

The International Bagpipe Festival in Strakonice and the Transformation of the Relationship Towards the Regional Bagpipe Tradition

Zdeněk Vejvoda

Institute of Ethnology, Czech Academy of Sciences, Czech Republic

vejvoda@eu.cas.cz

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8446-109>

Strakonice is a South Bohemian town closely associated with bagpipes, a connection dating to the early 19th century. The theme of the bagpipers was already harnessed by the Czech national movement of the 19th century, and revived in the folk revival movement after the Second World War. In 1967, the highly popular International Bagpipe Festival was established in Strakonice. New changes in the relationship to the bagpipe tradition can be observed since the beginning of the millennium.

▪ **Keywords:** bagpipe, festival, music tradition, Strakonice, South Bohemia

Strakonice so južnočeško mesto, ki je tesno povezano z dudami; povezuje sega v začetek 19. stoletja. Dude so bile kot nacionalni simbol uporabljene že v češkem nacionalnem gibanju v 19. stoletju, po 2. svetovni vojni pa jih je obudila folklorna dejavnost. Leta 1967 je bil namreč v Strakonice ustanovljen zelo priljubljen mednarodni festival dud. Nove spremembe v odnosu do tradicije igranja na dude lahko opazimo od začetka 21. stoletja.

▪ **Ključne besede:** dude, festival, glasbena tradicija, Strakonice, južna Češka

Significant attributes of traditional folk culture and folklore tend to be loaded with symbolic meanings exploited by the political and local-patriotic representation of towns, regions, or entire nations. Strakonice is a South Bohemian town with a long and rich history. The symbol, or indeed trademark, it is most closely associated with is the bagpipe and bagpipe music, a connection dating to the early 19th century and possibly even earlier. In South Bohemia and beyond, Strakonice has for a long time been popularly known as “Dudákov” (Town of Bagpipes). Since 1967, this tradition has been reflected in the existence of the International Bagpipe Festival.

It was not until about a decade ago – when enough time had elapsed from the fall of Communism in 1989 – that genuinely intensive research began into the dynamic transformations occurring in Czech society’s relationship to traditional music and folklore. Prior to this renewed interest in the topic, the Czechoslovak folklore movement of the second half of the 20th century was generally accepted, on the one hand, as a “showcase” or “servant” of the Communist regime; on the other hand, people who had been directly involved in the movement in the 1970s and 1980s welcomed it as an “island of creative freedom” devoid of major ideological pressures. This ambivalence was discussed in detail in the project entitled *Tiha a beztíže folkloru* (The Weight and

Weightlessness of Folklore) (Stavělová et al., 2021). Transformations of the phenomenon in the European context were presented in the proceedings of the Prague conference ‘The Folklore revival movement of the second half of the 20th century’ (Stavělová, Buckland, 2018).

International research to date has specifically examined festivals concerning their various social, religious, ethnic, national, linguistic, or historical connections (Falassi, 1987; Getz, 1990); the expression of cultural identities of festival audiences (McKay, 2000); or the economic background of festivals and impacts on tourism (Picard, Robinson, 2006; Gibson, Connell, 2012). A thought-provoking paper with the theme of festivals and their relationship to intangible heritage and the process of folklorization has been published by Valdimar T. Hafstein (2018) who, in a somewhat provocative shorthand, notes that “where we have intangible cultural heritage, we find festivals” (163). Substantial summary works on the topic of festivals and their multifaceted roles have been compiled by Judith Mair (2019), Andy Bennett et al. (2014), and Ullrich Kockel et al. (2020). Valuable contributions to the concept of musical revival have been made recently, for example, by a monograph compiled by Caroline Bithell and Juniper Hill (2014), and a contribution specifically to bagpipe music by Valdis Muktupāvels (2020).

The questions in the ongoing Czech-Slovenian research project concern, among other things, the general awareness of historical roots and especially the changes in the relationship to music and dance tradition (Stavělová, 2023). In fact, in addition to the mainstream music and dance ensembles within the established structures of the Czech folklore movement (including “folk” festivals with a tradition from the 1950s to the 1960s), an association of bagpipers has been operating quite informally in South Bohemia for 13 years. It is rather a spontaneous social institution and an open creative workshop than a mere musical ensemble. As we will indicate at the end of this paper, the association’s members are searching for and redefining their relationship to musical tradition within their activities.

The research questions posed are as follows: In what ways is the Czech bagpipe tradition in the 20th century reflected in the form of the modern urban music festival? What impulses does the festival give to the contemporary perception and transformation of the musical tradition?

The author of this text has explored the above, aware of his position as an interested observer and participant in formal and informal conversations and musical opportunities, including active participation in the most influential bagpipe music festival in Central Europe. For more than thirty years, he has participated in the International Bagpipe Festival in Strakonice as a musician, later as an author and director of festival programmes, and since 2016 as a programme director. At the same time, for decades, he has been consistently following and reflecting on musical events in this field in the Czech Republic and neighbouring countries, with a focus on bagpipe music ensembles.

In addition to the historical study of archival sources, he continuously engages in field research and conducts and analyzes interviews with actors from the contemporary folklore movement, as well as from the education system and regional cultural and political institutions.

For a deeper understanding of the multilayered background of the phenomenon under study, at least a brief overview and an attempt to interpret older Czech sources, especially from the period of the emergence and fundamental changes of the national emancipation and political programmes of the 19th and 20th centuries, is undoubtedly useful.

