1968) and subsequent preservation of this new status quo.
directly by expressing them in music or in publications or by signing one of the anti-regime documents, or indirectly by writing music to anti-regime movies (Klusák). Composers who had had activities in the West before 1968 (Zdeněk Lukáš, 1928 - 2007) also found themselves in trouble, as did those who expressed their progressive ideas by organizing concerts of new and experimental music, or by founding new music ensembles. After August 1968, these composers’ works were not performed or recorded. Among these were Kabeláč, Kopelent, and Klusák. The immediate loss of their current employments forced some to move into smaller cities, where they were not too visible to the authorities. Others took mediocre jobs to support themselves. For instance, Kopelent was released from the position of Director of the publishing house Supraphone and served as an accompanist at the ballet department at a small music school in Radotín from 1976 until 1991.

However, despite these unfortunate circumstances, many composers kept writing even without any hope of performance in Czechoslovakia. Their output reflects the social-political events, as well as the human frustration with the darkness and hopelessness, of this new unhappy period in the country. Inner indignation, the presence of moral values, a certain seriousness and severity, as well as emptiness, characterize the compositions of the time from the beginning of the Normalization until the beginning of the eighties, when the regime began to weaken again. (Kabeláč – Symphony No. 8, 1970, Eben – Vox Clamantis, 1969). Czech composers living in other countries reacted as well to the political events of Czechoslovakia, such as Nelhýbel – Cantata Sine nomine, Alleluia – Amen, 1968, and Husa – Music for Prague, 1968.
Even though the artistic activities of most composers were restricted during the period of Normalization in Czechoslovakia, several were able at least to keep in touch with their previously established international contacts and received several international commissions for new compositions. Kabeláč, for instance, wrote his eighth symphony for the international music festival in Strasbourg. This concert was organized in homage to Kabeláč by his friend and organizer of the festival, Paul Nardin. What was interesting about this premiere was not only the fact that Kabeláč could not attend the concert because of his political status, but also the technical occurrences connected to the concert.\textsuperscript{44} The performance featured two Czech artists: the singer Jana Jonášová and the organist Václav Rabas. They had rehearsed with Kabeláč (still in Prague), where they worked together on technical aspects of the performance planned in Strasbourg. Even though the members of the percussion section knew Kabeláč’s music (he wrote the \textit{Inventions} for them), Jonášová and Rabas had to carry Kabeláč’s performance instructions and ideas to them. Thus, by refusing to allow composers to leave the country, the regime had a negative impact on the individual lives of Western artists, as well.

\begin{center}
COMPOSER OF IMPORTANCE
\end{center}

The detailed description of the progressive composers of the sixties, their activities as well as their political and social situation during the Normalization, might suggest that music other than that allowed by the regime was not composed after 1968, or that this music does not have any importance in the Czech music of the twentieth

century. This, of course, is not true. Many composers contributed to Czech musical culture. Their music was based, however, on the older Czech compositional school in musical form and was very often influenced by the explicit nationally-characteristic music by Janáček or Martinů. Not only following the political return to strict authoritarianism after 1968, but since the end of the war in 1945, there had been composers with compositional tendencies of continuity to the past, though their style and musical language reflected new developments in music and eventually crystallized into individual and personal styles. One of the most important composers of this group is Viktor Kalabis. Even though his style was never influenced by social realism, he did not tend to new experimental styles either. His musical language was first influenced by Hindemith, Stravinsky, Prokofiev, Honegger, and to a certain extent by Bartok, as well. He also drew from the styles of Janáček and Martinů, mainly the ideas of folk-song transformations in modern music. He preferred traditional forms in his compositions, such as sonata form, which he used in chamber music, as well as in a symphony. He saw music as an opportunity to experience all sides of life, especially the ones not experienced in daily life. For him, this is an intuitive experience, rather than an analytic one, where life is perceived as a whole. Kalabis’ output is tremendous and his compositions are played frequently in the Czech Republic, as well as abroad.

LAST DECADE OF COMMUNISM BEFORE 1989

Similarly to the sixties, the beginning of the Eighties meant the weakening of the regime and with it another wave of brave movement against it. The slow but certain build-up of awareness among the general public that the communist regime would not have a very long duration, and the feel of the unstoppable breakdown of the system
allowed the politically ostracized composers to be played again. Their music slowly began to appear in the programs of music concerts in the middle of the Eighties. This of course did not occur very frequently and was possible only by the continuous decrease of the power of the regime and also with the help of people who were involved in the concert organizations and were supportive of these composers. A great example is the composition Čechům, 1984 - 1985 (To the Czech People), a vocal composition for male chorus by Jan Klusák, who expressed his beliefs and assurance of the need of human freedom.

The Svaz českolovenských skladatelů (The Union of Czechoslovak Composers) was led by new representatives after 1968. All of its activities were under strict control of the regime. Even though the Union organized concerts of contemporary music, such as the regular concert series Hudební středy (Musical Wednesdays) or the festival Dny nové hudby (The Days of New Music), the compositions performed at these events were only from the so-called official composers, members of the Union. Other composers, mainly those whose activities were restricted after 1968, had no chance of a presentation. It is therefore important to mention the ensemble Agon and their activities, which was founded in 1983 by younger progressive composers Petr Kofroň (b. 1955), Miroslav Pudlák (b. 1961) and Martin Smolka (b. 1959). This was the only independent ensemble that dared to play contemporary music, which could not be heard anywhere else in the country. They focused on performances of composers

46 Such as Kopeleň and Klusák.
47 Kofroň, Petr. Tón ne! (No Tone!). Brno: Host, 1998.
from the West, as well as pieces written by forbidden composers, and also on compositions of the younger generation of composers, including their own creations. This brave activity was, of course, very disturbing to the hegemony of the Union, but because the system was already weakening, this ensemble was ignored and therefore allowed to exist.

Thus if we look back on Czech music history after World War II, we see two long periods of relative openness interspersed with two long phases of tighter governmental control. This wave-like pattern corresponds to the waxing and waning of the power of the Russian-controlled Communist government. As government power diminished, tolerance for new ideas, and the freedom to present them, grew. When government power was strong or resurgent, the ability to create and present new ideas was restricted.

**JAN KLUSÁK**

Jan Klusák was one of several composers whose activities were heavily repressed by the regime after 1968.48 The main reason for this cannot be seen as the result of only one particular anti-regime act. In the lives of musicians there were usually several interacting factors that led to a complete shutdown. In the case of Klusák, he first provoked the prevailing authority with his music. His new orientation in composition was obviously influenced by music from “enemy” Western countries. Despite immediate strong criticism, however, he and a few other composers were tolerated by the regime at that time mainly because of the major erosions in the power

---

of the regime and the increasing permanent crises within it. This led to a certain degree of political looseness at the beginning of the sixties. Klusák’s provocative activities expanded over the years, however. In the sixties, he began writing music for theater and movies, in which he sometimes acted, as well. Some of the movies were also oriented against the regime, such as the movie *O slavnosti a hostech* (About the Feast and Guests) directed by Jan Němec. All of these activities accumulated, and after the next political crisis in 1968, led to a great diminution of Klusák’s activities. The movie *O slavnosti a hostech* was officially banned after 1968. However, these facts did not stop Klusák from writing during the next two decades, leading up to the Velvet Revolution in 1989. In the eighties, the last decade of the communist regime, Klusák’s compositions were sometimes included in the programs of the music scene in Czechoslovakia. This was possible only because the regime was, again, slowly losing its authoritarian control.
Chapter III

MUSIC IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC
AFTER 1989

The fall of the communist regime in Czechoslovakia in 1989 meant freedom of thought; creative freedom; opportunities to travel outside of the country, to places where new music was being created; the possibility for study abroad, including the opportunity to learn from renowned international composers; and the possibility of attending festivals and to be exposed to both contemporary music and older music that had been prohibited. Such a broad and rapid expansion of opportunities to experience "new" music led to equally broad and rapid changes in the dynamics of the music world in Czechoslovakia.

COMPOSERS AND THEIR NEW MUSIC ENSEMBLES

The contemporary music world in the Czech Republic is quite varied. This, of course, includes what is called entertainment or popular music. Musical life in the Czech Republic is massively influenced by popular music, which itself is divided into many subcategories. In addition to popular music, the intent of which is mainly to provide entertainment and enjoyment, there is also classical music, sometimes referred to in the Czech Republic as serious music, or concert music. It is regularly presented in its traditional fashion in the programs of symphonic orchestras, opera houses or chamber ensembles. Classical music is fairly well known among the general public. In contrast, contemporary music, which is still generally excluded from the programs of major concert halls, is practically unknown among the public at large. Most people would not be able to name even one contemporary composer.
The situation of contemporary music today as a part of social life is rather sad. It is certainly not an exaggeration to say that contemporary music in the Czech Republic, as a part of what is called classical music, falls into a separate subcategory, is not very popular and is, in fact, often ignored. Composers in modern times sometimes seem to write mainly because of their own inner need and perhaps with thoughts to the future rather than for their immediate environment. Large symphonies, cantatas, or even operas usually have little chance of being performed unless the particular composition is directly commissioned by an ensemble. If new compositions are played at all, they are usually of interest only to a limited circle of listeners. It is therefore not too surprising that composers of contemporary music began to look for a solution to this challenge.

After 1989, several composers founded their own chamber music ensembles for the purpose of presenting their own compositions alongside pieces written by other Czech or international composers. The creation of these chamber music ensembles had several positive aspects; chief among them was that they developed a creative environment between composers and artists inside the group, which increased their repertoire and started to acquaint the public with the newest musical trends.

GENERAL CONDITIONS FOR MUSIC AFTER 1989

Unfortunately, these new ensembles could not support themselves and would no longer exist without financial support from others. There were several important changes in the organization of music after 1989 which is important to discuss to fully understand these new developments.
The year 1989 ended the all-powerful supremacy of the Svaz československých skladatelů a koncertních umělců (The Union of Czechoslovak Composers and Artists), which determined among other things, which music would be played and which would not. The successor of this union was the Asociace hudebních umělců a vědců (The Association of Concert Artists and Musicologists), which was founded in 1990 and which did not have such a monopolistic status. Other new artistic associations and private foundations were established as well. In 1993 the government created the Státní fond kultury (The State Cultural Fund). This functioned only for a short period of time and was later replaced by a newly created system of governmental support of professional arts in the form of projects granted by the Ministry of Culture. Also in 1993 the Nadace Český hudební fond (The Foundation of Czech Music Fund) was founded, which contributed to musical developments by supporting many interesting projects. From the mid nineties the activities of the Hudební nadace OSA (The Music Foundation OSA) contributed significantly to contemporary music by supporting several interesting new projects. These changes in economic backing and support greatly influenced the creation of new professional music ensembles.

After 1989 several composers’ societies were established, which have organized festivals of contemporary music. Many members of the Asociace hudebních umělců became members and leaders of the Společnost pro elektroakustickou hudbu (The Association of Electro-Acoustic Music) and the Společnost skladatelů (The Association of Composers), which was renamed in May, 1998 the Společnost českých skladatelů (Association of Czech Composers). The Association of Czech Composers regularly organizes the festival Dny soudobé hudby (The Days of Contemporary Music), which
continues the tradition of Týdny nové tvorby (The Weeks of New Creations) which was established before the period of Normalization.

Another association was reestablished after 1989 – the association Přítomnost (Presence). This association had originally been founded during the first Republic of Czechoslovakia, in 1924. During the nineties, several other specialized festivals were created, such as Třídení plus (Three Days’ Plus), Maratón soudobé hudby (The Marathon of Contemporary Music) and the Expozice nové hudby (The Exposition of Contemporary Music) in Brno. There were also separate concerts organized by newly established Societies (Ateliér 90), or reestablished associations (Přítomnost, Umělecká beseda). A combination of an ensemble of contemporary music and a union of composers occurred with the establishment of the union Ateliér 90. The composer Marek Kopelent founded this society in 1990. Still in existence, it is a union that associates composers, artists, and musicologists who are oriented towards nontraditional contemporary music output. The main goals of the association are to promote open artistic expression and current musical trends. Since 1993, Ateliér 90 has organized the festival called Dvoudení, and later Třídení (Two- and Three Days Festival). Many compositions written either by members of the society or by avant-garde composers of the twentieth century have been presented at these festivals. The festivals cooperate closely with some of the chamber music ensembles established after 1989, such as Agon, Mondschein and Resonance, as well as the group ArtN.

**HISTORICAL CONTENT**

Interestingly, there is a certain correspondence between the contemporary music ensembles of the sixties and the nineties. Because of the Communist regime’s
weakening loyalty to Moscow during the sixties, the artists in Czechoslovakia experienced relative freedom from interference by the government. It was again possible to reestablish a connection to the West and learn about the current European styles and trends, which until then were practically unknown. In music, this was the first contact Czech composers had with the European avant-garde, the so-called New Music, and its compositional techniques.

This music was the focus of the newly established composers’ union Pražská skupina Nové hudby (The Prague New Music Group), together with its ensemble Musica Viva Pragensis (this ensemble was created by the members of the union). Ateliér 90 is the nineties equivalent to the union, and is even today connected with the Prague New Music Group personally through the composer Marek Kopelent. He was the artistic director of Musica Viva Pragensis and is the founder of Ateliér 90. Both groups are ideologically very similar as well. The Prague New Music Group tried to introduce both the classics and contemporary international composers to the public. They hoped that this would provoke Czech contemporary composers to write new creations, which could be then performed by the ensemble. Ateliér 90 proclaimed that the importance of their activities was in creative freedom as well as the output and support of unconventional and contemporary styles. These statements show the ideological parallel between the two groups.

Besides the Prague New Music Group and the ensemble Musica Viva Pragensis, several other groups were established during the sixties, including the Chamber Harmony, the Novák Quartet, and Sonatori di Praga. The chamber music group Due Boemi di Praga contributed greatly to the contemporary music scene in Czechoslovakia.
Beginning in the sixties these groups focused on compositions from the younger generation of composers. Ensembles like Musica Viva Pragensis and Chamber Harmony were based on the activities of several multitalented personalities, who managed the organization of the ensemble, and acted as performers in the group, as well as wrote new compositions for the ensemble. This aspect is also true of the ensembles of contemporary music that were established thirty years later. Musica Viva Pragensis was closely connected to the composers Marek Kopelec, Zbyněk Vostřák, Rudolf Komorous, while Jan Klusák was the pivotal composer for the ensemble Chamber Harmony. After the political crisis of 1968, all these ensembles were eventually suppressed. During the period of Normalization in the seventies and most of the eighties, the Svaz českolovenských skladatelů a koncertních umělců (The Union of Czechoslovak Composers and Concert Artists) had a tight monopoly in Czechoslovakia. Even though it regularly organized festivals of contemporary music such as Týdny nové hudby (The Weeks of New Creations) or the so-called Hudební středy (The Musical Wednesdays), only the compositions from the members of the union (the so called official composers) were performed at these festivals. Nonmembers’ works could never be played. The hegemony of the composers’ union was disturbed only in the eighties, when the Agon Orchestra was established. This ensemble focused on contemporary music, which could not be heard anywhere else in the country. This was, of course, against the official music culture policy.
THE ENSEMBLES OF CONTEMPORARY MUSIC AFTER 1989

There are six main characteristics common for many of the contemporary music ensembles created after 1989.

1. Many ensembles were created around a particular and narrow circle of composers and artists. Some of these were established under the initiative of the same personalities who were active in the sixties. In this category belong the composers Miroslav Pudlák, who helped establish Agon, Moens and WNP. Another composer, Michal Nejtek, should be mentioned here. He and Pudlák together founded the ensemble Why Not Patterns. He was also active as an artist and composer in the ensembles Agon and Tuning Metronomes. The composer Michal Trnka initiated two groups. The first was the previously mentioned Tuning Metronomes, which continued the activity of the ensemble Early Reflections. A female composer, Sylva Smejkalová, (now Stejskalová) is in a member of both of these ensembles. Vlastislav Matoušek was instrumental in the founding of the ensemble 108 Hz, which performed many of his compositions. However other ensembles, Agon and Mondschein, also presented his work. Another composer Petr Pokorný was the major actor in the group Resonance, but as in Matoušek’s case, the ensembles Agon and Mondschein also performed his compositions.

2. The ensembles focus on presentation of compositions by their members-composers. These are usually premieres.

3. A strong connection between the composers and performers is established in these ensembles. Many times the composers themselves are the performers.
4. The ensembles attempt to make a distinction in repertoire from other groups. The main idea is to support the younger generation of composers and to focus on their new creations.

5. All the groups present themselves as chamber ensembles. They vary the selection of instruments to correspond to the particular requirements of the composition being presented.

6. All ensembles predominantly present music of the second half of the twentieth century, as well as rarely or not at all performed compositions from the same period.

Following is a discussion of the individual ensembles and their particular profiles:

**Agon**

The composers Petr Kofroň, Miroslav Pudlák and Martin Smolka established the ensemble *Agon* in 1983. The group focuses on compositions from contemporary composers of the younger generation, who are connected to each other by the idea of Postmodernism. However the ensemble also performs compositions from the Czech avant-garde (Kabeláč, Komorous, Klusák, Kopeleń and Vostřák). At concerts within the Czech Republic, the ensemble includes various compositions by contemporary international composers.

**Mondschein Ensemble (MoEns)**

Miroslav Pudlák and Kamil Doležal founded the group Mondschein Ensemble in 1995. Their original idea was to create an ensemble that would bring artists and composers involved in new music closer together. The group focuses on performing
new Czech music, compositions by young composers – known and unknown - as well as on new international music. The group is not oriented towards one particular style. It works with a wide creative spectrum.

