The Brno of the Sixties was an important cultural centre characterised by its living creative ferment in many fields, in theatre, poetry, art and music. Seen from today's perspective its output may appear small, but given the arid years of the seventies that were to follow it was genuinely the "Golden Age" of Brno New Music.

To understand the situation in the Czechoslovakia of the time you need to realise that all musical life was fully in the hands of the bureaucratized Union of Czechoslovak Composers and that music was perhaps the most conservative area of culture. This made the founding of the Brno "Tvurci skupina A" ["Creative Group A"] quite a courageous step. Its members were the composers Alois Pi?os, Josef Berg, Miloslav I?tvan, Jan Novák and Zden?k Pololáník and the theoreticians Milena ?ernohorská and Franti?ek Hrabal. The activities of "Group A" and its ensemble "Studio Autoru" [Composeris Ensemble], however restricted, were among the most important expressions of the New Music in the Czech Lands. The high points of its activities were above all two legendary festivals of domestic and foreign contemporary work entitled Expozice experimentalni hudby Exposition of Experimental Music (1969, 1970). These festivals also provided a chance for the performance of important composition teamwork pieces created by Pinos together with others (Divertissement, Ecce homo, Peripetie [Peripeteias], Hlasova vernisaz [Vocal Private View]) and by Alois Pinos alone--the first Czech audiovisual compositions Mrize [Grille], Geneze [Genesis], Staticka kompozice [Static Composition] (co-operation with artist Dalibor Chatrny) or the stage event on a bizarre text by Josef Berg Vyvolavaci [Touts], in a prophetic vision parodying the malignant burgeoning of advertising.

In addition to its artistic initiative, Group A strove for changes in the organisation of musical life. In July 1968 Alois Pinos was elected chairman of the Brno branch of the Union of Composers, but there was to be no time to push changes through. In August of the same year Soviet forces occupied Czechoslovakia and the long and dismal period of political and cultural repression began known as "normalisation" and characterised by the "tightening of the screws" of the communist regime. The impact of this period on cultural life was crushing, although the repression was mainly covert and often indirect, operating through the suspension of funds, the restriction of opportunities. Many artists succumbed to the atmosphere of fear and not a few chose to leave the country. New Music practically disappeared from concerts and radio broadcasts, and scores and recordings were no longer published. Contemporary musical trends were entirely wiped out of musical education (which was not hard, because they had never been an object of interest in the schools anyway).

The totalitarian regime unerringly identified composers who represented non-conformist musical thinking and tried to sweep them from the scene. They therefore provided massive support for musical conformism represented by what were called "genres accessible to listeners", such as brass band music, inane pop music and "eternal" classics manoeuvred into the function of kitsch. For most of the public music became a form of escape from the unbearable political claptrap accompanying the president Husak era. [1]

Brno ?edesátých let p?edstavovalo významné kulturní centrum, charakterizované ?ivým tv?r?ím kvasem v mnoha oblastech: v divadle, poezii, výtvarném um?ní i v hudb?. Je v?ak t?eba si uv?domit, ?e ve?kerý hudební ?ivot byl tehdy pln? v rukou byrokratizovaného Svazu ?eskoslovenských skladatel? a ?e hudba byla nejkonzervativn?j?í oblastí tehdej?í kultury. Proto bylo zalo?ení brn?nské ?Tv?r?í skupiny A? v roce 1963 pom?rn? odvá?ným krokem. Jejími ?leny byli skladatelé Alois Pi?os, Josef Berg, Miloslav I?tvan, Jan Novák a Zden?k Pololáník a teoretici Milena ?ernohorská a Franti?ek Hrabal. ?innost ?Skupiny A? a jejího souboru ?Studio Autor??, jakkoliv byla omezována, pat?ila k nejd?le?it?j?ím projev?m Nové hudby v ?eských

zemích. K vrcholným aktivitám ?Skupiny A? pat?ily zejména dv? legendární p?ehlídky domácí i zahrani?ní soudobé tvorby nazvané Expozice experimentální hudby (1969, 1970), na nich? byly realizovány také významné skladby Pi?osova skladatelského teamworku (Divertissement, Ecce homo, Peripetie, Hlasová vernisá?) i Aloise Pi?ose samotného ? ji? zmín?ná audiovizuální kompozice s Daliborem Chatrným ?i scénická akce na bizarní text Josefa Berga Vyvolava?i, v prorocké vizi parodující zhoubné bujení reklamy.

Skupina A usilovala o nekonven?ní dramaturgii, zajímav?j?í prezentaci hudby a spolupráci s dal?ími um?leckými obory (emblémem Skupiny byla rozm?rná opona vytvo?ená Daliborem Chatrným). V ?ervenci 1968 byl Alois Pi?os zvolen p?edsedou brn?nské pobo?ky Svazu skladatel?. Na prosazení zm?n v?ak u? nezbyl ?as: v srpnu tého? roku obsadila sov?tská vojska ?eskoslovensko a zanedlouho normalizace utáhla ?rouby. Dopady tohoto období na kulturu byly drtivé: ?ada um?lc? podlehla atmosfé?e strachu a sna?ila se p?izp?sobit, nemálo jich rad?ji volilo odchod ze zem?. Nová hudba prakticky vymizela z koncert?, z rozhlasového vysílání, p?estaly se vydávat noty a nahrávky. Skupina A byla zakázána a Expozice experimentální hudby také.

Totalitní re?im neomyln? rozpoznal autory, kte?í reprezentovali nekonformní hudební my?lení, a sna?il se je smést ze scény. Proto nastupuje masivní podpora hudebního konformismu, p?edstavovaného tzv. ?poslucha?sky p?ístupnými ?ánry? jako dechovka, plytká pop music a ?v??ná? klasika vmanévrovaná do funkce ký?e. Pro v?t?inu ve?ejnosti se pak takováto hudba stává formou úniku p?ed nesnesitelnými politickými ?vásty, pro husákovskou éru p?ízna?nými.

Literature

- Markéta Sta?ková, "Tv?r?í skupina A", Bachelor thesis, Brno: Masaryk University, 2006. (Czech)

See also

Czech_Republic#Electroacoustic_and_experimental_music.2C_sound_art