The roots of the bagpipe tradition

There is written and visual evidence of bagpipe playing in the Czech lands as far back as the Middle Ages.¹ It is important to note that the social status of musicians and their European audiences changed considerably over the centuries. Between the 13th century and the middle of the 17th century, the sound and visual attractiveness of the bagpipe brought this instrument to the residences of the nobility and the royal families, as well as to important churches. However, with the rise in popularity of more modern instruments, bagpipers gradually descended the social ladder, becoming restricted again to an environment where they had originated: communities of shepherds and – on a more general level – rural areas and small towns (Markl, 1962; Vejvoda, 2015).

In the 18th and 19th centuries, Czech bagpipers came almost exclusively from poor rural backgrounds (shepherds, small craftsmen, poor farmers). Accordingly, their music and dance performances, though widely popular, came to be considered a cheap alternative to the more sophisticated – and expensive – string bands and, later, brass bands organized by local teachers (Markl, 1962, 1974).

A further feature typical of the 18th and 19th centuries was that the motifs of the bagpipe and bagpiper were found in Czech folk song lyrics and other forms of folklore. Furthermore, they appeared in folk visual arts such as painted furniture. Folk fairytales and legends often featured Švanda, a bagpiper from Strakonice, whose bagpipe had been bewitched by the devil and was used by Švanda to mesmerize his audiences and dancers (Režný, 2004: 15–18). This story was later exploited to the full by very diverse forms of arts, coming to play an important role in the “renaissance” of the bagpipe as a cultural and national symbol.

¹ Conclusive evidence of the use of the bagpipe in music bands in the Czech lands dates back to the 13th century, although trustworthy indications date it as far back as the 10th and 11th centuries (Zíbrt, 1917; Režný, 2012).



Figure 1: Strakonice-native Švanda the Bagpiper pictured on a 1920s postcard. Source: collection of Z. Vejvoda.

Švanda the Bagpiper and the national movement

The impetus for a second, symbolic life of the “Strakonice Bagpiper” came almost exclusively from Prague, the natural centre of the Czech national movement. The drama called *Strakonický dudák aneb Hody divých žen* (The Strakonice Bagpiper or The Feast of Wild Women), written by a leading Czech journalist and author, Josef Kajetán Tyl (1808–1856), opened in the Royal Estates Theatre in Prague in 1847. Tyl had stayed in Strakonice shortly before that when he toured the country with a travelling acting company. Undoubtedly, he had heard and seen live bagpipe music when in South Bohemia, and it seems very likely he had come across one of the existing versions of the story of Švanda the Strakonice Bagpiper. Before Tyl, the story had been rearranged and published by another revivalist, Jan Nepomuk Josef Rulík (1744–1812; his book

of stories and legends of 1799 was titled *Veselý Kubiček aneb V Horách Kašperských zaklený dudák*, Merry Kubitschek or A Bagpiper Under a Spell in Kašperské Hory), later by the priest, author and folklore collector Václav Krolmus (1790–1861; his collection of 1845 was titled *Staročeské pověsti, zpěvy, hry, obyčeje, slavnosti a nápěvy*, Old Bohemian Legends, Songs, Plays, Customs, Feasts and Melodies) and, finally, the journalist and collector Jakub Malý (1811–1885; his collection called *Sebrané báchorky a pověsti*, Collected Tales and Legends, was also published in 1845). The motif of the “Strakonice” bagpiper was revived by Josef Jungmann (1773–1847), a leading representative of the Czech national movement, in his 1835 Czech-German dictionary, and later, in 1852, by the poet František Ladislav Čelakovský (1799–1852) in his *Mudroslovní národu slovanského v příslovích* (The Wisdom of the Slavic Nation in Proverbs).

The fairytale motif of the magical bagpipe and the exotic attractiveness that this almost forgotten “Ancient Bohemian” instrument had for Prague intellectuals were a perfect match with the romanticism of Tyl’s drama. The play was received extremely well by audiences as well as critics. For his part, Tyl was so engrossed in the story that he continued to rewrite the play up till a few days before his death, making a substantial contribution to the popularity of the bagpipe at a critical time when a modern Czech nation was being established. The popularity of the bagpipe was further enhanced by leading Czech painters, Mikoláš Aleš (1852–1913), Augustin Němejc (1861–1938), Jaroslav Špillar (1869–1917), and Ludvík Kuba (1863–1956). Tyl’s play was also turned into a 1926 opera by Jaromír Weinberger (1896–1967), *Schwanda the Bagpiper*.²

Prague bagpipe productions in 1871–1921

The type of bagpipe used, in Tyl’s day, in the wide region of South-West Bohemia but also in the neighbouring regions in Austria and Bavaria had an air reservoir made from animal skin and blown from the mouth (with no bellows yet); it had one chanter (the melody pipe) and one drone pipe, typically tuned in D, E ♭ and F (Režný, 2012: 101).³ The instruments that have survived in South Bohemia and Lower Austria are almost identical and were sometimes produced by the same manufacturer. Yet it was only the Czech bagpipe (and more specifically the so-called Strakonice bagpipe) that grew into something of a national symbol, not the Bavarian bagpipe or the Austrian bagpipe. This was made possible by the systematic effort of the 19th century Czech intelligentsia to

² Much later, when Czechoslovakia had been occupied by the Soviet army, the Švanda story was turned into a 1974 musical film called *Hvězda padá vzhůru* (A Star Is Falling Upwards), directed by Ladislav Rychman and starring pop music icon Karel Gott.