**ArtN**

This is a society of young professional artists, mainly graduates of various programs in Fine Arts in Czech Universities. The composer Roman Z. Novák founded it in 1997. These artists represent the areas of contemporary music, acting, narrating, modern dance and the visual arts. The main idea of this society is to combine and connect all art categories together and search for new possibilities of common communication. This group also cooperates with deaf artists, mainly with the professional group VDN - Výchovná dramatika neslyšících (Dramatical Education of Deaf People).

**Resonance**

Michal Macourek, Petr Pokorný and Monika Knoblochová founded Resonance in 1998. This group would like to liberate contemporary music of long lasting traditional clichés, which do not respect the demands of new styles. They focus on music that is represented by a clear musical expression. Resonance searches for new musical qualities, which sufficiently reflect the composers’ ideas of their sonorities.

**Ensemble 108 Hz**

Martin Cikánek, Petr Bakla and Vlastislav Matoušek founded this ensemble in 2001. They support what they call artificial music. This was music that was considered for various reasons to be too unconventional, experimental or non-standard and was therefore hardly ever played in regular concerts.
Tuning Metronomes

The young composer Michal Trnka founded the ensemble Tuning Metronomes in 2001. Trnka and his friends and associates could no longer accept the fact that the contemporary music pieces heard in most concerts were often creations from music theory and history teachers of the various Czech music institutions, and were often not very original. They felt as well that compositions of young composers were ignored and given minimal financial support.

Why Not Patterns

The ensemble Why Not Patterns was founded in 2002 by the composers Miroslav Pudlík, Kamil Doležal and Michal Nejtek. They focus on compositions that are based on different types of realization, where one instrument is usually the leader and the others react on the given signals and impulses of the leading instrument. They see their music as compositions in real time rather than improvisations. Their music is oriented towards minimalism creating interesting musical constructions, sometimes using very simple polymelodies. They consider their music to well represent contemporary music, sometimes underlined with a somewhat brutal rock sound.

Konvergence

Tomáš Pálka, Ondřej Štochl and Martin Pallas, established Konvergence in 2002. Their activities focus on performances of compositions by the younger generation, either the creations of the members of their ensemble or younger international composers. They also include in their concerts compositions by the older generation which are rarely played or were not presented at all previously.
Early Reflections

The young composers Michal Trnka and Sylva Stejskalová founded this ensemble in 2003. The name of their ensemble derives from the acoustical term early reflections – the very first bounce/reflection of the sound from recording music. This is the basic idea for their ensemble. They search for the first reactions, the first or the quickest feedback to new music.

THE ENSEMBLES’ REPERTOIRE

Czech Composers

It is obvious that most of the above ensembles are oriented towards the compositions of their own artists/composers and other Czech contemporary composers. To these groups belong Resonance, 108 Hz and Why Not Patterns. Other ensembles present a balance between Czech and international composers. However, of the Czech compositions, those from the members or founders of the ensemble are usually preferred. Even though these ensembles focus on the younger generation of Czech composers, a large part of their repertoire also consists of material from the authors of the Czech New Music from the sixties. The ensemble Agon was perhaps the most active in presenting these composers’ works. The most-played composers from this era are Marek Kopelet (ArtN, MoEns, Tuning Metronomes, and Early Reflections) and Zbyněk Vostřák (Agon, 108 Hz, and MoEns). The ensembles Agon and Resonance were perhaps the most active in presenting the compositions of other Czech contemporary composers. From the younger generation of composers the most-played authors are Peter Graham (Agon, MoEns, Resonance, and Early Reflections), Michal
Nejtek (Agon, MoEns, Tuning Metronomes, and Why Not Patterns), Martin Marek (Resonance, MoEns) and Josef Adamík (Agon, MoEns, and Resonance). The output of other composers, such as Miroslav Pudláč, Vlastislav Matoušek and Hanuš Bartoň, was performed by several of these ensembles, not only by the groups they helped found. Certain ensembles focus on the presentation of wider repertoire (Agon, MoEns, Tuning Metronomes and Early Reflections), while others prefer one particular style/set of composers. So, for instance, the ensembles 108 Hz and Why Not Patterns are oriented towards conceptual music, while the group ArtN and, to a certain extent, Resonance present multimedia creations. The ensemble Konvergence is predominantly oriented towards meditative and timbral music.

**International Composers**

Even though many ensembles focus on the performances of Czech contemporary composers, composers from the international contemporary music scene also form a considerable part of these ensembles’ repertoire. Several ensembles presented the music by Philip Glass, Steve Reich, Terry Riley, and John Adams. Other international composers are represented in the repertoire of these ensembles - mainly the composers John Zorn, Elliott Sharp, Norman Yamada, Annie Gosfield and Anthony Coleman, Michael Gordon, David Lang and Evan Ziporyn. The music of John Cage is also still very often included in their programs. From the avant-garde composers, the compositions by Giacinto Scelsi, Iannis Xenakis, Morton Feldman, György Ligeti and György Kurtág are often played. Composers such as Karlheinz Stockhausen, Krzysztof Penderecki, Witold Lutosławsky, Luciano Berio, Arvo Pärt, Anestis Logothetis or
Henry Goebbels are played only very sporadically, and the ensembles' repertoire usually include no more than two pieces by each of these composers. The ensembles Tuning Metronomes and Early Reflections performed several compositions by the composer Alfred Schnittke. Mauricio Kagel's music was repeatedly included in the concerts of MoEns and Early Reflections. Some composers' music was only performed by one particular ensemble - for instance, Gerald Resch and Ališer Sijarić. The contemporary music ensembles also perform the compositions of composers who were until now unknown in the Czech Republic, such as music by Michael de Roo, Pierre-André Bovey, Harrison Birtwistle, Andrea Sodomka, Maral Yakshieva, Nenad Firšt and others.

Many ensembles began again to include music from the first half of the twentieth century by composers such as Igor Stravinsky, Paul Hindemith, Anton Webern, Dmitri Shostakovich, Claude Debussy, Alban Berg, Jacques Ibert, Arnold Schönberg, Béla Bartók, Paul Hindemith, Aaron Copland, Ernst Křenek, Charles Ives and many others. It is somewhat surprising that compositions by two very important composers of the 20th century – Olivier Messiaen and Pierre Boulez - are almost completely overlooked by these ensembles.

The purpose of these ensembles' activities is clear. They make efforts to present contemporary music by Czech and international composers to the public. However they have a small footprint in the concert realm as a whole. The music they present is of interest to an extremely small percentage of the population, and as such they have limited social impact. Because of these difficulties, their concert activities are usually attended by small circles of listeners – their colleagues, critics, friends, other artists and
enthusiastic individuals. However, there are positive aspects to be seen as well. The
time period after 1989 has witnessed the greatest expansion of the category of
contemporary music in the Czech Republic. For the first time there are many
ensembles interested in contemporary music. It is therefore possible to start a new
tradition, to which other composers and ensembles will be able to come back and
reconnect with in the future. This will give the basis and opportunity for further
transformations in the musical repertoire and in interpretation.

**MAJOR CONTEMPORARY MUSIC FESTIVALS AND ENSEMBLES**

**Ostrava Center for New Music** (OCNM)

The composer Petr Kotík initiated the Ostrava Center for New Music (OCNM)
in 1999 because of a series of performances of the music of Earle Brown, John Cage,
Alvin Lucier, Pauline Oliveros, Martin Smolka and Karlheinz Stockhausen with the
Janáček Philharmonic Orchestra. The impetus behind the formation of OCNM was to
produce the festival Ostravské dny (Ostrava Days) – a summer institute and festival
which gives emerging composers, performers and musicologists an opportunity to work
with leading personalities of contemporary music. Ostravské dny is a working and
learning environment focusing on compositions for orchestra. OCNM also produces
concerts and publications related to new music.

**Ostravská banda**

Formed in August 2005, the international chamber orchestra Ostravská banda
consists of young musicians from two continents whose primary interest is the
performance of new music. The current repertoire of Ostravská banda includes
masterpieces from the 20th Century, as well as compositions by the younger generation
of composers. The focus of the repertoire is to put current music by composers from both continents into the context of today’s music world.

Ostravská banda members are drawn primarily from the Czech Republic, Germany and other European countries with additional musicians from United States. Principal conductors are Petr Kotík (New York) and Roland Kluttig (Berlin). The core instrumentation of OB includes 23 players. This group may be reduced or expanded, according to the requirements of the compositions they perform.

Besides its residency at the biennial Ostrava Days, Ostravská banda organizes several concerts and workshops throughout the concert season. The experience of working with composers at the Ostrava Days makes Ostravská banda ideal for championing the music by emerging composers from Eastern and Western Europe, as well as from the U.S.

Komorní orchestr Berg (Berg Chamber Orchestra)

A young conductor Peter Vrábel, who to this day remains the conductor and artistic director of this orchestra, founded Berg Chamber Orchestra in 1995. The orchestra’s repertoire puts emphasis on music from the twentieth century as well as on current contemporary music. Even though they have premiered many compositions by young Czech composers, their repertoire includes internationally recognized composers of contemporary music. The orchestra helps create new values and invests into the future of music and arts. It is an important contributor to the scene of contemporary music in the Czech Republic.
Expozice nové hudby (The Exposition of New Music)

The Exposition is an international festival of contemporary music. Its history goes back to the years 1969 and 1970, when the festival was founded by progressive Brno composers from the association Group A (described in detail in the previous chapter). This festival was reestablished in 1993, and has taken place annually since then. The programming of the festival tries to encompass a very wide spectrum of contemporary music. It presents a combination of important composers of the music of the twentieth century (Czech and international) with excellent professional artists. Additionally, it strives to support the national output of Czech composers, and at the same time to provide an opportunity for the presentation of the works of the younger generation of composers. The structure of the festival attempts to show connections between the past and present on a large scale, thus giving the public the chance for making comparisons.

International Music Festival Forfest

Introduced in the early 1990, Forfest, the International Festival of Contemporary Arts with Spiritual Orientation, is organized under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic and the Olomouc Archbishopric. Every year, the festival offers a wealth of interesting exhibitions and musical projects. Prepared by Czech, as well as foreign performers, they are held in the attractive ambience of the Archbishop’s Palace and the churches of Kroměříž. The organizers strive to revive traditional values in art and ensure communication between different religions and cultures.
IMPORTANT PERIODICALS

Articles about, or criticism of, musical events appear very rarely in regular newspapers. Contemporary music is mentioned even less often. There are, however, several important music periodicals that contribute many interesting discussions of important musical events and keep readers informed about the classic music scene in the Czech Republic as well as internationally.

_Hudební rozhledy_ (Music Views/Prospects)

_Hudební rozhledy_ is the oldest monthly music periodical in the Czech Republic. It has appeared without interruption since 1948. However, because it was considered the official music periodical during the communist era, much of the criticism and many of the articles about musical events from that time were not always presented objectively. Today its main goal is to inform music professionals and the general public about important classical music events occurring in the Czech Republic, as well as, selectively, some happening abroad. It reports on new compositional directions in contemporary music. It discusses the manufacture of music instruments, and includes articles about music education. It reviews recent concerts, new CD’s, and publishes articles about contemporary and historical composers and artists.

 Harmonie

The magazine _Harmonie_ first appeared in October 2001 and has been published since. It appears once a month and tries to inform its readers about important music events in the country, as well as internationally. It publishes criticism of concerts, opera productions, and CD’s. It also includes interviews with renowned artists and reports on historical anniversaries.
Opus Musicum

Opus Musicum first appeared during the period of the weakening of the Communist regime in 1969. Its main concern at that time was to offer different perspectives on musical events in the country in opposition to the monopolistic music magazine Hudební rozhledy. Since it was founded, Opus Musicum has been oriented towards cultural events in other regions in the country than Prague, and together with the close cooperation of several musicologists, was able to build a reputation as a respectable music periodical. Opus Musicum appears as a musical revue six times a year and tries to present musical events with an emphasis on regional culture as it did during the time of its establishment. It also brings to its readers musicological studies.

His Voice

His Voice is a magazine for contemporary music and is not oriented towards any particular segment of the music world. It has appeared bi-monthly since 2001 and specializes in all music genres that are considered to be outside the mainstream. These are mainly genres where the purpose is seen to be the need for artistic expression rather than commercial success. His Voice takes the position that noncommercial music should not be closed into a separate category and so it presents information on a large range of varying styles of contemporary music, including post-jazz, electronic music, world music, music in improvisation, industrial music or noise. An interesting feature of the periodical is the enclosed CD in each issue, which presents a cross-section of the Czech independent music scene. Its internet website includes a special service covering the concert events in the Czech Republic. His Voice also cooperates with foreign institutions; for instance, in 2006 the Music Information Center of Lithuania’s
periodical, *Lithuanian Voice*, prepared a special CD for *His Voice*’s CD collection. Other cooperating institutions include the German publication *Staubgold*, and *Touch*, from Great Britain.

**Hudební věda (Musicology)**

*Hudební věda* is a scholarly periodical for musicology. It presents historical and theoretical studies, analysis of music compositions, and critiques/reviews of internal as well as international literature. It brings reports about important conferences, informs about activities of scholarly/academic institutions, musicology departments at universities, libraries and museums, and compiles regular bibliographies of the musicology production in Czech Republic. The publication appears quarterly and is published by the Ethnological Institute of The Academy of Sciences – Music Department.

**Czech Music Information Center**

Perhaps the most important institution for Czech music is the Czech Music Information Centre. The Center keeps the entire documentary record of Czech music from 1945. It has a large archive with scores and recordings of Czech music (including contemporary Czech music). It provides information about Czech ensembles, artists and orchestras. It also greatly contributes to Czech musical life by organizing diverse festivals, courses, concerts and conferences. The Center’s publishing activity is also very important. It publishes CDs, books and several music periodicals from which the most important is the above mentioned *His Voice*. 
Chapter IV

BIOGRAPHY OF JIŘÍ GEMROT

Jiří Gemrot belongs to the younger generation of composers in the Czech Republic. While he is best known, and is well established, in Prague, his compositions are also frequently played in concerts in other regions of the Czech Republic. Gemrot’s musical interests are not limited to composing. He is also active as a teacher in the Department of Composition at the Music Conservatory in Prague. Further, since 1990 he has been active as the radio recording engineer at Czech Radio Prague, and now holds the position of Director of the Recording Department. He is renowned for his technical skills in recording and his services are in high demand throughout the Czech Republic.

Gemrot comes from a family in which music has been very important for generations. His parents were not professional classical musicians. However, his mother sang in a folklore ensemble and traveled with that group around the world. His father was also very active in music, even though only as an amateur. He devoted his professional life to economics to provide for his family. Gemrot’s parents were always very supportive of his musical studies, encouraging his interests in music and providing for the expense of private lessons.

My family was very supportive of all of the arts. As kids, my brother was interested in drawing and I liked music. My mother sang in a folk music group that traveled a few times a year. My father was an amateur singer and when I was growing up we played house concerts together. My grandfather played trumpet in a local jazz band in Plzeň. Music was always important in our family life.49

49 Interview with Gemrot, January 15, 2008, 2007 (translated from Czech to English by the author).
Jiří Gemrot first studied the piano with a private teacher, Ema Doležalová. She noticed at an early point in Gemrot’s childhood that he possessed a talent for composing. At that time he was more or less improvising new parts to preexisting compositions, and she supported him in this activity and encouraged him to write his own music. Later, Doležalová introduced him to the composition teacher, Jan Zdeněk Bartoš, who became his first composition teacher in 1970. Gemrot was then thirteen years old. He had already by that time composed several short pieces.

In 1972 Gemrot entered the Prague Conservatory to study piano. Composition was not included in the music program at that time. He therefore continued taking private lessons in composition with Bartoš. One year later, composition became available for students as a field of music study at the Prague Conservatory. However, this was only allowed in combination with a second music major – playing an instrument – so he continued to study the piano. Gemrot studied a large amount of music literature with Bartoš. At that time they focused mainly on composers from the past and their compositional techniques.

With Bartoš I studied mainly basic compositional skills – major compositional forms and how to compose a piece. We worked with motifs and themes, and major musical forms such as the sonata form, the canon, and the fugue. There was no particular emphasis on style or forming my own individual harmonic language. We studied a lot of repertoire, major composers from the past – every period in musical history. Once you grasp that, you can then start going in the direction your own individual creative techniques take you.  

Gemrot also took lessons with Bartoš in ear training, harmony and instrumentation. Bartoš introduced Gemrot to major musical forms and taught him basic compositional techniques, focusing on detailed motivic and thematic work.

---

50 Interview with Gemrot, September 14, 2007 (translated from Czech to English by the author).
Bartoš, of course, also corrected his first compositional creations. He graduated from the Music Conservatory in Prague in 1976.

Gemrot further proceeded with his compositional studies at the Academy of Music in Prague. He studied there with the composer Jiří Pauer from 1976 till 1981. These years were devoted to the study of major compositional styles and how certain 20th century composers used and adapted them. With his teacher, Gemrot worked to cultivate and define his personal style, and to develop his own harmonic language. However, to be able to study at a university level during the Communist regime, one had to become a member of the Socialist Union of the Youth (Socialistický Svaz Mládeže, SSM). This group was a pre-entry association for joining the Communist party. Membership not only allowed one to receive a university diploma, but also unofficially guaranteed work after graduation from the university.