³ As almost all melodies in the Czech bagpipe repertoire are in major keys, Czech bagpipes tuned in D are composed of a melody pipe with *a, c#l, d^l, e^l, f#l, g^l, a^l, b^l*, and a drone pipe with *D*.

educate the general public “in the national spirit”; in parallel to these efforts, a number of artistic and commercial activities were pursued with the same implicit goal.

The available evidence suggests that the first enthusiast to raise awareness about bagpipe music was Josef Formánek (1844–1926), the headmaster of a Strakonice school. In 1871, Formánek gave a lecture about the bagpipe together with a concert, hosted by *Umělecká beseda*, a Prague-based artists’ forum bringing together creative artists in literature, music and fine arts (Formánek, 1894). The event was a success and was reportedly attended by the composer Bedřich Smetana (1824–1884). Formánek continued to give these performances up until 1916. The bagpipe was played either by Formánek alone or in tandem with members of *Prácheň*, a Prague-based society of Strakonice patriots. Consisting of the bagpipe, violin, clarinet, and cello, the band played folk songs alongside their own compositions imitating the “genuine Strakonice” bagpipe musical style.

Formánek was a source of inspiration for Čeněk Zíbrt (1864–1932), a cultural historian, university professor and founder of the ethnographic journal *Český lid* (Czech Folk). His educational programme called *Švanda the Bagpiper* in Prague was first presented at the renowned cultural centre Žofín on 1 April 1917 (Režný, 2012: 102–104). Although Zíbrt was a bagpiper, he was happy to be joined by a young teacher named Karel Michalíček (1893–1937). Michalíček had learned the art of bagpipe playing in the Chodsko and Blata regions, from the renowned bagpiper František Kopšík, a resident of Soběslav, South Bohemia, whose bagpipe playing remains recorded on phonographic cylinders (Tyllner, 2001). Zíbrt gave a lecture that was very well received and was followed by a successful bagpipe performance by Michalíček and two violin players: the repertoire comprised folk as well as authored songs and patriotic poems, all centred around the motif of the bagpipe and performed by two experienced concert singers. At the end of the show, the audience burst into spontaneous singing, and another such event followed soon. Zíbrt’s lecture appeared in print not long afterwards (Zíbrt, 1917) and the performers received invitations to appear in various parts of the country. In the First World War, Zíbrt’s bagpipe shows often turned into manifestations of national pride. After the independent Czechoslovakia was established, Zíbrt received fewer and fewer invitations, the last performance taking place in Velvary in May 1920.

The popularity and success of Josef Formánek’s bagpipe initiatives compelled his son, Jaroslav Formánek (1884–1938), to come up with his own commercial activity called *Umělecká družina krále dudáků, Mistra-dudáka Jardy Formánka ze Strakonice* (The Artistic Company Led by the Bagpiper King, Bagpipe Master Jarda Formánek of Strakonice). Beginning in 1921, Formánek Jr. held regular public concerts, lectures and bagpipe academies (Režný, 2004: 151). In a similar manner, Prague and various regions of the country occasionally saw other bagpipe bands that already used the trademark “Strakonice bagpipers” or “Švanda the Bagpiper” to attract bigger audiences. There are even reports about Czech immigrant communities in America attending concerts by

Czech musicians who called themselves “bagpipers from Strakonice”, no matter what their true place of origin was (Cwach, 2012). Furthermore, Prague and rural regions were home to a great number of solo bagpipers of varying musical skills; some of these people offered educational programmes and musical productions for school children, also using the “Švanda” trademark.

Becoming the town of bagpipers

In sum, in just several decades – and at a sensitive time when the nation was becoming emancipated – Strakonice rose to nationwide fame, developing a symbolic association with Švanda the Bagpiper and bagpipe music in general. Loaded with positive connotations, this association was, and still is, naturally exploited not only in culture, but also in tourism and marketing.⁴

It is symptomatic that although the Czech bagpipe tradition has been associated with the town of Strakonice since the 19th century, its real representatives came almost exclusively from the villages around Strakonice. Generally, this transfer of “rustic” musical traditions into towns in the Czech lands first occurred during the national revival, and later – more significantly – during the folklore movement of the second half of the 20th century. Strakonice produced some remarkable artists and organizers who played a key role in this process.

At the very beginning of the Second World War – in 1939 – the Strakonice Bagpipe Band was established by Jiří Malkovský (1920–1986), a civil servant. The band was composed of: a bagpipe, a violin, two clarinets (in Es and in B), and a violoncello (Režný, 2004: 159). Not long after that, the cello was substituted with a double bass, played by a graduate of the Strakonice Grammar School, Josef Režný (1924–2012), himself a gifted bagpiper who went on to become the leading personality of the bagpipe revival in the region of Strakonice and the entire Czechoslovakia.⁵ Režný was one of

⁴ Since 1887, beer called Dudač (The Bagpiper) has been made in the Strakonice brewery, which was founded in 1649; an ornamental painting of Švanda the Bagpiper, designed by the South-Bohemian painter Václav Malý (1874–1935), can still be found on the wall of a 1906 Neo-Renaissance structure, the former municipal savings bank; the motif is featured in contemporary campaigns advertising local and regional products.