Since Gemrot’s studies fell within the period of the Communist domination of Czechoslovakia, one wonders if information about current developments of contemporary music in other countries could have possibly made it through the Iron Curtain. From the numerous interviews I had with Mr. Gemrot, I discovered that despite the official restrictions of the Communist regime on allowing information of any kind from the western world into Czechoslovakia, the students at the Academy did have the opportunity to learn about contemporary music from other countries. Obviously, there were significant difficulties involved in obtaining this information. According to Gemrot, however, the scores and recordings of renowned composers and their music were brought into the country by those artists, musicians, orchestra members and
professors who did get permission from the government to travel, play concerts, or teach outside Czechoslovakia.

Access to contemporary Western music, in general, was difficult, but not impossible. We were lucky that some musicians who had the opportunity to travel to other Western countries were interested in new Western music, and would bring back as much as possible. And then it circulated "unofficially" among friends and colleagues, so despite official prohibition, the knowledge about new streams in contemporary Western music was, at least theoretically, known by looking at scores, and sometimes listening to recordings. As a student at the Academy, I was lucky to get this new material because my teachers would have workshops and share the new music materials.\textsuperscript{51}

These materials gained abroad could not, of course, be published, but they spread very quickly among the circle of professional musicians and their music lover friends.

At the Academy of Music in Prague, seminars and workshops were organized for students to present these valuable materials. They studied the scores, listened to recordings, and had the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the music of other countries, including Poland, France, Germany, the USA, Russia, and Italy. Major styles and trends being written in Europe and in the United States were discussed in their classes.

Perhaps due to the weakening of the controlling authority during the last decade of the Communist regime, the isolation of Czechoslovakia from the activities of the western world was absolutely complete in music. According to Gemrot, the Academy was also able to send students abroad to participate in summer master classes led by renowned composers. Several students went to Munich, Paris, Manchester, Amsterdam, Darmstadt, and Krakow. Gemrot himself went to Italy to study with

\textsuperscript{51} Interview with Gemrot November 26, 2007 (translated from Czech to English by the author).
Franco Donatoni in Siena in 1980. It was interesting for him to learn about Donatoni’s progressive ideas, even though he did not adopt this particular language in his writing.

I didn’t know what to expect in Italy. I was shocked after a rather conservative education in Prague, with my first international experience with Donatoni. I was a little disappointed that, even though I spoke Italian, I was unable to make a personal connection with him. I expected, based on my previous experiences with excellent teachers, to build a close working relationship - that did not happen.

***

Although I did not adopt Donatoni’s style, the experience was broadening. I got to meet other international students, and, through the exchange of views on contemporary musical styles with a young generation of composers, I learned about other countries’ education, and what it was like to be a composition student in other places.\(^{52}\)

At the Academy, Gemrot learned more about contemporary music from the above mentioned workshops, which also included compositions from Czechoslovakian composers.

After Gemrot finished his studies at the Academy of Music, he began to work as a music director of the recording section in the Czechoslovak Radio in Prague. This was perhaps one of his best opportunities to learn about music from a completely different perspective, and so to gain valuable experiences as a composer. Not only did he become familiar with an incredible amount of music literature, he also was able to learn more about instrumentation by recording contemporary pieces and studying the scores of the pieces to be recorded. He also learned more about orchestral sonorities, which helped him to better understand how to write for the orchestra, as well as about the technical and practical aspects of how an orchestra learns a contemporary composition.

\(^{52}\) Interview with Gemrot, January 15, 2008 (translated from Czech to English by the author).
Gemrot, having been a member of the SSM, was asked by officials to join the Communist party while he was still at the Academy. At that time he was able to refuse. However, when starting at the radio, he had to participate every week in a seminar for non-party men. This was initially meant to last for only a year, but it was extended to three years. At the end of that time, Gemrot was asked again to join the Party. He refused one last time. Shortly after this, when the officials required that he study at VUML (Večerní Universita Marxismu Leninismu - Evening University of Marxism Leninism) as a necessity to keep his work, he finally quit his employment at the radio.

A polite way to refuse to join the party was to say "I'm not ready." So they forced me to go to a seminar for non-party members every Thursday morning before work. I was hoping for the year to pass quickly and to be let alone, but then I was forced to do this for another two years! After the long two years, when they said they thought I was ready, I knew I would never be ready. So I went straight to the office and told them I quit my job.53

At that time Gemrot was already working part time at the Panton Publishing House. After leaving the radio station, he was able to work full time at Panton, where he spent four years from 1986 till 1990. Panton and Supraphone were the only publishing houses of records and scores in the country at that time. Panton and Supraphone each had their own record series. Panton had two major departments – recording and sheet music publishing. Because Panton was producing many series in folklore, pop music and classical music (standard repertory), which was very profitable for the company, they were able to use these funds to establish a less popular and not surprisingly unprofitable, series of contemporary music recordings. In this way they were able to promote many contemporary Czechoslovakian composers, who would

53 Interview with Gemrot, February 19, 2008 (translated from Czech to English by the author).
otherwise not have a chance to be published at all. In addition to the record series of contemporary composers, they also had a similar series introducing young artists, competition laureates, and the like, giving an opportunity to young rising stars to establish a name. Gemrot was active in Panton as a record editor of the recording department. Because of his position, he was also the member of the Board Committee, which accepted and reviewed contemporary music submissions for publishing. However, he was only able to make suggestions and did not have control over the final decisions.

From Gemrot’s account of this situation, the committee never received an official list naming the composers who were explicitly forbidden to be published. However, it was understood that all composers and artists who emigrated before 1970 were forbidden.

There was no list. But we all knew who was on it. The information was spread from mouth to mouth. Everybody in Prague knew who was forbidden. But we did not always know why. Some composers, sure, we knew they had connections to the Western world, so we knew why their music was prohibited. But others, it was not always clear. Also, people outside of Prague, who held regional musical events, they might not have known who was in favor or not, and they got into trouble because they performed something by someone who was forbidden. It was maddening.54

There were also several other composers living in Czechoslovakia whose names were known as less desirable (such as Marek Kopełent, Miloslav Kabeláč and Jan Klusák.), so they could not appear on new records. Gemrot remembers that the committee (composed of rather anti-regime people) tried several times to publish music also from these “undesirable” composers (for instance compositions by Marek

54 Interview with Gemrot, November 26, 2007 (translated from Czech to English by the author).
Kopelent) but were never successful. The committee had to fulfill requirements to publish compositions written in the officially favorite style – socialist realism. Nevertheless, they strove to support independent-minded artists writing in other styles. While some composers saw the opportunity to advance their careers by composing in the official style, others who were unwilling to accept these constraints were grateful to Panton for supporting their music. Panton was able to keep, at least partly, real Czechoslovakian musical culture evolving. In this way it achieved some balance between forced requirements and cultural developments.

After the overthrow of the Communist government in 1989, Panton publishing house began losing money. The termination of government support required them to become self-sufficient, and this they could not do. It was finally taken over by Supraphone in 1990, which at that time was a branch company of Bonton media holding company.

In 1990 Gemrot returned to Czech Radio after the breakup of the Panton Company. He now holds the position of the Director of Recording Engineers there. Since 2000, Gemrot has also been active as a teacher at the Department of Composition at the Prague Conservatory.

Gemrot’s music is today known for the clarity of its form, the transparency of its melodies, and its precise thematic content. These, together with the use of contrast as a constant feature in his compositions, became characteristics of his individual harmonic language. In his student years, he had admired music by Britten, Prokofiev and Janáček. At that time he also fancied Martinů’s original use of rhythm and idiosyncratic musical language. Even though Gemrot carefully studied all the major
compositional styles of twentieth-century contemporary music, and modeled them in his student composition exercises, he did not adopt any particular technique in the further development of his personal style. As mentioned earlier, his studies with Donatoni, one of the most-read European Modernists, seemed to have no effect on his style.

Gemrot sees the importance of continuity between the music of the past and the contemporary music of today. His personal goal is to reestablish a closer connection between contemporary music and the audience, which has been decreasing over decades now. He also has a close connection with many artists in the Czech Republic and abroad, to whom he usually dedicates his compositions.

The situation of contemporary music is the same everywhere. Everybody is frustrated because the public is not interested in listening to contemporary music. If you asked someone on the street to name one living contemporary composer, it would not happen. We have to reconnect with the audience, because as a composer you want to write for an audience. However, the situation is that we are really writing for a very small number of individuals who are interested and still care about contemporary music. So in my music, I reconnect to the past through the use of conventional musical forms, while exploring new ideas with the form and language within the traditional context. I don’t know if this is right or wrong, but it’s what I have to offer. I know that I am not the only composer who feels this way, and there is some demand for my music, which supports my belief that I am contributing in the right direction.\textsuperscript{55}

Even though Gemrot’s compositional output includes several orchestral compositions, he mainly concentrates on instrumental works, writing often for chamber music groups as well as for soloists. Sometimes he enjoys challenging projects, such as writing for unusual instrumental settings requested by particular music ensembles.

Gemrot believes that his inventive faculties are best suited to the chamber genres. He is convinced of a need to bridge the gap between the composer and the

\textsuperscript{55} Interview with Gemrot, February 19, 2008 (translated from Czech to English by the author).
audience, which has prompted him to strive for a communicative approach in which the emphasis is on a tuneful element. Admittedly, his language utilizes the forward-thrusting music that evolved in the twentieth century, but it is his aim to fuse styles uniting past and present. He often employs sonata form, but in unconventional ways. He regards it as a principle of evolution and contrast.

Moreover, it is not rare for Gemrot to pose philosophical and artistic questions in his music; in his orchestral Tributes, for instance, he pays homage to artistic points of reference; a respect for tradition in Heritage and human feelings, which may be identical to artistic sentiments in Emotions. Maxims for fifteen stringed instruments consists of three parts: Prologue is a vision of original human purity, Drama characterizes man's social debut, and in Contemplation the composer considers how some ideals undergo change. In his symphonic music there is a sequence following Maxims expressed in Dances and Reflections, which are a kind of allegory of good and evil as they are mirrored on an extrovert and introvert plane of human perception. This area of thought of attaining a greater balance is brought to a culmination in Three Adagios dealing firstly with nature, secondly with the soul, and lastly with death.

Gemrot enjoyed success several times at the annual competition for young artists – Generation, held in Ostrava, Moravia, and also at the Czech Republic's Young Composers Competition. Not infrequently, Gemrot has been inspired by the performances of musicians to whom he has dedicated his works. To cite but a few examples: there is the Cello Concerto written for Marie Hixová, his Piano Sonata No. 2 tailored for Milan Langer, his organ Fresco for Melanie Pustějovská, Meditations for viola and organ for Ladislav Kyselka and Josef Popelka, the guitar Fantasy and Toccata
for Miloslav Klaus, *Summer Study* for the *Prague Saxophone Quartet* and *Bucolics* for the *Stamic Quartet*. Of his current works, mention should be made of his *Suite* with a children’s theme which was commissioned by the *Czech Music Fund* for the anniversary of the ensemble *Czech Nonet*.

Gemrot has also been successful as a composer internationally. He has received several commissions for his original works in countries such as the United States, Japan, Italy, and Austria. For example his most recent commission is a string quintet for a festival by The Friends of Chamber Music in Tucson, Arizona. His compositions have been performed in France, Scotland, Germany, England, and other countries. Several recordings have been made of his works in the United States and Japan, as well as in the Czech Republic.

Gemrot belongs to that group of composers who follow their intuition in the creation of compositions. He does not strictly apply any particular compositional method (such as serialism or others). He sometimes uses such strict principles but he does not subordinate his musical ideas to them, if his intuition leads him elsewhere. Gemrot prefers clear musical forms and very detailed motivic work within the form (such as the sonata form or the fugue) in his compositions. His musical language can be characterized as making use of extended tonality; there usually is a tonal center in his pieces, but he does not restrict himself to functional harmony or the conventional use of older forms.

Much of Gemrot’s work is published and recorded by Panton, Baerenreiter, Radioservis, Canyon Classics, Albany Records or Editio Moravia.
Chapter V

ANALYSIS OF JIŘÍ GEMROT'S SECOND PIANO SONATA (1985)

Gemrot’s Piano Sonata No. II was composed in 1985, during the last decade of the communist regime in the former Czechoslovakia. Mr. Gemrot was then only twenty-eight years old and was active as the music director of the Czechoslovak Radio in Prague.

The piece is written in sonata form. As in a typical sonata form, we can see that Gemrot’s sonata is divided into three major sections. These are obvious at the first listening. We can clearly identify the Exposition with its three different musical ideas, clearly separated from each other by their contrasting character. The beginning of the Development section does not follow any transition or preparations. The first musical idea does not include any of the Exposition motives and therefore can’t be developed through the traditional means of a Development. Gemrot here uses completely new material, presenting it in a cadenza setting, which is even more unusual to appear at the beginning of a development section in a regular sonata form. Later in this section Gemrot proceeds to develop the main motive, although in a very special way which will be discussed in more detail in further analysis. The Recapitulation can be unmistakably identified by the returning motive from the Exposition. After the very fragmented Development section, Gemrot repeats here a larger part of the Exposition (the first 93 measures including all three main ideas of the Exposition) to affirm the presence of the Recapitulation. He later brings back some of the development sections as well, however, he does so in such a way that the coherence of the entire sonata remains
unthreatened. The sonata keeps all sections in a well balanced relationship. The Exposition presents three basic ideas with some of their repetitions in 127 measures. The Development section in its unusual setting is kept shorter in a traditional way. In this sonata it lasts for about a half the length of the Exposition (67 measures with three short unmeasured cadenzas). The Recapitulation, generally kept shorter than the Exposition, is here extended with some of the Development material as well as another variation of the main motive; therefore in this sonata it is longer than the Exposition (195 measures with one short unmeasured cadenza).

We will see in further analysis how much of the classical sonata form Gemrot actually uses, how he treats individual sections and how he makes the piece coherent and legitimate to be called a sonata.

**EXPOSITION**

The Exposition consists of 127 measures. We can observe three main ideas, which are very different from each other, and which all return several times within the Exposition. The first main idea is a short motive based on a descending major second motion, which begins at first on two notes, D and C. This little motive is transposed many times and becomes gradually melodically expanded throughout the Exposition.
Ex. 1, M. 1.

The bass voice is a pedal point, which will lead to further development and important character support. In the first phrase, the bass voice starts on C#. The motive is melodically simple, so the rhythm drives the opening Exposition. It is very striking from the beginning. Gemrot begins in the meter of 5/8, which is immediately switched to 3/8 in the second measure, back to 5/8 in the third, and continues with this pattern for about five measures, which is the entire first motive idea.

Ex. 2, M. 5.

Gemrot works on a small scale using very few compositional tools, but does so very effectively. His first sonority seems to be based on two sevenths built around the tone D, which is in the middle. The first seventh C#/D occurs between the bass and the
middle voice, second seventh D-C is created between the middle voice and the upper voice, which functions as a melody even though it is very limited in term of its range. In the first phrase the motive expands from the first notes D and C to two more notes Eb and B, which are both half steps from D and C, only in opposite directions. These sonorities create a feel of inner impatience and nervousness. The continuously changing meter from 5/8 to 3/8 supports this anxious mood very well. The motive repeats in the second phrase with a slight change of intervals, which further heightens the tension.

Ex. 3, M. 7 – 12.

We will see through the analysis how the use of different intervals between the upper voice, the middle voice and the bass in this motive changes the overall sonority, as well as its character. Also, the pedal point moves from C# and C, to D and B in the first section. The third phrase begins with a more peaceful sonority – a perfect fifth - than the two previous ones. Even though this is the beginning of the third phrase, it is perceived as the end of the second phrase because the perfect fifth resolves the harmonic tension of this previous phrase (M. 13).
This third phrase takes the motive melodically farther, up to the pitch G. It becomes rhythmically frantic, going back and forth through several quickly changing meters, 5/8, 3/8, 4/8, 6/8 and 8/8. The pedal point stays on B♭ for the entire third phrase. The first part of the Exposition’s first section culminates in fortissimo, which uses, up to this point, the strongest dynamic and quickest note values (sixteenths notes). Also the melodic range expands even further from the main tone D and brings to the end of this section the sonority of B♭-F-E♭-G♭. One measure of G.P. (Generalpause) follows prolonging the effect of the recently reached climax. The composer writes lunga after the GP to ensure that the performer makes the pause extra long.

Sonority graph – Extension of tone range:

1. Phrase: \( D \rightarrow Eb \) and \( B \)

2. Phrase: \( D \rightarrow E \) and \( Bb \) (=A#)

3. Phrase: \( D \rightarrow Gb \) and \( Bb \)

Bass pedal point development: C#-C, D-B, Bb

The similarity between the first phrase melodic motion D, C, Eb, B with the development of the bass line over the whole section C#, C, D, B (Bb) is very interesting. If we examine this in detail we find that this is another modified version of the main motive. It moves in exactly the same direction from one note to the other, the only difference is that all the intervals are a half step smaller/shorter than in the original motive.

Example:

Main motive: D- C=major 2, C- Eb=minor 3, Eb- B=dim.4.
Bass line: C#-C=aug. 1 but sounds as minor 2, C-D= major 2, D-B=minor 3

It is perhaps even more interesting that we find this exact same modification created in the bass line in the melody as well, only in transposition – Dim.4 in M.21, 22 (F, E, Gb, Eb).

Ex. 6, M. 19 – 24.

Even though the ending of the first section is very dramatic and presents an obvious culmination of the feeling of anxiety which permeates throughout, it leaves complete freedom for the following section. The listener doesn’t know what will happen next, the music keeps him interested and curious. The next section begins again with the main motive; however, the first two phrases are repeated with different pedal point.
Gemrot again uses four notes for the entire section as he did in the first, but this time he begins with Eb and continues in ascending motion over Fb, F and F# from which F# is predominant and the longest of all. This raising bass line brings more intensity to the whirling atmosphere. Also in this section Gemrot switches meters at the end, adds an eight note motion and finally leads smoothly into the next section.

The music gives the impression of a quick, forward motion, and signals that changes of character will occur soon. Gemrot's musical language in those two parts is based on every kind of seventh and second - major, minor, diminished, augmented. They occur between the two upper voices as well as between them and the bass line. The choice of this particular sonority seems to be perfect for achieving the impatient character of the section, which is driven by a certain mood of eagerness and a search for
more relaxing harmonies. There is perhaps only one short moment where this harmony occurs, in the first measure of third phrase/first section.

Ex. 8, M. 13.

The sound of the perfect fifth, already mentioned above, gives the listener a more relaxed feeling though for very brief moment. In addition to the seventh and second intervals, which are the major content of these two sections, Gemrot also uses occasionally diminished fourths and fifths, and sometimes major and minor sixths. Both sections are otherwise driven by the repetitive use of sevenths.

The very last measure of the second section with its accented eighth notes leads into the third section, which has toccata-like character. Even here Gemrot maintains a major seventh in the repeated chord (Ex. 9).

Ex. 9, M. 54 – 56.
The entire sonority is built on the pitches D, F#, G#, C#. This chord is exchanged with a chromatic rhythmical figure - two sixteenth notes and an eighth note – based on two of the tones included in the beginning chord, C# and G#. A larger contrast between these two figures is made by a pair of elements. First, Gemrot changes from low to higher register; second he places quick dynamic changes – piano, forte – together with accents over the chromatic figure to underline the toccata character. The chord itself is also used chromatically in M. 57 with no interval change.

Ex. 10, M. 57.

This helps to move away from the original sonority, D, F#, G#, and C#, to the new chord, which contains the same intervals and is a major second lower. This same idea repeats with similar procedures and is followed with a three measure long single bass figure, in fortissimo barbaro, ending with a short diminuendo. This particular figure will be used several times later in the piece, including in completely different contexts and characters.
Ex. 11, M. 63 – 66.

The fourth section again uses the very first motive from the beginning of the piece. However this time the motive appears in a register about two octaves higher than the original, with both hands notated in the treble clef, with a descending major second A – G instead of the descending D – C from the opening of the Exposition, these two major seconds being a perfect fifth apart.

Ex. 12, M. 67 – 71.

Another new aspect and variation of the primary theme is a four sixteenth figure in the lowest voice, resolving in a minor second accompaniment. This briefly gives the music characteristics of a dance. Also in this section, Gemrot quickly exchanges different meters: 5/8, 3/8, 4/8, and ends on 6/8. Also the melodic idea is no longer limited to only four pitches but moves in a range of a minor seventh, from A₂ to Gb₃. This quick
return of the main motive is followed by another short, dance-like segment in an augmented sixth chord sonority.

Ex. 13, M. 77 – 85.

This augmented chord D, F#, B♭ is formed with the two hands in a way that each hand doubles one pitch in octave and plays also a minor sixth within the same octave. A short octave passage in descending major seconds brings the music back to the toccata motive. Also this part is repeated without significant change in length, transposed a perfect fourth higher, from the original C# to F#.
Ending this section on C, the main motive takes over and continues on C, this time appearing in fragmentation underlined with quick meter changes – 4/8, 3/8 and 5/8.
The music becomes more and more frantic and impatient, the dynamic *forte* or *fortissimo*. Then it finally leads through a triple in 4/8 to the last section of the Exposition (M. 107). Still *fortissimo*, the right hand plays in heavy, choral like marching chords over a bass pedal point in A. This melody is created by an augmentation of the main motive, which is perhaps not as obvious at first listening. The syncopated accompaniment figure taken from the first *barbaro* section, together with the marching chords in 3/4 meter has the character of a final statement. This might be also due to the fact, that for the first time in the piece, we get a sense of tonal harmony. Throughout this section, the harmony is really just one chord - A minor. This last section ends with the bass figure by itself, which becomes less intense. With added ties, the syncopation also gets less frequent, and through a long diminuendo and poco ritenuto it slowly comes to a calm end. This is perhaps an unusual set up for a Development section; however, it makes sense in light of what follows.

Ex. 16, M. 116 – 125.
DEVELOPMENT

The Exposition ended in a peculiar way, somewhat unusual for setting up the Development section. However the next part of this sonata is not very typical in terms of compositional form. Here Gemrot departs from the classical form of the Development section and freely incorporates many varying ideas. Gemrot continues to use certain fragments of the main motive from the Exposition but he does not build on this idea as one would expect in a traditional Development. Rather, he uses it more as a reminder and as a contrast to the other parts, which are of an improvisational character. The entire part is developed with fragmented ideas, which are not always built upon and are only occasionally connected to each other via transitional material. Most of these small component sections within the “Development” occur suddenly, with no preparation. The beginning of the Recapitulation seems also very surprising once it occurs. However, Gemrot achieves the coherence of the Development section by the continuous use of motivic work known to us from the Exposition. Even the many quick tempo changes don’t interrupt the continuity of the entire section.

Gemrot begins with a simple one voice cadenza which stands out after hearing the rather intense flow of the Exposition. The cadenza here is a simple improvised tune rather than a traditional virtuoso cadenza. Gemrot achieves a sound contrast here by writing this short improvised phrase in pentatonic scale. The notes overlap and mix together with the help of the sustain pedal. He creates a very peaceful and relaxed atmosphere.
Ex. 17, M. 126 – 127 and Cadenza.

Liberamente, quasi una cadenza! \( \frac{\text{f} + \text{96}}{} \)

This peaceful sonority is interrupted only once by the same eight note figure in the bass heard at the end of the Exposition, introducing slight discomfort. The slower tempo corresponds well to this new character. This small cadenza as Gemrot calls it, repeats in this section three times, each similar in length and varying only slightly. The first short cadenza is formed with and around the pitches D, E, G, A and B. It is suddenly interrupted by a repeated fragment of the main motive from the Exposition for about seven measures. It appears in the same transposition used in the Exposition in M. 67. It is perhaps interesting to mention that the fragmentation of the motive is not merely transposed, but Gemrot also uses different intervals between the upper and lower voice and the bass. This is the same technique as observed in the Exposition.

Ex. 18, M. 128 – 134.
The second short cadenza follows with the same pitches as the first, continuing the peaceful character but with more repeated short figures. This second cadenza is not interrupted by the main motive; instead it leads into the main motive by means of a major second interval.

Ex.19, Cadenza and M. 135 – 138.

Also this time the transposition of the motive is the same - in fact the first heard fragmentation repeats entirely with the change of the register. It appears one octave higher. This agitato mood is replaced by a new musical idea in Molto lento tempo. It is introduced by an E major chord in pianissimo followed by a descending dotted arpeggiation of a B major chord beginning on its fifth F#. This turns into a little motive in the upper voice. It is repeated twice, on each repetition the motive starts a third higher than previously, creating on the second repetition a seventh chord (A#, F#, D#, B), and a ninth chord beginning on C# on the third and last repetition. This is the first time in the piece we have the sonority of a major triad. Gemrot is using it on purpose to
achieve larger contrast in character and also to provide new space for developing new sonorities (M. 142).

Ex. 20, M. 139 – 147.

Even though the cadenza sections give the impression of peaceful scenery, the aspiration of the rather nervous triple figure in the bass and its overlapping sound kept in the pedal, leaves a feeling of a possible quick change to another of the agitato sections, which follows these cadenzas. However, in the short, five measure long Molto Lento section, the sonority of the E and B major triads is not interrupted and does not signal any change of the mood. The B major chord in the right hand creates a short melody by a descending arpeggiation beginning with the fifth F#. It is used in slow dotted rhythm. Gemrot establishes here a pattern, he uses the same idea by the next chord when he adds another third (A#) on top of the previous B major triad creating so a seventh chord. The third arpeggiation is heard as a ninth chord beginning with C# which settles in an unbroken seventh chord of F# in second inversion (4/3) with the C#
in the bass, creating a small tension with the leading tone E in the upper voice so it can be immediately resolved into the calm sounding C# triad. With this harmonic progression we are shortly reminded of the musical language of Romanticism. This built up calmness is interrupted with a *sforzato* and with it the returning *agitato* motive. This time its duration is only five measures, two measures shorter than the first two interruptions. The motive is used in a new transposition beginning with C# in the upper voice.

Of interest here is the change of the combination of intervals between the upper and middle voice and the bass. In the first used transposition in this middle section, the interval between the outer voices (bass and upper voice) is an octave. This interval forms a certain coherence in sonority. The major seventh interval Bb-A between soprano and alto voice creates tension which is resolved in following major sixth. The final sonority is then A, Bb and G.

Ex. 21, M. 128.

![Agitato](image)

In the third *agitato* section the intervals between all the voices are changed. There is a major seventh between the bass and soprano voices instead of an octave. The soprano and alto create first an octave which is then followed by major seventh. The final
sonority of this section is C#, D, B. It is now perhaps more obvious why this third use of the motive sounds more aggravating.

Ex. 22, M. 146 – 147.

The major seventh between the bass and soprano voices produces a feeling of discomfort. Instead of a resolution we hear another seventh (minor). If we compare the two differently modified phrases, we hear a certain change in the intensity of the tension there. It is therefore very interesting to observe that the final sonorities of both phrases differ only in transposition (different pitches) - A, B♭, G / C#, D, B. This example perfectly shows Gemrot’s effective use of minimal material in this sonata. His musical language is based on simplicity but his music does not sound simplistic.

After the third appearance of the main motive, as it fades away we expect another repetition of the settled pattern, which implies another slow section. Gemrot keeps the pattern and somewhat modifies the previously used *Molto Lento* section. Instead of one triad before the dotted motive, Gemrot places a short chord progression, beginning with a D major triad (a continuation of the bass line from the previous *agitato* section). He moves in perfect fifths and octaves through Eb major harmony which he resolves then into a G major triad.
Ex. 23, M. 151 – 152.

In the same manner as in the first Motto Lento section, the relationship between the dotted motive and the bass line, which is a broken D major chord, is that of a fifth. Gemrot uses the same idea adding another third to every repetition of the D major triad, forming a seventh and a ninth chord. The new element in this part is the middle voice, which imitates the upper voice and only differs from it in that it is based on a G major chord. That has an interesting effect when they run together at first in sevenths apart (major and minor), then in perfect fifths and in thirds (major and minor).

Ex. 24, M. 157 – 160.

This idea is repeated, with the upper voice in a higher register. The music somehow swings in this dotted rhythm between the two major triads having no particular direction to take. That changes with a sudden stop of the dotted movement on a B minor chord which immediately takes away the previous dreamy atmosphere.
As before, Gemrot also interrupts this slow section with the main motive.

Ending the slow section on a B minor triad, Gemrot begins the motive by using B for the pedal point as well as for the upper voice. He moves the register back down below the middle C.

Ex. 25, M. 161 – 170.

The alto voice disappears completely in this part, which reduces any possible tension between the voices. The soprano voice and the bass begin again in an octave relation, moving back and forth to minor seventh and somewhat surprisingly ending with the perfect fifth B-F#. This is the fourth and last time the main motive from the Exposition appears in this section. Gemrot decides to return to the *Molto Lento* motive, again through the same chord progression, only transposed – F major, Gb major leading into Bb major (M. 166).
We can observe now Gemrot's idea of having all the *Molto Lento* sections in a minor third relation, beginning in E, then in G and now in B♭ major. He makes another change. Instead of placing the motive in the upper voice, Gemrot places it in the bass, still a fifth apart from the main chord B♭ major (M. 167). He turns the F major triad into a seventh and a ninth chord as he did previously, still broken and dotted. He continues further by switching from the dotted rhythm to a triplet accompaniment, still using the ninth chord in F. Because the ninth chord has only five different pitches, in a 3/2 meter this chord will appear irregularly (M. 171).

Ex. 26, M. 171 – 176.

That means that a different tone from the ninth chord will fall on each down beat of every measure. However, this irregularity produces, after all, a nice effect, namely every pitch of the nine chord appears once on the first beat and that in an ascending way (F, A, C, E, G).
In this way a whole cycle of six measures is made, from which the last measure is a repetition of the first. This feature causes a certain confusion in meter and rhythm, undoubtedly intentionally created. The melody over this triple accompaniment derives from the main motive. It is reduced to the main four pitches, transposed and augmented (G, F, Ab, E / D, C, Eb, B at the beginning). Because of the increasing volume, the melody is placed in chords, doubling the octave and keeping tone D always in the middle. To help to increase the dramatic mood, some chords are repeated with natural acceleration and crescendo (M. 173). After the first pitch of the ninth chord appears again, the circle is left. This entire phrase culminates in rather harsh and violent sounding triads – D and A major, played simultaneously, marked in fortissimo.

Ex. 27, M. 175.

In the following measure the D major chord in the bass is changed to C# major. Gemrot slows down these heavy chords and finishes this longer section with the most intense statement of the dotted rhythm motive (Ex. 28).
The broken chord appears this time doubled in triads, in a victorious sounding C major. Also here Gemrot expends to a seventh and a ninth chord in the next two measures, as he did every time before with this motive, ending to some extent unexpectedly back in D major. (Ex. 29, M. 180)

A D major harmony ends this emotional section (M. 180). A single voice cadenza reminds us of the simple sounding tune that began this entire section. It is brought back in almost a complete repetition, based again on the pentatonic scale, now only in A, beginning with E. After this cadenza we would expect maybe the main motive interruption again, but Gemrot has decided otherwise.
Ex. 29, M. 180 with Cadenza.

Liberamente, quasi una cadenza

Instead another *Molto Lento* motive appears. Beginning on a single note E (as the first *Molto Lento* section began with the entire E major triad), it is followed by a broken G major chord in its descending form, and instead of turning it into a seventh chord again with the addition of a third in front of the G major triad, Gemrot first changes the G major to a G minor triad and then adds a major third (Eb) at the end (Ex.30).


*Molto lento*
For the remaining part of this section, he uses bits of previously heard harmonies from the same section. Therefore it seems to have a somewhat confusing character, lost and looking for a solution. The returning nervous figure in the bass signals another possible change. The listener probably already senses some instability in the atmosphere and is maybe even more surprised, after hearing so many different sections and musical fragments, when the Recapitulation of the sonata finally resounds.

**RECAPITULATION**

The Recapitulation begins with an exact repetition of a large part of the Exposition. The reason for this might be the fact that the Development section doesn’t appear in a usual Development setting, with its numerous fragmented sections. Having a fantasia like character, moving frequently from one musical idea to another, the listener doesn’t necessarily expect the entrance of the Recapitulation at the moment of its actual appearance. Gemrot repeats the first two sections with its main driving motive of the Exposition without any changes. He keeps the exact same interval relationships between all voices. Neither does he change any pitches of the pedal point.

The *toccata*-like section remains also the same, only its last measure has a small change in the pitches. The last beat is here changed in the right hand to Ab (Ex. 31, M. 257). The left hand switches also, to C (same measure).
Ex. 31, M. 257 - 259.

The closing figure in this last measure in the Exposition (the last two beats), followed by the first appearance of the short *barbaro* figure, form two chromatic steps G, Ab, G – G being the first pitch of the *barbaro* figure.

Ex. 32, M. 63 – 64.

With the pitch changes in M. 257 in the Recapitulation, we get the motion of G, Ab and C, from which Ab and C leap into the beginning seventh A, Bb of the following motive section (M. 257 – 258). Because of the fast tempo of this section, the listener might not even notice the pitch change in this particular figure. However we can see in this example, that Gemrot uses the sonorities of the main motive not exceptionally

Ex. 33, M. 5.  Ex. 34, M. 257.

The barbaro figure used in the Exposition in three measures is skipped here. From this returning motive section on, Gemrot repeats another larger part of the Exposition, again with no changes. We hear once more the short dance-like segment from the Exposition as well as another repeated toccata like section and the following fragmented motive section on C.

The final two measures (M. 297-8) of this section are placed in an octave higher register as a preparation for the following section. Here, the last part of the Exposition before the Development section is replayed – marching heavy chords in the right hand over a pedal point in the left hand. However, in the Recapitulation the transitional two measures have been moved one octave higher, therefore the marching chords also appear one octave higher here than they do in the Exposition (M. 297 – 299).
Ex. 35, M. 296 – 299.

This is not the only change Gemrot makes. In the last transitional measure of the exposition (M. 107) he uses in the upper voice of the triplet the pitches G, Eb, Db leading in to C in the beginning melody of the marching chords. In the Recapitulation, he changes Db to D, so the leading figure becomes G, Eb, D and leads to C# as the beginning pitch in the chord melody (M. 298). The pedal point in the bass is also on C# in contrast to A used in the Exposition. This completely changes the harmonic feeling of this section. In the Exposition we heard predominantly an A minor sonority because of the pedal point A and the frequently repeated A minor chord in the right hand. In the Recapitulation, Gemrot changes the first A minor sixth chord into an A major sixth chord except the pedal point is no longer on A here, but on C#. Because of the leading measure into this section, which contains the triads Eb major (incomplete without the fifth), Ab minor without the root and a complete G minor triad, the first chord is therefore heard in continuity with these previous chords as an A major sixth chord (M. 298-299).