⁵ A native of Strakonice, Josef Režný was born on 2 February 1924. Upon completing his secondary education at a local grammar school in 1943, he trained in music in public classes and privately. After completing his compulsory work service in Nazi Germany, he changed jobs several times, working in administrative as well as blue collar positions, before becoming – in 1953 – a primary school teacher in Strakonice. In 1955–1970, Režný was a training specialist and innovator in music, singing, dance and theatre. Between 1971 and his retirement in 1984, Režný served as director of the Municipal Museum in Volyně, in addition to his positions as leader of the Prácheň Ensemble, choreographer, choirmaster, author and arranger of music. 1950 saw the beginning of his collecting efforts in the domain of South Bohemian folk music and dance, with his collection amounting to over 1,000 written recordings of folk songs and 60 folk dances. Režný was a leading expert in folk musical instruments, especially the bagpipe, and their role and place in the Bohemian and Central European musical tradition (Vejvoda, 2000).

the founders, in 1949, of the Prácheň Song and Dance Ensemble, which remains till the present day an active stage presenter of folk music and dance of the Strakonice and Šumava regions. Later, Režný was the principal initiator of the Strakonice International Bagpipe Festival.

Following the Second World War, bagpipe playing was introduced as a subject in the Strakonice School of Music, which has produced hundreds of graduates since the 1950s who helped establish dozens of successful bagpipe bands. These bands have been the urban epitomes – and modern continuation – of musical traditions of the region, reflecting likewise the transformation of these traditions. This was a time of post-war euphoria and general enthusiasm about folk culture. The Communists, who came to power in 1948, provided massive support to folklore, which was understood to be part of what was officially called leisure artistic activities; at the same time, however, they also introduced their own ideological agendas into folklore, exploiting it for political purposes, especially by having folklore ensembles participate in political rallies and folklore festivals (cf. Stavělová et al., 2021).

The bagpipe festival in 1967–1989

Before the Strakonice International Bagpipe Festival was established, there had been seven editions, in 1955–1961, of what was known as the South Bohemian Song and Dance Festival. This was a regional festival which was intended to be the South Bohemian equivalent to the Folklore Festival in Strážnice, South Moravia (Stavělová et al., 2021: 371). The South Bohemian Festival was initiated by Zora Soukupová (1922–1981), leader of the folklore ensemble Úsvit based in České Budějovice, employed at the time by the Regional Educational Centre; her husband, Lubomír Soukup (1915–2001), a folklore editor at the České Budějovice regional office of Czechoslovak Radio; and Josef Režný, leader of the Prácheň Ensemble from Strakonice, who at the time worked at the District Educational Centre. The first edition of the South Bohemian Festival included a meeting of bagpipers from South Bohemia, bringing together authentic representatives of the waning tradition with younger bagpipe enthusiasts from among the folklore movement. Providing an opportunity for sharing expertise, the meeting was received very well, expanding in later years to include musicians from other regions of Bohemia, as well as from Moravia, Silesia, and Slovakia (Režný, Veselá, 2002: 8).

The second edition of the South Bohemian Song and Dance Festival in 1956 was followed by a workshop. It was at this workshop that Josef Režný first proposed the establishment of an international bagpipe festival. However, this idea could only be turned into reality in the politically more liberal times of the mid-1960s. The occasion provoking preparations of the festival's first edition was the 600th anniversary, in 1967, of Strakonice being granted the privileges of a town. The celebration of bagpipe music



Figure 2: Josef Režný (pictured left with the double bass) and the Strakonice Pipe Band during the visit of Czechoslovak President Edvard Beneš to Strakonice in 1945. Courtesy of the Museum of Central Pootaví, Strakonice.



Figure 3: The Prácheň Ensemble from Strakonice pictured in a Labour Day parade in the 1980s. Courtesy of the Museum of Central Pootaví, Strakonice.

as a symbol of folk entertainment, optimism and the interconnection between the socialist town and its past (interpreted here in an ideologically biased manner) received support from the Communist management of the town, region, as well as the public at large. Moreover, the pre-1968 government policy allowed a limited amount of cultural exchange between the East and the West, which continued to be a remarkably constant feature of the microcosm of the bagpipe festival for many years until the fall of communism in 1989.⁶

Režný proposed that the International Bagpipe Festival should “serve to present musical folklore with a special focus on bagpipe music, more specifically bagpipe dance and song folklore” (Markl, 1979). The first edition of the festival was held in September 1967, and was co-organized by the Strakonice town and district authorities, the regional council of South Bohemia in České Budějovice, and the Prácheň Ensemble. The positions of chair of the executive board and the administrative secretary were given to political officials loyal to the official communist ideology, while Josef Režný served as chair of the programme board.

As has been suggested above, one feature of the festival was rather unusual in Czechoslovakia under communism: festival participants included ensembles and groups from the other side of the Iron Curtain.⁷ It is evident from the list of international participants that ever since the first festival, there have been regular appearances by performers from the United Kingdom (in particular the north of England and Scotland), Ireland, Spain (Galicia), France (Bretagne), Germany and Austria and, in recent years, Belgium, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Italy, Greece, Turkey, New Zealand, and the US. Bagpipers from the former Eastern Bloc came from Poland, Hungary, Yugoslavia (Croatia, Slovenia), Bulgaria, Romania and the former USSR. The regional diversity, which in turn reflects the diversity in the types of instruments, music repertoire and traditions of interpretation of bagpipe playing in Europe and beyond, is one of the fundamental attributes of the festival, and one that has remained unchanged over the years.