Also in this section, Gemrot uses for four measures the same chords (with the same pitches) as he used in the same part in the Exposition with the exception of the A
chord, which always appears with C#, therefore an A major. The melody is also here an augmentation of the main motive. The chords are usually formed by doubling the melody tone in octaves and filling it by a major or minor second below the upper voice, rarely above the lower voice. The third pitch is mostly an augmented forth or diminished fifth (these intervals sound the same). After the first four similar measures, Gemrot keeps moving the chords in the melody in chromatic upward motion, reaching up to A3. The pedal point on C# gives the section an unstable atmosphere. Additionally, it imitates the barbara figure from the Exposition. When the chords in the right hand start changing, the pedal point also changes, unlike in the Exposition, where the entire section was kept over the same pedal point A. Here it changes first to C natural (M. 303), going the opposite direction from the melody, creating in this way strong interval tension between the two hands. It continues one more step further to B (M. 305) for about three measures, in which the melody moves from G# to A, giving, together with the bass line, the sonority of the often used variation of the main motive intervallic relationship (minor seventh between the outer voices and major or minor sixth between the bass line and the middle voice). This time it is a minor seventh with major sixth B, G#, A.

This entire section driven by the pounding barbaro figure together with the
marching chords emerging on the previously discussed sonority of B, G#, A becomes so
severe and intense at that point, that resolution cannot be further delayed. Because of
both outer voices moving from each other in opposite directions throughout the entire
section, beginning with the pitches C# - C# (No. 299), increasing it to C# - D# (M. 301),
continuing through C - F, F# (M. 303) and B - G# (M. 305), one could expect the
resolution of both voices into A. This occurs in the last beat of M. 307 but only very
briefly and in syncopation, so the resolution into A does not appear as a harmonic
climax. The left hand continues one step farther to B♭, then goes in eighth notes back
and forth between B♭ and A (No. 308), while the right hand’s last chord from the
previous measure (A, D#, G#, A) sounds over the left hand’s eighth notes motion.
Finally the climax of this section arrives and functions simultaneously as the beginning
of the following section. Because of the pitch exchange A - B♭ in the last eighth note
motion, A begins to sound as a leading tone into B♭. So when this eighth motion stops
on A, and the B♭ major chord enters in unison in both hands after this short preparation,
it almost sounds at the moment as the classic dominant which is also in a classic way
'resolved' into tonic chord E♭ major. This, however, happens over a G major triad (m.
308).
The following section does not contain any new material. This short motive with the melodic tones B♭, G, and E♭ is already very well known from the Development section. It is the beginning motive of every *Molto Lento* section, which first appears in a very peaceful E major quiet atmosphere. The same motive is heard at the end of the third *Molto Lento* in the Development section as a culmination point in heavy accented chords over a short pedal point on C resolving into D (M. 178 – 180). The beginning in the *Molto Lento* section in the Recapitulation reminds us of this particular moment. It is in fact very similar, however the beginning harmony is based on E♭ major chord, which quickly moves away through B major and finally arrives on C, where it continues as a long pedal point (Ex. 38, M. 311). This pitch motion in the left hand E♭, B, C was heard as a complete sonority D, C, B♭, B at the beginning of the Exposition (M. 5). Here Gemrot uses it in augmentation and in a different order in the bass line (M. 309 – 311). The right hand moves through several tonal chords still in the dotted rhythm of the main motive until it arrives, together with the left hand, on a C major triad. These
two beginning measures of this *Molto Lento* section have a victorious character. Gemrot himself wrote into the score *trionfale* and three *fortes*. Following the previous impatient section with a long built up tension, the effect of the triumph character appears much bigger than in the same part of the Development section. There the dotted motive was anticipated by the augmented main motive accompanied by the triplet figure in the left hand (M. 170).

Even though many atonal sounding chords were heard over the F seventh chord in the Exposition, it did not culminate with such an intensity and speed as it did in the Recapitulation. This augmented main theme, together with the triplet accompaniment, is also used in the Recapitulation, this time following this victorious dotted motive (unlike in the development section, where it appeared before). This augmented theme is not separated from the previous dotted rhythm. It is still a part of the *Molto Lento* section (beginning in M. 311) and is almost entirely repeated as it appeared in the Development section.

Ex. 38, M. 311 – 313.

It is interesting that Gemrot uses the same chords in the right hand with the same pitches as in the Development. Only the bass in a C ostinato figure and some use of the higher register in the right hand differ from the same section in the Development. Also the ending of this section is similar in character to its earlier equivalent. It ends with
breaking from the ostinato figure into a descending C major triad leading to another barbazo figure on lowest C on the keyboard (M. 319).

This is not the end of the Molto Lento section, but this augmented motive idea is shortly interrupted with one measure of the barbazo figure on C. This figure becomes another ostinato figure and remains present until the end of this section. The right hand moves its melody to the bass clef (M. 320).

Ex. 39, M. 320 - 321

It appears one octave below middle C. This low register makes the melody more dramatic. The melody itself is a variation of the augmented main motive. It still uses some of the augmentation but it appears in the reverse direction. However, this is not an exact mirror inversion; it is only suggested by using the opposite direction with the combination of similar enough intervals (an augmented third instead of a diminished fourth, etc).

This last part of the Molto Lento section might appear to the listener as a new idea with new sonorities. This could be true because of the combination of a somewhat new sounding melody - unheard before, and the use of the lowest register for the melody. However, with closer analysis, this section is only a slight variation of the very last section in the Exposition (M. 108). There we heard in the bass the same barbazo
figure in ostinato, only on A instead of on C in the Recapitulation. The right hand used
the augmented version of the main theme, in marching heavy chords. In the
Recapitulation this same melody has been changed in only three aspects: it appears two
octaves lower than at its first appearance, it is played solely in octaves instead of
chords, and the theme is reversed with some changes of the intervals. The length of the
melody remains the same as well (11 measures).

We heard in the Exposition that this section faded away as a transition to the
pentatonic improvised tune of the following Development section. Even this idea is
kept in the Recapitulation, this time with only two fading measures (M. 331-332). The
following pentatonic tune from the very first cadenza of the Development section
appears almost without changes - the exception being that the pitches are one octave
higher - from its first appearance. The tune is slightly shorter than in the previous
cadenzas of the Development. This time the last note G provides the leading tone to A,
which is the beginning pitch of the very last *Molto Lento* section in this sonata.

This section differs the most from the other *Molto Lento* sections in this sonata.
Gemrot starts immediately with the augmentation of the main theme beginning a perfect
fifth higher from the original motive in the Exposition, with the syncopated
accompaniment on A, sometimes embellished at the end of a measure with a triplet turn
in sixteenth note value.
Both hands are in a higher register than before in this particular motive (M. 333). The syncopated simple voice is underlined by a grace note which appears at first twice every four measures and then every two measures after that. This grace note is usually held for about two measures. Even though this part seems to set a calm peaceful atmosphere, the harmonic touch of the grace note gives this part an eerie sound. Also, the irregular rhythm in the right hand together with the syncopation of the left hand helps to create a particular feeling that the music is leading nowhere - it seems to drift away. The augmented melody first appears in a transposition of a perfect fifth and lasts for four measures containing the same intervals (A, G, Bb, F#) of the original main motive sonority (D, C, Eb, B). The second phrase (M. 337) repeats only the first pitches of the main motive (A, G, Bb) and then moves freely away, mainly in a chromatic upwards direction, reaching F# as the highest note.
The third phrase is another augmented transposition of the main motive, this time beginning on C - one whole step lower (or minor seventh higher) than the original. It is interesting to observe the unusual interval tension in the second and third measure of this phrase (M. 342 – 343). In the beginning of the third measure, the sonority is created by the grace note A (the first time in unison with the middle syncopated voice) and the melody tone Bb (still held as a tie from the last beat of the previous second measure). When it leaps from Bb to C# at the first beat of the third measure (M. 343) after the grace note A is played, we still hear it somehow as a stretch of harmonic tension rather than having a resolving character, which we would expect since C# is a major third from A and would normally suggest an A major triad.

Ex. 42, M. 342 - 344
This special effect is created by a combination of two aspects: the leaping from B♭ to C♯ in the melody (an augmented second) together with the half step grace note motion from B♭ to A. Both outer voices meet on B♭ on the last beat of the second measure (M. 342) creating two minor seconds with the inner voices (R.H. - C, B♭, L.H. - B♭, A), which both resolve into an octave at the beginning of the third M. 343. However, the opposite motion in both outer voices away from the pivot tone B♭ creates an odd tension in sound. The fourth phrase of this section also begins with the main motive with the same pitches as heard in the first phrase (A, G – M. 345)). The third measure brings a perfect fifth sonority in the left hand, the right hand moving away from the main motive (A, G, B♭, F♯) to A, G, B♭, A and G instead of F♯, suggesting the resolution into F (D minor triad), which doesn't follow.

Ex. 43, M. 345 - 348

Instead, Gemrot keeps the tension leaping to E (M. 347). Also, the following two measures with their sonorities Eb, A, B♭ and E, A, B♭ (M. 349 – 350) don’t resolve the ongoing tension, though they function as a preparation for final resolution - Eb-B♭, E-B♭ resolving into F-A (M. 351).
Ex. 44, M. 349 - 351

Those two pitches are exchanged in a triplet/double motion between the two hands for two measures until the tone A is left behind by itself in triple pianissimo M. 353).

This last Molto Lento section is ended by a retrospective entrance of the first dotted motive of the very first Molto Lento section in the Development.

Ex. 45, M. 352 - 355

Following the same pattern of introducing a descending major triad (dotted) beginning on its fifth, Gemrot begins this time with the fifth A of a D major chord, the second time beginning on its seventh (C#), then on its ninth (E). To prolong the ending and fading atmosphere of this section before the very last part of this sonata, Gemrot extends the pattern even further - to the eleventh (G#) and the thirteenth (B) of D major.
By descending back from B (B, G#, E – M. 357), C# - the seventh of the D major triad is here exchanged for C natural signaling a shortly approaching change in character, and possibly in tempo as well. The tone C keeps moving back and forth with its ninth D, still over a D major chord in the bass until it stops on D, uniting a D major harmony in both hands. Somewhat surprisingly after this final resolution, the D major triad is left for C major triad with its third in the top voice so the outer voices move in the opposite direction from each other (D-E, D-C).

Ex. 46, M. 360 – 365,

Since the main motive follows this section in its original setting, we can see that the back and forth moving pitches D, C (M. 357 – 359) suggest the return of the main motive (D, C). Also the C major chord at the end of Molto Lento section was placed on purpose to create a better transition between the outer voices. They move back towards each other, E back to D in the right hand and C to C# in the left hand (M. 361- 362). The C major chord also provides a better transition between the register changes.

The last Agitato section comes back in a fragmentation and stretto like diminution of the main motive. The meter is kept as in the Exposition, exchanging
between 5/8 and 3/8. The first two measures appear as in the beginning of the
Exposition, repeated once without any changes. The third repetition of those first two
measures is placed an octave higher, the fourth repetition increases one more octave (up
to D3). This impatient, frantic character continues with a shift to further material heard
in the Exposition - the short dance like segment in augmented sixth chord sonority in
6/8 meter (M. 370). To increase the intensity of this already furious character, Gemrot
uses this dance-like segment in changing meter - 4/8 and 3/8 moving back and forth.
The harmless dance character is no longer present. The chords quickly move by
ascending thirds from an augmented Eb triad through an augmented Db, Ab, Gb chord to
an octave higher register. This frantic move is briefly slowed down by a change of
meter from 3/8 to 3/4 for about three measures (382).

Ex. 47, M. 377 - 382,

\[ \text{Musical staff image} \]

In the last measure the augmented chords move chromatically until they reach the
sonority D, G#, A. From there a sixteenth note descending passage in toccata character
takes over and brings the sonata to the end. The sonority is created by an octave A with
its perfect fourth D and another octave on D with its perfect fifth A, so D and A are
always present in the right hand. The left hand moves on the black keys only, G#, Bb,
C#, Eb. These quick changes in sonorities, accompanied by a very fast tempo, are probably not heard clearly by the listener.

Ex. 48, M. 383 - 389

However, the repeated chords with the interval combination of major seventh and minor second are surely at least partly recognized by the ear as the basic sonorities returning from the beginning of the sonata.

**Pianistic elements**

The clear sonata form structure and the harmonic language show the influence of classicism in this sonata. Gemrot himself stated that while still a student he admired Prokofiev's writing for its clear, well structured forms, idiosyncratic new musical
language, the simplicity of his motives, and their effective use within his compositions. Gemrot's main motives are very simple; however, his economic use of them is made very effective through an incredible diversity of sound (using different range/octaves on the piano) as well as through the variety and exchange of the primary chosen intervals. This clever combination of applying different compositional aspects to one single motive brings not only an interesting and ongoing sound contrast, but also creates a sense of tension that depends on the particular choice of interval. A great example of this diversity is the main motive of this sonata. It is heard throughout the entire piece quite frequently. However every time it is replayed, its character changes slightly (Ex. 1 and 2).

Ex. 1, M. 1 – 5.

\textit{Agitato (\textit{f} 168 \textit{p})}

Ex. 2, M. 67 – 72.
Further, this same motive is transformed and used in augmentation as a lyrical melodic theme in the very last Lento molto section. This compositional effect might not be as obvious for the listener, and perhaps even after numerous listenings it may not be audible at all without looking at the score; however it represents Gemrot’s idea of contrast, which is a very important aspect for him, often representing figurative ideas such as good and evil, life and death, day and night, etc., in his compositions. This main motive is transformed from having a rather mysterious, anxious, and forward-driving character to a peaceful, lyrical, and drifting character. In this way great contrast is achieved even though the same basic idea and material is used. The pianist must be aware of these variations, and to bring those out must use different speeds and weights of touch, sometimes the use of flat finger technique is appropriate, as in Ex. 3.

Ex. 3, M. 333 – 335.

Another very important effect is achieved through the rhythmical idea. The constant exchange of 5/8 and 3/8 meters in the main motive creates the atmosphere of instability and the feeling of an enormous forward drive in the piece. The performer must make this metric plan clear, creating a balance between asymmetry and regularity. This occurs on several different levels simultaneously and can be observed in the first
two phrases of this sonata. The obvious asymmetry of the 5/8 and 3/8 meter is tied
together by the symmetry created by the regular repetition of both meters, achieving a
well-balanced phrase and a feel of coherence. The next level is on the scale of several
measures. Even though each phrase is built asymmetrically with seven measures, both
phrases together with a total of fourteen measures provide the important balance
between an unsteady and a satisfying feeling.

This sonata is very effective for the piano. Since Gemrot is a pianist himself, his
knowledge of the instrument’s sound and technical possibilities are very much apparent
throughout the entire sonata. He also writes in an incredibly pianistic way. There is not
one spot in the sonata that would be awkward for the pianist to play. That does not
mean however, that Gemrot’s sonata is not technically demanding at all. It certainly
requires a high technical proficiency from the pianist and can be compared to the level
of difficulty of Prokofiev’s earlier piano sonatas, No. 1 and 2 in particular. However,
many difficult and very effective sounding places are not, in fact, so technically
demanding. This is, of course, a very pleasant feature for the interpreter. Even though
every pianist seeks challenging piano pieces to increase his/her technical and musical
expertise, one can never have enough effective piano pieces in the repertoire, and it is
always important to have a few such pieces that can be learned quickly and brought to
the stage in a short period of time, if the concert situation demands it.

A perfect example of this can be seen in M. 54 through 63.
The *toccata*-like repetitive chords, the quick change of register, the use of parallel octaves in unison as well as the shifted rhythm and the contrasting dynamic, the simultaneous use of all these aspects effectively brings the music to its climax at its maximum strength. Difficult and virtuosic as it might sound, it actually sounds harder than it is to play.
Chapter VI

ANALYSIS OF JIŘÍ GEMROT’S SIXTH PIANO SONATA (2007)

FIRST MOVEMENT

Gemrot’s sixth piano sonata was composed in 2006 and contains two separate and contrasting movements. Unlike Gemrot’s second sonata (in one movement), which used the sonata form rather loosely, the sixth sonata more closely follows the classic sonata form, including clear divisions of the Exposition, Development and Recapitulation of the first movement as well as the typically classical use of motives, themes, phrases and well balanced proportions.

EXPOSITION

The Exposition shows Gemrot’s precise and remarkable work with motives. In this section he uses three very transparent themes connected to each other with transitional material taken from one of the themes, either in its exact form or rhythmically and melodically varied. The main motive of the Exposition complements the suggested character in the tempo marking – Allegro appassionato. Gemrot begins very vigorously with the repeated note B played over three octaves in the bass.

Ex.1, M. 1 – 3.

\[ \text{Music notation image} \]
This tone appears as two sixteenth notes on an offbeat. The third note B is a dotted half note on the down beat of the first measure, which continues with a sixteenth note turn between the pitches B and G leading into the second measure. Two chords – B minor and an augmented seventh chord on C - harmonize it. In the second measure, the melodic motive sounds rather interrupted when it ends on G#, C. In contrast to the first measure, where the right hand held a B minor chord over the entire measure, in the second measure the augmented sonority has a very short duration of only a dotted eighth note followed by a silence. The main motive of the left hand is repeated in the third measure with an embellishment of the down beat – B leaps to D and back in dotted rhythm. Also, the motive-ending pitches G# and C are held this time over the entire measure providing harmonic background to the right hand, which imitates and varies not only the leap B-D from the previous measure in the left hand but also the main motive. This second appearance of the main motive leads again to the augmented chord on C, which is led into the second inversion of G minor triad - the resolution of the sixth Bb in the middle voice of the right hand is delayed by a leading motion Eb, D, C, Bb.

(M. 6-7)

Ex. 2, M. 6 – 7.

This G minor sonority doesn’t give the impression of a satisfying resolution and the descending dynamic (from molto forte to piano) underlines this effect. The theme seems to strongly follow the classical build up of a main theme in a sonata form. The
first statement of the motive is introduced within the first two measures; these are entirely repeated with slight changes and lead into a weak harmonic and motivic ending, suggesting another repetition of the motive with perhaps different developments. Even though this similar compositional technique might give the form certain predictability, its well-structured musical content keeps the listener interested and curious throughout the piece.

At the end of the first theme the sixth B♭ of the G minor triad descends on the fourth beat to Ab, marked with an accent, which gives an impulse to a new beginning of the following phrase. The main motive is repeated again, this time with the offbeat figure in the right hand, still with the span of three octaves (M. 7-8). This maneuver sets the right hand into an octave higher register than in the first appearance of the theme. The main motive in the left hand is inverted and ends therefore with ascending pitches C, G♯ instead of G♯, C. By the second repetition of the motive the C, G♯ (changed enharmonically to C, Ab) provides again the harmony for the rest of the theme, moving by inversions of the interval C, Ab into the higher register. The minor third embellishment of the right hand from the previous repetition of the motive is kept as well, but its dotted imitation in the following measure (M.11) extends melodically first from B to a diminished fourth Eb.

Ex. 3, M. 11.
Within the next two measures, this dotted figure (as a fragment of the main motive) occurs in several repetitions, each now ascending chromatically, followed by the same short leading/closing figure heard at the end of the main theme. It appears also in an inversion - B, C#, D, Eb, F - with slightly changed pitches, a kind of answer to the preceding descending figure Eb, D, C, Bb and Ab. It can be observed in this example how well and in what incredible detail Gemrot works with motives, playing with its smallest fragments to achieve a persuasive and effective form. Also at the end of the second repetition of the theme, the listener doesn’t feel a real resolution, even though it seems to have more of a closing character than the first time. The reason for this could be the multiple repetition of the harmonic interval C, Ab/Ab, C, suggesting, along with the melody, the sonority of the Ab major triad, which is finally heard in its completion in a root position on the down beat of M. 14. In a similar way as in the previous closing figure (M. 7 – middle voice of R.H.), the Eb in the melody (as a fifth of the Ab major chord) continues one whole step higher to F moving away from the major triad creating shortly a minor sixth chord on F and a feeling of instability.

The second theme follows in a new tempo Piu animato and a new meter of 3/4. The last interval of the left hand Ab-C (enharmonically changed to G#-C) is stroked again by the right hand as an offbeat in the last measure of the first theme (M. 15). The left hand enters with an electrifying triplet figure and functions for two measures as an introduction to the second theme melody, and then as the accompaniment and harmonic background (M. 16-17).
Ex. 4, M. 16 – 17.

The melody of the second theme appears in two four-measure phrases. Both melodic phrases are based on chords suggested by the left hand, sometimes slightly changed and filled in with passing tones. The pitches G♯-C from the introduction to the second theme are also present in the melodic contour, and appear both times at the end of each theme’s phrase in the form presented in the introduction as a separation between the phrases (M. 22-23 and 28-29). The left hand shows an interesting harmonic as well as a rhythmical build up through the eighth note triplet figure. This figure uses a B minor triad melodically, which ends on a non-triad pitch E♯ and as a quarter note (M. 16). This model is repeated throughout the entire theme, beginning variously on one of the B minor triad pitches, first in descending order B, F♯, D - M. 16, 19 and 21(from which the figure on D is modified using pitches of the D seventh chord instead of B minor triad notes).

Ex. 5, M. 21.
Further, with the increasing tension of the music, the accompaniment figure begins to ascend along with the melody as well as in the appearance of the modified introduction measures which follow. The note value exchange between the two introductory measures - triplets/quarter notes (M. 16) and the following measures of this theme (M. 18), allow the music to get moving and pause very easily. In the accompaniment to the melody, the quarter note is left out and the continuous triplets seem perfect for the animato mood. The buildup of tension is interrupted with the reappearance of the two introduction measures (slightly modified in pitches) relaxing the driving feel through the rhythmical change (M. 23-24). It picks up again with the second phrase of the theme. Here the melody achieves a higher register, and, together with the ascending accompaniment figure, announces an approaching change of character.

The climax is reached after an interesting harmonic modification of the third use of the introductory measures. The created interval between the first and last notes of the accompaniment figure G#, E#, leads into A, F#, from which F# is the leading tone into the following G major triad.

Ex. 6, M. 28 – 29.

The next six measures present a segment of transitional material, which will appear several times in the first movement, functioning either as a resolution of built-up tension and/or as leading material into a new theme. We can also see in this short
section how Gemrot uses intervals and harmonies closely related to the previously heard themes.


The right hand uses two melodically descending minor thirds G-E, Eb-C. This interval combination of two minor thirds connected by a minor second can be found in the beginning of the second theme, although it is modified there. It appears in different order and with minor and major third connected by a minor second (M. 18 and 21). Although the major third was replaced by a minor third, the connection to the motive idea is obvious. The entire group is repeated twice, and each of the thirds is embellished by a turn of five sixteenth notes as a continuity of the metric speed built up during the second theme (M. 30-31). The second repetition uses different rhythm. The left hand provides the harmonic background. All chords are tonal but some of them create dissonant sonorities in combination with the right hand (M. 30-35). The dynamic descends from the climax, from forte to piano, together with the register, which moves one octave lower. The music calms down, the metric drive relaxes into a larger note value arriving finally on F# major triad with a melodic tone C (M. 34). This sonority creates a calmer, though still unsettled, atmosphere.

The next section is a modified repetition of the second theme. This time the roles of each hand are exchanged. The introduction measures follow the previous model (M. 36-37).
Ex. 8, M. 36 – 37.

Both hands determine the harmonic sense of C, the left hand with contra C held through both measures, the right hand playing the triplet figure on C minor triad (with the ending quarter note F# - M. 36). The theme’s melody appears now in the left hand and follows the same contour as in its first appearance. Gemrot also uses the same harmonic relationship between the two hands as he did the first time. They are related by minor third – the right hand figure is based on C minor triad and the left hand begins the theme in Eb major (the first time the left hand’s figure was based on B minor triad and the right hand began the theme in D major). The two measures interrupting the main theme, as could be heard the first time, are changed to only one measure and the hands again exchange their tasks to provide variation – the left hand takes over the accompanying triplet figure (Ex. 9, M. 42-43).

Ex. 9, M. 42 – 43.

The diminished fourth G#-C from the first second theme is here replaced by the minor third G-Bb (which is the beginning interval of the theme in this section). Because of the hands’ switch, it is here played by the left hand. The second phrase uses fragmentation
of the theme (M. 44-46), which ascends in pitch every two measures until this melody is interrupted by dotted rhythm, both hands in unison (M. 48).

Ex. 10, M. 48.

The melodic line begins on B♭ and descends mostly in half/whole step motion. Within the next three measures it leaps one more time to B♭ and then to D♭. This occurs irregularly on different beats to increase the intensity of the build-up to crescendo, which then leads into the same short climax section as heard after the first appearance of the second theme (M. 51).

This climax-transitional segment is almost identical with the previous one. The length remains six measures. The harmonic progression follows the same pattern but is transposed a perfect fourth lower (beginning on D major triad instead of G). There is only a slight modification of the use of different inversions of the chosen triads (Tables No. 1 and 2).

Table No. 1, M. 30 – 35.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>G - root position</th>
<th>Eb - sixth chord</th>
<th>C - root position</th>
<th>F - root position</th>
<th>F# - root position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Table No. 2, M. 51 – 56.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>D - root position</th>
<th>B♭ - sixth chord</th>
<th>G - six/four chord</th>
<th>C - sixth chord</th>
<th>D♭ - root position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
The direction of movement of the chords is changed as well, so the first leap starts up instead of down (M. 51). The dynamic range is kept the same as well; the climax appears, of course, first in *moltó forte* and then within six measures fades away.

At this moment Gemrot introduces a new theme (Ex. 11, M. 57). It is twice as long as the first and second themes (30 measures). The melody has lyrical character and because of the two-voice accompaniment in long note values (dotted/regular half notes), instead of the *agitato* figure from the second theme, the music seems to be much calmer, at least in the beginning.

Ex. 11, M. 57.

```
\begin{music}
|\end{music}
```

However, it clearly keeps continuity in direction. This entire theme is built up in three phrases. The melody in the first phrase contains some ideas of the previous second theme. The similarity can be seen mainly in the use of identical intervals — a descending third G, E at the beginning, diminished seventh E, Db in M. 60-61, which is only enharmonically changed - M. 40-41 Fb-Db. The melody has a floating character, which is achieved here by a tie between the third and first beat used regularly every other measure throughout the entire section.
Ex. 12, M. 59 – 65.

The harmony is based mainly on atonal sonorities resolving continuously intervallic tension created between the two outer voices (diminished ninth, major seventh, augmented fourth, etc.). This not only maintains the flow of the music, but also makes it possible to emotionally slow down the phrase, when it resolves into complete tonal harmony (C major in M. 65) at its end. The second phrase is only two measures shorter than the previous one, and is otherwise very similar to it in all musical and rhythmical aspects. The most interesting feature here is the appearance of a new middle voice in the right hand, which first occurs in M. 69 below the melody (this is changed in the third phrase where it appears above the theme).

Ex. 13, M. 69.

The third phrase repeats the entire melody of the first phrase. However, this is not so obvious at first listening because other aspects are changed. The second voice in the right hand (placed above the melody) together with the middle voice of the left hand
creates an ascending chromatic line (M. 78, 80, 82, 84). The bass becomes a pedal point on F# which is played every other measure.

Ex. 14, M. 77 – 89.

In M. 75 (Ex. 13) another voice appears in the left hand placed between the bass and the middle voice of the left hand. This voice functions as another harmonic bass line and is regularly exchanged with the pedal point. It also moves in half/whole steps. This lining up of all voices in different registers creates an incredibly intense emotional and musical build up. The theme is of course extended to prolong the buildup so the entire phrase is fourteen measures long. The culmination of this third theme is expressed again in the same way as before – with the leaping chords in the left hand and the embellished minor third in the right hand. The harmonic progression is changed here because it eventually leads into the Development section.

Table 3, M. 87 – 90.

|------------------|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|--------------------|------------------|

The entire segment is shorter (only four measures) and the harmony is based first on a repeated Ab major triad to prolong the culmination achieved after the long build-up.
The right hand plays only one interval this time (minor third Eb, C) instead of two as in the previous sections (M. 87). However the register is changed each time. Because this third transitional segment leads into the Development, the dynamic also has to be changed. It continues in \textit{molto forte} with a crescendo at the end, where with the entrance of the modified first theme, the Development section is reached (Ex. 15 M. 91).

Ex. 15, M. 91.

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{image1}
\caption{Ex. 15, M. 91.}
\end{figure}

\textbf{DEVELOPMENT}

The Development section follows the standard procedures of the classical sonata form. Here Gemrot develops all three themes introduced in the Exposition, although sometimes in a very unusual way.

Gemrot develops the themes in the same order as they appeared in the Exposition, but the first and second themes are used several times before the appearance of the last theme. He begins the Development with a clear reappearance of the very first motive in the same meter of $4/4$ (M. 91). As expected, it is varied but not only by transposition. It appears here in a major mode and in the mirrored form heard before in
the Exposition. The motive is repeated twice, as it was originally, but at the end of its fourth measure (M. 94) it is suddenly broken up and followed by a fermata.

The meter and the tempo change with the entrance of the second theme. The triplet figure begins in the previously suggested harmony (at the beginning of the Development – M. 91), based on A major triad.

Ex. 16, M. 95 – 96.

The right hand enters one measure earlier imitating the triplet figure, beginning on G double sharp and signaling further harmonic changes (M. 96). The first two measures of the second theme follow the original melodic contour exactly; the triplet figure changes harmonically every measure. The fragmentation of the theme brings with it faster rhythmical speed.

Ex. 17, M. 100 – 104.

Supported by an accelerando and growing dynamic, the music becomes very energetic. Finally, in M. 105 a dotted rhythm in the right hand takes over in the right hand.
Ex. 18, M. 105.

It is still playing a melodic line, however, it moves through about two octaves within Eb3 and C1. The left hand is interesting here. Even though it provides a certain harmonic background, in closer analysis we can see clear similarities with the melodic contour of the first main motive from the Exposition.


Ex. 20, M. 105 – 113, left hand only (E, D, C, Ab, G, Bb, A).

It is, of course, augmented and most probably not audible for the listener, but again shows Gemrot’s fascinating and detailed work with themes. This eight-measure long segment is followed by three measures of the triplet figure from the second theme, this time used in triads, which makes the music more dramatic and frantic.
Ex. 21, M. 113 – 114.

The intensity and dynamic are still increasing, leading into another theme fragment of the Exposition. While the right hand keeps playing the triplet figure, changed from triads to a major second, the left hand presents another melodic fragment of the main theme, taken from the middle voice leading figure before the second repetition of the first theme in the Exposition (M. 116-119)

Ex. 22, M. 116 – 119.

This descending line appears here as a melody fragment, beginning on F# instead of on Eb and two octaves lower. This perfectly prepares the harmonic setup for the climax, which occurs four measures later as a reassurance of the A sonority reached already once before in M. 113. This high point again uses the triplet figure in A minor, in contrast to the rather more lyrical A major from the beginning of the Development. The left hand reintroduces the energetic sixteenth-note motion from the very first motive,
repeated three times without any further progression of the motive. With the until-now highest dynamic of triple forte, the music makes the impression of a final statement.

This is weakened two measures later by the triplet figure in a continuous triplets motion (without the quarter note on the third beat) fading in dynamic and moving towards higher register, thus creating the space for the new following melody in the left hand.

After the multiple transformations of both first and second themes from the Exposition, leading dramatically to the strongest culmination in this movement, Gemrot uses this moment for a short reminiscent entrance of the more poetic third theme, although with different accompaniment – the ongoing triplet figure. (M. 124)

Ex. 23, M. 124.

Through a ritenuto and a setup of the note Eb/D♯ as a leading tone, the sonority resolves into the A major triad. Another fragment of the second theme is heard, for the last time. Because of the discontinuation of the triplet figure, the music appears peaceful (M. 129).

Ex. 24, M. 129.
With the entrance of the sixteenth note figure (quintuple), which has been used throughout the Exposition as transitional material before a new theme, and which did not appear at all in the Development, the approach of a new section is clearly signaled. The B minor triad in the beginning of the following Recapitulation is achieved in the right hand by descending thirds: G-E, Eb-C, Db-A# (Bb). The left hand moves chromatically through this entire transitional segment. On the last beat of the last measure of the Development (M. 142) both hands create the sonority of F, A#, C#, which finally leads into the Recapitulation.

Ex. 25, M. 142.

**RECAPITULATION**

The Recapitulation follows mainly the classical sonata form and its compositional procedures. It begins with the main theme of the sonata. The melodic contours as well as all harmonic progressions remain without changes. The ending of the second repetition of the theme is slightly changed to achieve the harmonies of the second theme.

Instead of following the model of the classical sonata form, where the second theme is usually in a different mode than in the Exposition, Gemrot keeps the same harmonies (accompaniment is still based on B minor triad and the beginning of the
melody is played in D), however the hands exchange their role so the B minor of the accompaniment is now above the melody in D played by the left hand.

Ex. 26, M. 159.

This is followed by the two introductory measures with one pitch change in M. 166 to provide variety in the sound color.

Ex. 27, M. 166.

The second part of the theme reappears as in the Exposition, so the melody is again in the right hand above the accompanying figure. At the end of the second theme, one measure of ascending dotted line is added to be able to place the following six-measure segment into its transposition of the original in the Exposition (here a perfect fifth higher in C).

Ex. 28, M. 173.
The first three chord progressions in the left hand are kept in the same interval relation as in the Exposition. The last two sonorities are changed to provide better harmonic lead-in to the next section, which is another reappearance of the beginning of the second theme, transposed a perfect fourth higher, on F. However after the two introduction measures the second theme melody does not appear here; instead the left hand joins the right hand to a continuous triplet figure passage in unison, which descends over six measures into a lower register and leads then into the third theme.

The reappearance of the third theme follows the exact buildup from the Exposition including the multiple levels of the different voices in ascending stepwise motion at the end. It is only transposed a perfect fifth lower so the pedal point appears on B instead of F#. It culminates as it did previously into the sixteenth note embellishment section, which is here first based harmonically on a Db major triad and then moves over C major and A minor to a single note F, which provides the harmonic background of the next part. The right hand repeats only one interval this time – the minor third Ab, F.

The next part of the Recapitulation introduces completely new material and so differs from the typical sonata form. Its character is very peaceful; the mostly tonal chords in both hands suggest a chorale-like character. Even though still in 3/4 meter, the long held triads in dotted half or quarter notes create a feel of a slower 4/4 meter.

Ex. 29, M. 224.
The entire section is, of course, not completely tonal, but the returning Bb major represents the feel of the main key orientation. The entire section consists of one theme which is built with four six-bar phrases, and is repeated once more in its entire length, with the change of register and dynamic. This peaceful hymn-like theme is however continuously interrupted by the embellished figure of a minor third, heard many times throughout the sonata (M. 239).

Ex. 30, M. 239.

It occurs regularly after each phrase of the theme (six bars), and also in the second repetition. Every phrase is also preceded with one bar of the held note F (M. 241) in the bass in the first part of this choral section, which is then replaced in the second part by a leading figure of repeated pitches F and Bb in a broken-chord-like passage (M. 266). In the first appearance of this theme, the embellished figure is always played twice by the right hand only (with the exception of M. 248 and 249, where it appears only once because of the melodic additional measure leading into the last fourth phrase). Here the minor third Ab-F is embellished. It is played first in the octave of Ab₃, and then repeated in the next measure one octave lower (M. 230). The entire theme is in the dynamic of molto piano. The second repetition is led in by a figure of seven eighth notes playing a broken Bb major triad without its third, which appears before each phrase, replacing the previous bar of the pitch F. The dynamic changes suddenly into
**fortissimo.** The theme is then repeated one octave higher in the root position of a Bb major triad in the bass.