The second edition, scheduled for 1968, was postponed to September 1969 due to the Soviet occupation. At the same time, however, the fundamental change in the

⁶ As a token of reciprocity for the participation of foreign ensembles in the Strakonice festival, the local, regional and national governments would grant members of the Prácheň Ensemble the permission to attend festivals in Western and Southern Europe (Belgium, the Netherlands 1967, 1969, France 1968, 1973, 1989, West Germany 1968, 1969, Spain 1973, Austria 1974, 1978 and other countries) (Pilík, 2009: 21).

⁷ Režný is known to have exchanged letters with John Forster Charlton (1915–1989), a resident of Newcastle who would later become Režný’s friend of many years and a regular participant in the festival; of special note is their correspondence before Charlton first came to Strakonice. Responding to the invitation that he was sent by Režný in 1967, Charlton wrote he was afraid of coming to Czechoslovakia, given the alarming reports by the British press; he asked Režný to say whether there really was shooting at the border, with cameras being confiscated and passengers arrested, and whether Strakonice was a safe place. He was assured there were no risks involved, and the festival director would come and pick him up at the border. The festival’s executive committee arranged for a special permit allowing Režný entry to the prohibited area of the border, and Režný was able to welcome the worried guest in person in Rozvadov, a border crossing from West Germany (Režný, Veselá, 2002: 7).

country's political course, which was officially referred to as the start of "normalization", put an end to Režný's official involvement in the running of the festival for a long time.⁸ Following ideological clashes that he had with the Communist leaders of the Strakonice town administration, Režný now was a political persona non grata and had to resign from his public posts, leaving his status as an influential public educator for the insignificant position of director of a small museum in the nearby town of Volyně. Being leader of the Prácheň Ensemble, however, Režný was indispensable for the official system. On the one hand, he was not allowed to serve as programme director of a festival that showcased the impeccability of socialist culture, yet on the other, he maintained some informal influence on the Festival agenda and the choice of performers, being in contact with his friends from among the Prácheň Ensemble or members of the programme board.

The following six editions, which were held every two or four years in the 1970s and 1980s, were designed by invited experts in folklore, alongside musicians affiliated with Czechoslovak scientific institutions (Zora Soukupová, Karel Krasnický, Jaroslav Jakubíček, Jaroslav Markl, Jiří Janoušek, Ludvík Kunz) and Czechoslovak Radio (Jaroslav Jurášek, Lubomír Soukup, Zdeněk Bláha). Programmes were normally directed by Zdeněk Podskalský, the renowned film and TV director, who brought popular actors and singers from Prague to serve as programme presenters (Režný, Veselá, 2002). Josef Režný was reappointed to the Programme Board in August 1989 (several months before the fall of communism), heralding a new era of the Festival, which came in the 1990s.

Despite the unique focus on Czech and international bagpipe traditions, the format and content of the festival prior to 1989 were similar to other events held in Communist-ruled Czechoslovakia at the time (Stavělová et al., 2021). The courtyard of the Strakonice castle and the open-air theatre – with political slogans devoid of content hanging above the stage – served as the venue for regional shows featuring folklore ensembles from towns and villages in South and West Bohemia, as well as festivals with international participation. Despite the organizers' emphasis on professionalism, it was entertainment that was often the dominant aspect of these productions. Other popular components were (and still are) pompous street parades.

Since the very first edition, the festival's opening has had the form of *kasací*, an ancient custom whereby pipers make a ceremonial request with the mayor of the town in order to be given permission to organize their musical productions. This show, played outside the town hall and, in later years, on the open-air stage, was inspired by traditional folk festivities, some dating back to Baroque times (Zíbrt, 1910). Traditional bagpipe music has been complemented with crossover programmes,

⁸ Režný's unacceptability resulted from his sincere character and sometimes saucy remarks. There was clearly a personal animosity between Režný and the new political representation of the town and the local branch of the Communist Party. Režný never engaged in political opposition (Vejvoda, 2022).

presenting authored music in particular.⁹ Over time, the festival was expanded to include a wide selection of off-stage programmes, all related to bagpipe playing, such as workshops, lectures, exhibitions and publishing activities, completely in line with Režný's founding vision.



Figure 4: Josef Režný pictured in 2007. Courtesy of the Museum of Central Pootaví, Strakonice.

⁹ Czech composers have produced new compositions for the bagpipe and symphonic or chamber orchestras or, as the case may be, chamber ensembles and choirs, with the recordings made by the Czechoslovak Radio. The personalities invited by the Festival Board to contribute in this way include Zdeněk Lukáš (1928–2007), Zdeněk Bláha (*1929), Jaroslav Krček (*1939), Josef Krček (*1946), Jiří Teml (*1935), Jan Málek (*1938), and Karel Krasnický (*1937).

The recent history and present state of the festival

In the last three decades, the festival has grown into a large enterprise of European renown, becoming a member of the International Council of Organizations of Folklore Festivals and Folk Arts. The repertoire has broadened beyond music and dance folklore, and authored music, to include pop – especially rock – music featuring different types of the bagpipe¹⁰ as well as various fusions of popular and (pseudo)historical genres inspired by medieval music.

However, the core of the programme still consists of performances by solo pipers, small groups, folklore ensembles and bagpipe bands from a wide range of Czech and European regions, presenting traditional folk music and dance in a more-or-less authentic rendition. Bagpipe manufacturing is also a regular topic. Manufacturers are sponsored and invited by the organizers to present their products and manufacturing processes on the festival premises, with a special programme dedicated to the manufacturing technology and organological issues. Each edition is complemented with exhibitions held by the Museum of Central Pootaví in Strakonice, as well as other institutions.

The four-day festival has a budget of 5m crowns (210,000 euro) and is organized by the Strakonice Town Council, assisted technically by its Municipal Cultural Centre, with sponsors including the South Bohemian regional government, the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic, as well as local donors. The programme board is nominated by the organizing bodies and consists of members of municipal and regional institutions (Museum of Central Pootaví in Strakonice), scientific bodies (Institute of Ethnology of the Czech Academy of Sciences, National Heritage Institute in České Budějovice), and leading personalities of the regional folklore movement.¹¹ Starting with 1992, the festival has taken place every two years, with the 2020 edition cancelled due to COVID-19 related measures. Participants normally include 10-15 foreign bagpipe ensembles and a similar number of domestic ensembles; the total number of participants amounts to 900, playing to an average audience of 30,000.

The festival's stability and sustainability are guaranteed primarily by the numerous local bagpipe bands and dance ensembles, whose family members and friends constitute a substantial proportion of the festival audience. Strakonice and its environs are currently home to an incredible thirteen independent bagpipe music bands, as well as music and dance ensembles, representing different generations. Their proliferation is

¹⁰ The bagpipe brings a breath of the exotic and the strange into the musical structure of these groups; it is only occasionally that the bagpipe is used to identify musicians regionally, which is in line with the romantic thrust as well as the aural urgency of rock music. In order to achieve a more penetrating sound, bands use double-reed pipes, in general preferring instruments native to Scotland.

¹¹ Following Režný, the position of programme director was assigned in 2012 to Zdeněk Bláha, a radio editor and composer, Josef Krček, a composer and author, and – beginning in 2016 – the present author, ethnomusicologist Zdeněk Vejvoda.

the result of the many years of dedicated efforts by Josef Režný, leader of the Prácheň Ensemble, who died in 2012 just as the 20th edition was in preparation, in addition to the fact that bagpipe training has for a long time been offered by the Strakonice school of music. The largest of these ensembles include the Prácheň one, with 40 members, and the children's dance group called Prácheňáček with a similar number of members; both these ensembles are accompanied by their own bagpipe bands. Other bands normally recruit members from among graduates of the Strakonice school of music, who have been trained by Vojtěch Hrubý (1915–2006) and Bohuslav Šabek (*1947). The value shared by all these ensembles is the concept of continuity with regard to the regional style of music and, more significantly, the conservative band composition (bagpipe, violin, viola, double bass, clarinets), in addition to other aspects such as regional costumes. On the other hand, the bands each have a different approach to the music and dance, and a different specialisation, ranging from involvement in traditional folk festivities (carnivals, maypole festivities, carol rounds), to dance accompaniment (Elčovická Dudácká Muzika, Veselá Dudácká Muzika and others), to performing at folklore festivals and commercial events (Mladá Dudácká Muzika, Strakonická Dudácká Muzika), to expert-level reconstructions of historical instruments and music bands informed by regional manuscript and audio sources (Pošumavská Dudácká Muzika led by the ethnomusicologist Tomáš Spurný). Bagpipe bands active in the region regularly make their own recordings, documenting their styles and distinctive approaches.

A similar diversity of takes on traditional music has been observed in performers from abroad. In the recent two decades, a genuinely academic approach has been pursued by Unisonus based in Salzburg (led by Michael Vereno), Steirische Bordunmusik based in Graz (led by Sepp Pichler), and Dudarski Rej, a group of Belarusian migrants residing in Poland, led by Vital Voranau. Of particular note is the innovative approach presented by huge piper ensembles from various parts of Hungary (Magyar Dudazenekar), as well as Croatia (Hrvatski Gajdaški Orkestar), and Slovakia (Spojené Huky Slovenska), offering concert versions (highlighting the virtuosity) of traditional shepherd repertoire, which was originally only played solo as dance accompaniment. A similar tendency can be observed in Czech bagpipers, as will be presented at the end of this study. No less interesting are huge bagpipe orchestras, originating from various parts of Europe and modelled on Scottish military bands. Apart from repertoire inspired by traditional music typical of their regions, these bands play contemporary compositions accentuating sound effects as well as originality in harmony and instrumentation (e.g. Kevrenn Brest Sant Mark from Brittany, France; Banda de Gaitas de Ourense from Galicia, Spain).

The one aspect respected by most domestic and international ensembles is the fusion of bagpipe music and dance, with the staging of dance oscillating between the restrained (ensembles from Polish mountainous regions) and the spectacular (municipal folklore

ensembles from Turkey, Bulgaria, and Italy).¹² The Pipers Ball, accessible to festival audiences as well, is a combination of social event involving members of international and domestic ensembles, and a dance workshop.