Ex. 31, M. 258.

This is in opposition to the beginning, where the phrase was underlined with the Bb second inversion chord, which was more suitable there for the hymn-like character.

The embellishment figure is now played by both hands to accommodate to the **fortissimo** dynamic (M. 264). It also again uses two descending minor thirds with different pitches, as heard before throughout the sonata. In its third repetition the figure is elongated over four measures. Finally the last measure of the theme is delayed, interrupted by the embellishment figure (Ex. 32, M. 290), beginning this time on beat two with ascending thirds D-Cb and E-C#. The intensity is increased through a crescendo, which culminates in the Bb major triad in the left hand with the embellishment figure in the right hand playing the major third F-D for the first time, as a final resolved statement (Ex. 32, M. 293). The dynamic is the strongest of the entire movement in triple **forte**.

The climax of the sonata is reached here in an unusual way, through the introduction of a new theme together with only one segment known from the Exposition (the embellishment figure). Because the first appearance of the theme is so calm, it provides enough space for more intense buildup and an even more powerful climax.
After the final climax is reached, the embellished third figure descends in repetition of the same major third F-D, fading away in dynamic and slowing down the rhythmical speed by the use of half notes (M. 294).

Ex.32, M. 294.

In M. 298, the tempo is changed back to the original tempo from the beginning of this movement. The previously reached note D1 in the right hand is held, without being stroked again, over the first two measures, while the left hand, after releasing the B♭ harmony, enters with the first motive of the original theme as the last reminiscence of it.
Ex. 33, M. 300.

The right hand replays the tone D by a quick leap to F, which reminds us of the same third figure (Ex. 33, M. 299-300), heard in the main motive (there as the third B-D).

The motive is then repeated again as at the beginning of the movement with a slight prolongation of G# (M. 301). The melodic line originally played by the middle voice, appears here in the left hand one octave higher, maintaining, however, the same pitches (M. 302). It is repeated one more time beginning on G (G, F#, E, D, C), which perfectly leads into the original pitch from the very beginning – B (M. 308). The sixteenth note figure from the beginning (repeated tone B ascending over three octaves) reappears here in opposite direction, first in its original (B three times), then with only an octave, and finally as the last stroke of a single tone B – in triple piano (M. 308-311).

SECOND MOVEMENT

The second movement is in ternary form with a short Coda. The A sections are in an Andante moderato tempo. The middle section is fast, which, using similar
material, also appears at the end as a Coda. The first part of this movement, Section A, presents two contrasting themes, both of which are repeated several times with some variety. The B section is a fast driven toccata, which reminds us only loosely of the themes presented in part one. It is the longest section in this movement (146 measures) and also the most dramatic. The third part, A, returns clearly with the reappearance of the first theme of the beginning of this movement. This section is perhaps the most interesting of all. We will see in detailed analysis how Gemrot combines all the themes heard before that time, including themes from both the first and second movements. At the end of the Exposition, the chorale-like section from the first movement is heard again with the incorporated first theme from the second movement. Also Gemrot’s feeling for economical use of themes is apparent here in an incredibly effective and interesting way. The final Coda in the toccata character from the middle section brings this movement to its end.

FIRST PART, SECTION A – *Andante moderato*

The first section consists of two different themes, both of which appear several times throughout this section, with each repetition slightly varied. The first theme is based on a harmonic progression of six different chords, which are positioned very closely to each other to keep the movement between them within a minimal space.

Ex. 1, M. 1 – 7.
The melody, too, is composed with a beautiful simplicity. It uses the upper notes of the created chords; these are only two pitches E and F. Each one is embellished by a figure of four or eight eighth notes, which provide the feeling of a slow walking *Andante moderato*. (It is perhaps not a coincidence that the first movement’s main motive also began with an embellishment of the first tone, B, to move to the following triad.) Both hands play the chords and the majority of the melody, which makes the impression of a dense, barely moving texture (M. 2, 4 and 6). This combination underlines well the *lontano* character indicated by Gemrot in the score. The first phrase is built on a regular rhythmic idea - one bar of a long held chord is interchanged with one measure of the eighth note movement. The music begins to move slowly forward in M. 8. The eighth note figure from M. 6 is played again but with the first interval raised one step higher - to a major third F - A.

Ex.2, M. 8 – 12.

The same idea also repeats in the following measure, expanding the first interval even farther (F, Bb). In the next two measures the melodic direction of this eighth note figure is modified so the rhythmic speed becomes faster (2x4 and 2x2, Ex. 2, M. 8-12). The left hand accompanies the eighth note movement by a similar melodic line in quarter notes. These four measures function as a smooth transition into the higher register where the main theme is replayed again (M. 12). The first seven measures repeat
almost exactly, the left hand becomes more active filling in the previous long held chord measures with a descending broken chord following the same harmony. Also this phrase is followed by transitional material leading into the second theme.

The left hand introduces sixteenth-note motion (M. 19) and becomes an ostinato figure in the accompaniment for the entire second theme (at first on F).

Ex. 3, M. 19.

The melody is greatly embellished and feels almost improvisatory, with its frequent note value changes and irregular melodic contour. After a short break of the ostinato accompaniment (Ex. 4, M. 25), the theme returns again with a similar ostinato figure in the left hand, this time based on Bb. This phrase is shorter and ends with an augmentation of the first motive in the right hand, leading thus into the next reappearance of the main theme (Ex. 5, M. 29-30).

Ex. 4, M. 25.
Ex. 5, M. 29 – 30.

The melody remains the same as at the beginning of this movement. The left hand however keeps the previous ostinato accompaniment idea. This way, the previously established forward movement does not stop again and helps the general flow of the music. The ostinato figure begins this time with the pitches C#, E, F (M. 30). It is changed, however, every time when the right hand plays a long held chord in the melody. Then the ostinato figure follows the pitches of the chord and also extends to the lower register to provide sound variety (M. 36).

Ex. 6, M. 36.

This particular figure and the carefully chosen pitches give the otherwise calm sounding theme an eerie atmosphere. After the first seven measures of the theme, Gemrot keeps the previous pattern of the structure and continues again with a transitional material (Ex. 6, M. 37).
This time the previously used eighth note figure of the right hand is varied with a gradual increasing note value (Ex. 6, M. 39 and Ex. 7, M. 40-41) which underlines the crescendo and helps to build up the dramatic mood.

Ex. 7, M. 40 – 41.

The main theme resounds again as the climax of the previous built tension in *forte*. The theme is played in full heavy chords (M. 42-43); the left hand follows the contour of the melody now (in contrast to the beginning where the left hand kept a dotted half note bass line for harmonic coloration). The dotted half note chords are kept as they were originally without any additional accompaniment, so the music seems to slow down.

This third repetition of the theme is at the highest dynamic until this point, and is therefore the most intense in character. The added figure on E (M. 44) of two ascending thirty-second notes followed by a half note played by the right hand (over three octaves) underlines the feeling of a certain growing anger. The theme is kept to its original length of seven measures; however the ongoing intensity evolves into a different ending. The last triad Cb, Db, F of the original theme (M. 7) is replaced by a new sound of Gb, Ab, F (M. 48) to prolong the tension. The following two chords, still in non-resolving sonorities, and the repeated figure on E keep the listener curious as to what comes next.
Ex. 8, M. 48.

The *molto forte* is abruptly interrupted by an A minor triad in its second inversion in a sudden dynamic change – to *piano* (M. 51). The following two measures imitate the eighth note motion of the main motive but the few chords (three different chords in the right hand, two in the left hand) seem to turn in a loop, which creates the feeling of disorientation (M. 52-53).

Ex. 9, M. 51.

This unsettled character does not change even with the entrance of the second theme two measures later (M. 54). This effect is mainly caused by the ongoing two-chord loop accompaniment in the left hand (B♭ and G♯ minor triad, M. 54-55) in combination with the bigger register span between the melody and the chords (the melody is now set two octaves higher than in the first appearance, M. 54).

Ex. 10, M. 57 – 58.
The first five measures of the second theme melody repeat without changes, transposed an augmented fourth higher. The left hand eventually leaves of the two-chord loop four measures later (M. 56) and continues with minor descending triads in a minor third sequence (M. 57-58), which ends on the sonority of A, C, D and is held for almost three measures while the right hand continues with the descending line of triplets. The last three measures can be seen again as transitional material leading into the next section.

Ex. 11, M. 59 – 61.

In M. 62 the first theme appears for the fourth time. The melody is played now by the left hand only. The right hand continues with the previously heard triplets, though here as an accompanying figure of two measures, rather than as an additional melody.

Ex. 12, M. 62.

This is similar to the procedure used earlier in the movement during the second appearance of the theme, where the accompaniment ostinato figure was taken from the previous section as a continuous element (see M. 30). We will see in further analysis that Gemrot tries in this way to achieve better continuity throughout the entire piece. The last appearance of the theme in this part differs from the original melody in its
melodic direction. The first three measures are the same (M. 62-64). Then, however, the melody seems to follow the original in its mirrored version. Therefore in M. 65 the eighth note figure is changed so the melodic note in M. 66 becomes an Eb in an Ab minor triad, instead of the melodic tone F in the Bb triad in the same place of the original theme (M. 5).

Ex. 13, M. 66.

The melody continues to descend together with the triplet accompaniment in the right hand and leads after a short ritardando into a new section (M. 71).

Ex. 14, M. 71.

Perhaps a little unexpectedly, Gemrot reintroduces the choral-like theme from the first movement. It appears in G together with some of the material heard immediately before. The triplets are first used as an embellishment of the bass accompaniment on the second and fourth beat, however, Gemrot uses it immediately in the second measure of the theme (M. 73) in the right hand where it appears as a shortened version of the two-measure accompaniment figure from the last appearance of the theme (M. 62).
Ex. 15, M. 73.

The first two measures are underlined with the pedal point G. The melody does not progress further here contrary to what occurred in the first movement. The melody simply repeats the first two measures of the motive. The left hand changes the harmonic feel, at first with the descending thirds G, Eb, C, A. The last sonority is based on the pitches Ab, C#, D, D# (and their enharmonic equivalents), from which the Ab is in the bass and D functions as the last melodic note of the rather reminiscent sounding choral motive.

Ex. 16, M. 74 – 75.

This particular sound color does not make the impression of a resolved satisfying sonority and signals a shortly approaching change of character. Also interesting here is the change of meter. In the first movement, this theme appeared in 3/4 meter however because of the use of long note values on each melody tone, the feel of the theme seemed to be in 4/4 meter. Here it is written in 4/4, and because of the slow tempo, it sounds almost identical to the first movement. For variation, the second and fourth measures (M. 73, 75) are in 5/4 meter because of the use of the three-beat embellishing
figure in the right hand. This short reminiscence of this peaceful tune ends with the last measure in 3/4 meter with only the repetition of the embellishing figure in triple piano.

SECOND PART, SECTION B (Toccata)

The middle section of the second movement is a fast virtuoso toccata. It is set into a 5/8 meter, which underlines well the driving character of the section, and makes the effect of the tension stronger. The entire section does not seem to use any of the previously heard material except for the beginning interval – the augmented fifth C - G# (M. 77).

Ex. 17, M. 77.

We hear this particular interval throughout the entire sonata. It appeared for the first time in the second measure of the main theme in the first movement, only in inversion (G#, C) and in the second repetition of the theme then as C, G#. Gemrot also used this interval in the two introduction measures of the second theme in the Exposition (M. 16 and 17) as well as in the Recapitulation (M. 159 and 160). It is perhaps interesting that at the beginning of the second movement this interval appears also in the second measure as it did in the first movement, only in the opposite direction (G#, C). It functions here as a part of the harmony (in the left hand) while in the first movement it was used in the melody as a part of the main motive. In this middle section, Gemrot
also begins the *toccata* with this particular interval – ascending C - G#. He creates a melodic and rhythmic group by adding a descending chromatic line, which leads again to the beginning pitch C (M. 77-79). This way Gemrot makes this short motive a model, which he uses throughout the entire section with small variations and modifications. We will see in further analysis, how he works with this short and quite simple motive. It shows once again Gemrot’s particular ability to use motives economically but still very effectively. In the first part of the *toccata* Gemrot uses the main short motive, at first transposed – three times in ascending thirds (beginning on C, Eb, Gb, A – understood of course enharmonically, M. 77 and 81-83).

Ex. 18, M. 81 – 83.

The accompaniment in the left hand, having the rhythmic pattern of the first and fourth eighth note in each measure, supports the general driven feel of the music well. It is also interesting to observe Gemrot’s efficient use of material here. The bass line of the first seven measures begins on A and the entire contour creates a diminished seventh chord A, C, Eb, F# (enharmonically of course) which is the inversion of the outline used above in the right hand (M. 77 and 81-83). The second phrase begins in the same way as the first phrase with the same motive in the right hand. However the left hand introduces abruptly a repeated note Eb in *forte* in the second measure, which creates more tension between the two voices and the character becomes even more urgent.
Ex. 19, M. 86.

This repeated pitch of five-eighth notes becomes another element that repeats throughout the entire *toccata*. We will also see that after every appearance of this figure, either immediately or shortly after, there is a melodic change as well as a change of direction in the other voice. We see this already after the first appearance of the repeated Eb, where the fourth measure of the motive (M. 98) continues in an ascending chromatic motion instead of descending.

Ex. 20, M. 98.

This technique brings the motive higher in register, and further, the entire first section is brought to its climax, when the same interval C - G# that is used at the beginning is reached one octave higher with the repeated five eighth notes on C# (M. 105). After the constant chase and continuous ascending movement between both hands, this particular sonority of C, C#, G# feels fulfilling and is well chosen for the climax. To prolong this finally attained feeling of satisfaction in the fast tempo, Gemrot repeats the figure G#, C, G#, F double sharp, G# in the right hand seven times.
Ex. 21, M. 105.

The left hand, after the repeated figure on C# in the low register, plays the same figure in higher register on G#2 (M. 107). Then it comes back to the repeated C# over three octaves of D (M. 108-110). A short break of silence and an A minor triad in both hands in *sf\"erzato* interrupts the build-up of tension (M. 112), and another new phrase starts with the same main motive, this time in the left hand (M. 113).

Ex. 22, M. 113.

From this point on Gemrot uses all of the previously introduced material. The main motive appears either in transpositions played by either hand, in inversions or in slight modifications. The minor triad in *sf\"erzato* (later used with several triads in a row) also appears several times throughout the entire section (M. 112), always functioning as a separation between particular sections. There are always changes afterwards either in dynamics, register, intensity etc. The one-measure long figure of repeated pitch also becomes more frequent and longer as well (two to three measures in a row, M. 184). It usually increases the ongoing intensity, especially when the pitch is doubled in octave (M. 179).
Towards the end of this section both hands more often play passages without any rests. The music becomes more frantic and unpredictable. After the second climax, where both hands are at their most distant from each other in register and interval (right hand on D4 and left hand on lowest C#, both doubled in octaves), the intensity begins to drop (M. 191-194).


The right hand plays a passage of ascending broken thirds; the left hand plays on the black keys only in the same direction. This is repeated three times with the interruption of the previously heard octaves on D and C#. The music fades away. Finally a similar short motive appears in the left hand accompanied by a repeated tone D in the right hand. This passage has some similarities with the melodic line from the last two triads’ passages in *sforzato* as well as the last melodic line of the bass at the end of the first movement.
Ex. 25, M. 206.

After the numerous repetitions of the tone D and its two-measure long pause, it returns again in a repetition of three, two and one (M. 216, 219, 221) similarly to the end of the first movement (there on B).


This rhythmical slowdown and the fact that both hands are unified on D, perfectly sets the calm atmosphere from the returning theme. The last held minor second D, Eb in the left hand also smoothly resolves into the minor third C#, E of the first sonority of the returning main motive.

Ex. 27, M. 221.
THIRD PART. SECTION C – Andante Moderato

The main theme from the first part A returns one octave higher in both hands. Here Gemrot also uses one element from the previous section (as he did several times previously before in this movement), it is the repeated tone D, kept as a group of five (M. 225). Gemrot places this figure in the measure of the long held triads always on beats two and three (from which the third beat is missing the first note of the group). The first group appears on D4, the second on D1 so the triads placed in-between seem to be captured by the two Ds. This register span, together with the interval tension created between the tone D, and the particular triad bring a somewhat eerie character to the music. The phrase does not follow the harmonic structure in the beginning of this movement. In the fourth measure of the theme, (M. 226) the melody is modified similarly to M. 65 so it can harmonically resolve into the same triad Ab minor.

Ex. 28, M. 226.

However it further differs from all appearances of the theme heard until now. The bass line steps even further down to Gb (M. 228), F and back to F# so creating new sonorities. After three transitional measures the theme is repeated again. The melody is played by the left hand in the original register. The right hand accompanying in triplets reminds the listener of a similar previously heard version of the theme in M. 62. This time however only the first triplet E, D#, E is repeated in a span of three octaves.
Ex. 29, M. 233.

The melody of the theme changes immediately in the second measure, where it takes off in the opposite direction than that in the original. After the 6/4-triad on C, the melodic line begins to ascend using small intervals (major and minor seconds, minor third). The bass line rises as well creating a row of 6/4-triads (with one exception in M. 236).

Ex. 30, M. 236 – 238.