The current festival reception

A questionnaire survey conducted by the organizer after each festival¹³ and interviews with Czech active participants (musicians, dancers, and ensemble leaders) and visitors to the International Bagpipe Festival in Strakonice in 2022 revealed that most respondents are regular attendees, with the older among them having first attended or performed in the 1990s. Aspects especially appreciated by respondents are the diversity of shows and the exclusivity resulting from the narrow focus on bagpipe music. Performers native to Strakonice appear to assign vital importance to the participation of exclusive guests from France (Kevrenn Brest Sant Mark Ensemble, a regular participant since 1967), Scotland (the Neilston and District Pipe Band based in Glasgow has never missed the festival since they first came to Strakonice in 1978), England (Robson's Choice was introduced to the festival in 2004 by Neil Smith, a piper born in 1924, who was mentored by the above-mentioned John F. Charlton and developed a love of Czech culture), and the Netherlands (Hailander, the favourite trio from Zaandam, has been a regular participant since 1994). Most respondents appreciate the street parades and shows introducing international guests. Events highly popular with domestic audiences include concerts by local and regional dance ensembles and bands, including children's groups, and topic-dedicated programmes taking place in the courtyard of the Strakonice castle. Pop music concerts featuring bagpipes are especially popular with young audiences, as are pipers balls. Sacral music concerts taking place in the church, lectures and workshops for parents and young children appear to draw much smaller audiences, given the limited capacity of the venues and the narrow focus of such events. When complaints were made by respondents, they were related to the festival's organization, not content.

When asked about their motivations for membership in folklore ensembles (or attending folklore festivals), most respondents pointed to: a sense of responsibility for – and continuation of – local or regional traditions, the social aspect, and passing traditions down the family line. Similar motivations have been reported by surveys among organizers, although the utilitarian aspect is also present: the focus appears to be on promoting regional values, responsibility for cultural development, building the

¹² The ensemble representing Slovenia in 2006–2012 was the Tine Rožanc Folklore Ensemble based in Ljubljana (led by Bruno Ravnikar).

¹³ Questionnaire survey 2010–2022. Archival funds of the Municipal Cultural Centre in Strakonice.

“trademark” of Strakonice being the town of pipers (to be used in tourism and commerce), and promoting the town among Czech as well as international audiences. This is one of the reasons why the town management has, since the 1990s, approached the festival as the most important cultural enterprise, no matter their political affiliation. The town has funded the festival from the municipal budget, in addition to providing regular support to folklore ensembles and bands, whose dedicated work and training capacities are crucial to the sustainability of Strakonice’s status as the town of Švanda the Bagpiper.¹⁴

Festival as a commodity?

From the position of the programme director, the author of this text observes the behind-the-scenes events, but at the same time, he is a participant and co-creator of important negotiations that have been influencing the shape of the bagpipe festival for several years. He sees an advantage in his “expert” position as an outsider who does not come from Strakonice or the South Bohemian Region, so his decision-making is not influenced by deep personal ties or direct dependence on financial and political support from the city and the region.

One of the important moments before the 22nd edition of the festival in 2016 was the negotiation of greater openness and the removal of mental and financial barriers. This is because the income from the admission fees for the various festival programmes hardly covered the costs of its administration. Surprisingly, the decision to open the festival grounds free of charge was met with resistance from some performers who perceived it as a disparagement of the quality of their artistic production. Some out-of-town festival-goers also lost the security of a seat in the auditorium when it was full, especially for the evening gala concerts in the summer theatre. The result is the current compromise of several dozen seats that can be reserved in advance for a fee. At the same time, the main objective of this measure has been met: visitors of all generations freely pass through the festival and actively participate in it, and a social barrier – albeit a minimal one – has thus been removed. The city comes alive with dozens of spontaneous musical opportunities for interaction between local, international, and national guests.

It is also not easy to balance the interests of the numerous local ensembles and bands, which are irreplaceable carriers of the local musical tradition, with the well-thought-out dramaturgy of the individual programmes and festivals. However, through long-lasting patient communication and lecturer cooperation, organizers have been quite successful in fulfilling the chosen concept of the particular festival years and, at the same time,

¹⁴ The 25th edition of the Strakonice International Bagpipe Festival is tentatively scheduled to take place on 22–25 August 2024.

presenting the repertoire of local ensembles in the whole spectrum of contemporary adaptations of musical folklore. Negotiations mainly concern the selection of material and its presentation in the necessary stage abbreviation and the creation of programme contrasts and thematic arcs.

The town of Strakonice, as the organizer of the bagpipe festival, specifically its political leadership, also pursues its interests in relation to the festival. The long-term goal, richly fulfilled for decades by emphasizing the bagpipe music tradition, is to support tourism and promote the town and the region abroad. The shape of specific festivals also reflects the influence of political cycles. Presenting the current city leadership to local audiences is particularly advantageous in the final days of the election period. A disagreement between the festival's programme management and the organizer resulted in the removal of the ceremony, which once had the form of a spectacular show on the walls of Strakonice Castle using video mapping and fireworks, from the remit of the programme board. The disagreements concerned the aesthetic concept and the financial cost of the overall programme and budget of the festival. The pop-rock bagpipe scene and the opening ceremony, in which the town's mayor personally welcomes bagpipers from all over the world, are finally arranged and organized by the Municipal Cultural Centre, which is directly subordinate to the town hall, by mutual agreement. Except for this opening ceremony, however, the Programme Board has not experienced any similarly significant political pressure. The economic background is the demanding organization of stalls selling all kinds of goods and catering associated with the festival. For obvious reasons – except the presentation of Czech and foreign bagpipe makers – the festival's programme management does not influence this field and it is the responsibility of the organizer, the City of Strakonice.