This rising motion is stopped by the two measures of minor chords heard before in M. 53 where it calmed the previously reached climax. Even though it uses the same triads with the same pitches, the one higher octave register makes the music seem brittle (M. 239). The same slightly changed version of the second theme follows with different accompaniment in walking eighth notes (M. 241). The melody becomes fragmented over several measures and towards the end it repeats only one element of the second theme’s motive. It creates a loop where with every repetition one note is added at the end.
Ex. 31, M. 246 – 248.

The left hand uses similar looping procedures however with an ascending effect. This whole section with the loss of meter creates a feeling of disorientation. Though a ritenuto at the end it is finally led into the main theme of the first movement (M. 252).

Ex. 32, M. 252.

Because of the slower tempo, the several octaves higher register, and in piano, it appears very poetic, calm, and missing the drama from the beginning of the first movement. These two and half measures of reminiscence on this theme are interrupted by a short pause and the previous looping melody takes over again for another two measures (M. 255-256). After another ritenuto the choral tune from the first movement returns in fortissimo with the same leading figure, its triads based on B major harmony. This moment seems victorious mainly because of the effect of unifying the two main themes from both movements of this sonata (the theme from the second movement is played by the left hand, M. 257).
Ex. 33, M. 257.

Every two measures the two themes are exchanged between the two hands so each hand plays first two measures of one theme, then of the other. The choral tune itself follows the harmonic language and progressions from the first movement. At the end the melody repeats three times the very last measure of the phrase (F#, D#, C#, F#) is modified every time by a rhythmic and melodic variation (use of a triplet) to prolong the preparation for the resolving climax on B.

Ex. 34, M. 264 – 265.

However the resolution into B is also surprisingly prolonged by the reappearance of the toccata material in 5/8 meter. Here Gemrot uses the same model of the main motive however fragmented and in even faster tempo (prestissimo).

Ex. 35, M. 267.
The entire section descends about two octaves. The left hand drops out after a fourmeasure crescendo resolving into a sforzato. The right hand continues alone in a loop of tones between the C# and Gb.

Ex. 36, M. 277.

After all pitches of the loop are used as the first note of the turning group, the melodic line leads into B, which is the resolution of the long delayed climax, however here it functions only as a harmonic result since the dynamic is back to piano. The very last section is based on a pedal point B which is represented by a pulsing eighth note repetition in the left hand. The speed seems to almost increase by the change of meter from 5/8 into 6/8. The right hand enters after three measures of pedal point with a short melodic phrase similar to the middle voice leading melodic line from the first movement at the end of the first theme.

Ex. 37, M. 290.

Also here the first four notes are within an interval of a perfect fourth, the last fifth note seems added at the end. This phrase is repeated three times in augmentation, it progresses down two octaves lower where it leads over C into the pedal point B as a unifying resolution. Similarly to the end of the first movement, where Gemrot used a
fragmented figure from the main motive in three short repetitions, in which each repetition is shortened by one note, Gemrot uses this procedure also at the end of this second movement. The pulsing eighth-note figure, now in triple forte is interrupted by two measures of silence, followed by only a fragmented repetition of three eighth notes, which are proceeded by another two-measure break and lead to the end of this movement with only one more repetition of the pitch B.

Ex. 38, M.

It appears on the second beat (off beat) in M. 322, doubled in an octave and in a surprising sudden piano. The repetition of the closing procedure, with its driving toccata, as well as the fact that the sonata ends on the same pitch with which it began, give the culmination a coherent and very satisfying feeling.

**Pianistic aspects**

Gemrot’s sixth sonata strikes the listener first by its incredible passionate character and rhythmic power. Its clear arrangement of structure and recognizable motivic development are accessible to any listener. In a remarkable way Gemrot again uses the full range of sound dispositions of the instrument. The passionate character is
well underlined by the rhythmical idea of the main motive – two sixteenth notes as offbeat, then a dotted rhythm that is well suited for the *appassionato* character. The combination of all these aspects, together with the large span between the right and left hand in the first two phrases, creates a bold and clear affect. The power of this sound, which surely catches every listener’s attention immediately, is created here by the use of the full keyboard register rather than through a large amount of notes or heavy chords (Ex. 1).

Ex. 1, M. 1 – 10.

One of Gemrot’s characteristic features in his compositions is his great ability to create a naturally sounding flow with effective changes of the texture, often using a distinct rhythmical figuration to help the musical motion. We can observe this in the entrance of the second theme where the triplets figure accompaniment in the left hand takes over the inner pulse of the second theme section. The pianist must create independent dynamic for each hand, realizing this, the counterpoint and the foreground and background aspects of the passage become clear.
A similar example can be found in the second movement, where the slow main theme in *Andante moderato* is exchanged by the more forward flowing second theme. Here Gemrot also uses a faster note value (continuous sixteenth note figure) in his accompaniment. Another interesting aspect in this particular figure can be seen in its melodic metric division, which is completely different from the regular meter of this theme. This repetitive figure is actually only six sixteenth notes long, which gives it the pulse of three eighth notes.

This figure repeats again to complete the entire measure in 3/4 meter. In this way, Gemrot creates two different meters occurring at the same time, 3/8 within 3/4 meter (M. 20).

Ex. 3, M. 20.
This particular feature does not occur only in the buildup of the emotional portion in the piece; Gemrot also uses this effectively as a prolongation of the already-built excitement, such as in the Development section of the first movement in M. 115 through 122 (Ex. 3).

Ex. 4, M. 115 – 122.

Gemrot usually builds his sonatas in a conventional sonata form; however, he sometimes surprises the listener with a new section that is often placed before the very last part of the sonata, or a particular movement. In this sonata Gemrot chose a very simple, folk-like tune. The choral-like setting together with the contrasting B flat major harmony creates a feeling of distance from the emotion and very intense character of the previous musical developments. This particular section has no motivic connection to the earlier appearance of the themes and it still seems completely natural and well-placed once heard in context.
Ex. 5, M. 224 – 229.

The endings of Gemrot’s piano sonatas are often very dynamic and effective. Technically demanding and emotionally driving passages also bring this sonata to its end. Rhythmic acceleration and change of meter (or at least different rhythmic groupings asymmetric to the regular meter) often accompany the final powerful passage. At the end of this sonata the meter of 5/8 is changed to 6/8, which increases the rhythmic intensity (M. 286 – 287).

Ex. 6, M. 286 – 287.

Another of Gemrot’s typical compositional marks in this section is an incorporated melodic element from the previously heard motives. This can be observed in the final toccata-like section of the second movement of this sonata (Ex. 7, M. 290 – 295), where Gemrot uses the short closing melodic line of the middle voice (see Ex. 1, M. 6) from the main theme of the first movement.
Ex. 7, M. 290 – 295.

It is used in augmentation, repeated in a descending motion and increasing dynamic. This particular compositional gesture gives the sonata the final touch of coherence. The last note B also underlines this feel since the sonata started with the exact same pitch.

Like Gemrot’s second piano sonata, this piece is remarkably well composed and pianistic. Gemrot clearly maintains his unique musical language that was already present in his second sonata, but here it has obviously matured and deepened. The stylistic elements found in it are appealing both from the perspective of the listener and the performer. The piece’s superficial similarity to neoclassicism may at first exposure strike the listener as being somewhat traditional, but interesting musical ideas abound within, making it a true joy both to hear and to perform.
CONCLUSION

This paper began by posing the question of what effects a situation in which an arbitrary force held back a society’s normal path of artistic development had on creative individuals within that society. To this end, this paper examined the life of Jiří Gemrot, a composer who was active in both the later part of the Communist era in Czechoslovakia, as well as remaining active as a composer in the Czech Republic to this day. The history of musical developments during the Communist period of Czechoslovakia was briefly examined, as were some of the changes that took place after the fall of the regime in 1989. Detailed analyses were also made of two piano sonatas written by Mr. Gemrot. The first of these was written during the Communist period and the second in the post-communist era. Through this process it was possible to identify whether or not the Communist regime and its fall had a significant impact on the compositional style and output of Mr. Gemrot.

The conclusion in this matter is that the Communist regime itself had little impact on Mr. Gemrot’s compositional style, and as such there is little difference seen between his works written during and after the Communist period. Obviously there are significant differences between Mr. Gemrot’s second and sixth piano sonatas. The last sonata No. 6 shows an incredible motivic work, which was already apparent in the second sonata, but did not display the same level of sophistication.

However, these differences signify the natural growth and maturation of the composer rather than a radical reappraisal on the part of the composer of his art. There is no convincing evidence that his body of work would have been substantively different absent the Communist regime’s influence on musical life in Czechoslovakia.
There are several factors which, taken into account, might explain why this is true. As described, government control over music in Czechoslovakia went through four periods. There were two in which the control was quite strong and severe, interspersed by two periods in which the control was weak. These periods of weakness correlated with periods in which the Communist party was weak in general or when it pursued a more reformist agenda. Mr. Gemrot, being born in 1957 and studying from 1976 till 1981, came of age as a composer as the Communist regime was entering terminal decline. As such, he had access to at least the most important trends in contemporary music from the West while he was a university student. He had many opportunities to study these, to make note of their stylistic features and to make personal assessments of their strengths and weaknesses. Throughout the Eighties, as he developed his professional life, the situation in the country was such that, while this music was not publicly accessible, it was to a certain extent obtainable to professionals in the musical world. Therefore, the events of 1989 did not substantially enlarge the range of music with which Mr. Gemrot was familiar.

While even during the Eighties the government of Czechoslovakia favored, and through its official musical institutions supported, the socialist realism musical style, there existed several avenues through which a composer could get pieces written in other styles published and performed. As has been shown, Mr. Gemrot did not write in the style of socialist realism. His compositional style can be best described as drawing heavily on the Czech compositional tradition with some influences from Neoclassicism. He developed his personal language, which is based on detailed motivic work, using traditional musical forms with the apparent aim of making the music as expressive as
possible. Gemrot’s style did not put him in opposition to the governmental restrictions, but neither did it satisfy the government’s desire for adherence to musical dogma. Therefore, it did not provide him with any of the benefits that followed from adhering to the government line. As evidenced by Mr. Gemrot’s refusal to join the Communist party, he followed his own conscience and managed while doing so to achieve some personal successes even under the Communist regime. Much the same could and should be said about his music. This is no small accomplishment.

Additionally, Mr. Gemrot has expressed his belief that contemporary music needs to reconnect with the general public. The popular perception that classical music, which in the Czech Republic has a fairly broad following, is distinct and separate from contemporary developments that have almost no popular base, is, according to Mr. Gemrot, unfortunate. Mr. Gemrot is properly seen as belonging to a set of composers who feel that this situation can be changed by developing a contemporary music which exhibits some stylistic continuity with the historical compositional traditions which are relatively well known and appreciated by the general public. He believes that by maintaining this connection with tradition, there will be possibilities to present new musical ideas to large audiences, and that there are still many unrealized possibilities inherent in this musical framework. When effectively realized, he hopes that it will appeal to people who likely would not attend performances of the more abstract forms of contemporary music.

There is some evidence that Mr. Gemrot is correct in his assessment. He has written many pieces on commission for particular ensembles, festivals and competitions and there is a not insignificant demand for his music in the Czech Republic. Mr.
Gemrot's work has obviously achieved a certain connection with performers and audiences and his growing recognition reinforces his feeling that his particular style is appreciated and valid.

For these reasons it is safe to assume that the Communist government of Czechoslovakia had little effect on the development of Mr. Gemrot's personal style, at least to the extent that its disappearance caused no major changes in his output as a composer. Questions of whether his style would have been different, had there not been a Communist coup in 1948, lie in the realm of mere speculation. This is impossible to say. Certainly, as mentioned, other Czechoslovakian composers experienced significant government suppression of their artistic ideas, and it is unknown how many others would have experienced this repression had they not abandoned their real artistic feelings in order to not risk crossing the de facto lines of acceptability that the Communist government had established. The rapid explosion of new ensembles and new musical associations after 1989 as well as in the sixties, when the regime was weak, attest to the fact that there was a considerable latent desire among Czech and Slovak composers and artists to branch out into previously suppressed musical styles. However, it is equally apparent that there were many composers whose natural compositional inclinations led them to styles which, while not the officially favored socialist realism, were also not prohibited. Mr. Gemrot obviously belongs to this latter group. He was in a way fortunate that his musical taste, while it did not bring him official acclaim, likewise did not bring him any grief.
APPENDIX I

BIBLIOGRAPHY


Kofroň, Petr. Tón ne! (No Tone!). Brno: Host, 1998.


Pantůček, Viktor. "Úvahy o Novém umění nebo Nové hudbě v Praze na přelomu 50. a 60. let 20. Století (Thoughts on New Art and New Music in Prague in the Late Fifties and Early Sixties of the Twentieth Century)," *Opus musicum*, vol. XXXIX, Brno: Opus musicum, o.p.s., 2007.


*"Dějiny hudby jako vědní obor a jejich periodizace (Music History as a Field of Study and Its Periodicals)*. Praha: Akademie muzických umění, 1999.


__________. *Václav Talich - život a práce (Václav Talich – Life and Work).* Praha: Hudební matice, 1943.


Vorlček, Chrudoš. *Pedagogická fakulta University Karlovy ve vývoji vzdělání v československu (The Evolution of Education at the Pedagogical Faculty of Charles University in Czechoslovakia).* Praha: Pedagogická fakulta University Karlovy, 1991

LIST OF GEMROT’S COMPOSITIONS

Symphony (2007) small orchestra

Piano trio No. 3 (2007)

Sonatina (2007) flute and harpsichord

Pastorale and Double Fugue (2007) harpsichord

Piano Sonata No. 6 (2006)

Quintet (2006) clarinet and string quartet

Small Suite (2006) piano

From a Diary (2006) piano

Piano Trio (2006)

String Quartet (2005)

Sonata (2005) violin and piano

Quintettino (2005) piano and string quartet

Eight Minutes with Mozart (2005) flute, cello and piano

Romance (2004) violin and piano

Concertino (2004) cello, piano and orchestra

Italian Motifs (2003) 12 cellos and 2 double bass

Sapporiana (2003) flute and guitar

Plays (2003) harpsichord
Piano Concerto (2003)

Concertino (2002) flute, timpani, bagpipe and orchestra

Double Concerto (2002) cello, piano and orchestra

Lullaby (2002) mezzo-soprano, cello and piano

Suite Cannese (2002) cello

Summer suite (2002) violin and harpsichord

Piano Quintet (2001)

Sonata (2001) cello and piano

Piano trio No. 1 (2001)

Lacrymosa. Phantasy variations (2000) piano for four hands

Piano Sonata No. 5 (1999)

Concertino (1998) harp and strings

Bachmannlieder (1998) soprano and orchestra

Sonatina (1998) 2 recorders

Solo for Harpsichord (1998)

Die Schalmeiane. Suite (1996) six oboes

The American Overture (1996)

Piano Sonata No. 4 (1996)

Concerto (1994) trumpet and brass band

Mass in C (1994) mixed choir

Lauda, Sion. Cantata (1993) baritone and wind orchestra

Olga’s Songs (1993) mezzo-soprano and cello

Flute Concerto (1992)
Psalmus 146 (1992) mixed chorus and orchestra

Inventions (1991) cello and double bass

Sonatina (1990) violin and piano

Violin Concerto (1990)

Piano Sonata No. 3 (1990)

Three Adagios (1989) orchestra

Dances and Reflections (1987) orchestra

Rhapsody (1988) oboe and piano

Fresco. Sonata Phantasy (1987) organ

Bucolica (1987) string quartet

Rhapsody (1986) bassoon and piano

Meditation (1986) viola and organ

Summer Study (1986) 4 saxophones

Moments (1985) oboe, clarinet and bassoon

Maxims (1985) 15 strings

Piano Sonata No. 2 (1985)

Cello Concerto (1984)

Five Lyrical Songs (1984) soprano and orchestra

Inventions (1984) violin and viola

Homages (1983)

Piano Sonata No. 1 (1981)
APPENDIX III

Published score of Piano Sonata No. 2, by permission of The Czech Music Fund, Prague.
APPENDIX IV

Score of Piano Sonata No. VI, by permission of Jiří Gemrot.
2. SONÁTA

PRO KLAVÍR

Jiri Gemrot
(* 1937)

Duroto ca 12 min
Agitato (\( j = 168 \))

\( p \)

\( mp \)

\( (f. s.) \)

\( molto Ped. \)

\( (n. l. g.) \)

\( mf \)

\( p \)

\( molto \)

\( b. d. \)

\( b. d. \)

\( sempre cresc. \)

C Jiri Gemrot 1988

CHF 9508
senza Ped.

Ped.

Ped.

Ped.

ff barbaro

Ped. ad lib.
Liberamente, quasi una cadenza (1/96)

Agitato

Piedi

(Lil pedale sempre tenere)
Liberamente, quasi una cadenza

P. come prima

sempre tenere
Liberamente, quasi una cadenza

come prima

rit.

lasciar sempre sonare (prl resultListenent)
I. Allegro appassionato

\[
\text{\( \text{\( j \)} = 120/ \)}
\]

\[
\text{\( \text{\( j \)} = 138/ \)}
\]
Tempo I.

Tempo II.

p cominciare un po' sostenuto, ma subito andare a tempo sempre più...
II. Andante moderato

Jiří Gemrot

\( \text{\textit{p \textbf{d\'a lontano}}} \)

\( \text{\textit{pp}} \)

\( \text{\textit{combiare natur.}} \)

\( \text{\textit{poco f}} \)

\( \text{\textit{mp}} \)

\( \text{\textit{f}} \)
Andante moderato

molto p da lontano