The evaluations of the individual festival years and the interviews with festival participants reveal exciting facts that can be reflected in this context more generally. The reasons behind the (almost exclusively) positive reception of the bagpipe festival and the bagpipe as a national or regional symbol are manifold. Older generations tend to have a natural need for being culturally rooted in what is an increasingly globalized culture. They actively seek out traditional music and folklore performed at festivals or played on the radio as a counterbalance to contemporary music production, which older generations believe to be incomprehensible and even aggressive, given the ubiquitous marketing. Opposite reasons are often found in the younger generation of the festival's attendees. The bagpipe is present in a wide range of countries and regions and exists in numerous types and sounds, appealing to young people as a “cosmopolitan” instrument of traditional, “ethnic” – and even popular – music. Young festival audiences tend to consume music and entertainment without the prejudice associated with the totalitarian Communist era. Furthermore, research has found respondents, irrespective of age, to possess little or no awareness concerning the regional history of traditional music and how it was practiced in the past. The festival performers and most of the audience

normally fail to be aware or critical of the way in which cultural heritage has recently been manipulated by political marketing, tourism, and advertising. It can be concluded, with the benefit of hindsight, that the crucial significance that the bagpipe festival has for all those involved lies in negotiating, constructing, and regularly verifying the identity of the place and region. In this respect our research of the Strakonice bagpipe festival has found a strong continuity of the above-mentioned nationalist, regionalist and romanticizing constructs typical of the 19th and 20th centuries, rather than any link between the present and more ancient traditional expressions of South Bohemian bagpipe music.

Rethinking the Czech bagpipe tradition

Parallel to the above-described activities of music and dance ensembles within the more or less formalized structures of the Czech folklore movement, processes have been taking place in this field since the beginning of the millennium that are subconsciously motivated by the desire to rediscover and, in some cases, reassess the relationship to the bagpipe tradition. Since the 1950s, its transmission within the folklore movement has taken place exclusively within individual ensembles. Young talents first learned the basics and later went on to develop their own style. Playing off-sheet music was a very uncommon thing, although most of the older pipers respected the musical arrangement in a relatively strict way. Beginning in the late 1950s, bagpipe lessons were available in selected state-run music schools. Instruction sheet music was made, as well as new compositions, and teachers noted down concrete melodic variations of folk songs. From the 1960s to the present day, dozens (somewhat less than a hundred) of graduate pipers have worked almost exclusively in established regional folk ensembles. On top of that, each new generation brought its innovative formations. The fall of the Communist regime in 1989 also meant the end of government institutional support to regional music schooling. But, paradoxically, bagpipe lessons at Czech leisure-time artistic schools never stopped.

It was the fall of the state system that provoked ten performers, mostly non-professional, to establish, in 2010, the *Budějcké dudácké sdružení* (The Association of České Budějovice Pipers, known by the acronym BUDUS). The informal leader of this group is a person called Miroslav Stecher, who was born in 1946 and is a piper as well as a bagpipe manufacturer. What is interesting are the group's international inspirations. In the interview, Stecher said more than once how he admired the "impressive and attractive sound" of Scottish bands, in addition to pipers' groups from Slovakia (Čech Slovenských Gajdošov – Spojené Huky Slovenska), Hungary (Magyar Dudazenekar), and Croatia (Hrvatski Gajdaški Orkestar) – he has regular contact with these groups at the Strakonice Festival. All these groups play a social as well as educational role in

their public performances, which are innovative compared to the traditional set-up of bands and orchestras. Joint performances by several pipers were only made possible by advances in manufacturing technology and the fact of precise tuning. Last but not least there is the audio and visual attractiveness.

The chronicle of BUDUS said in 2010 that the mission of the association was to “make it possible to get together, play together, teach one another the technique, and to play bagpipe music publicly in order to make people happy”.¹⁵ The importance of the social dimension of BUDUS sessions was reported in all my interviews: *“It means so much for me to be able to be part of this community; it gives me so much motivation and self-confidence.”*¹⁶ *“First we’ll talk about bee-keeping, which is something that all of us share, chat about what’s new in our ensembles and families, and then we’ll have a nice playing session.”*¹⁷

Who are the BUDUS members? The association has 19 members from all the ethnographic regions of South Bohemia. Members include students, people in their forties and fifties as well as the elderly; age groups appear to be evenly distributed. From my observations of group activities, I can safely say that there is a completely natural dialogue among generations. Members have very diverse occupations, including teachers, engineers, economists, company owners, farmers and farm owners as well as manual workers.

BUDUS has 12 male and 7 female members. The gender aspect of bagpiping is extremely interesting. Traditionally, playing folk instruments (and all the more so the bagpipe) was restricted to men. However, several of my respondents told me that the youngest generation is dominated by girls, especially in state-run music classes. It appears from what the respondents stated that girls are better at concentrating and patience while boys and men tend to be good at improvising and performing with a certain ease in public performances. Needless to say, generalizations are impossible.

BUDUS members get together at a particular restaurant in České Budějovice one evening monthly. The sessions are open to anyone interested in bagpipe music. There is friendly conversation but the highlight of the evening is a team music production, partly directed by Miroslav Stecher or Ladislav Chyňava (born in 1962), who is the administration manager. The production is a two-voice performance of selected bagpipe songs from all regions of South Bohemia, normally having the following structure: overture, choral singing of one or more stanzas accompanied by bagpipes, and postlude. Sometimes, there is polyphonic singing a capella.

Public productions of the BUDUS take place during rural and urban folklore festivities. The pipers perform in their own folk costumes which represent the region they

¹⁵ <https://budus.cz/budejcke-dudacke-sdruzeni/> [quoted 3.9.2023].

¹⁶ Narrator, female (1993), bagpiper, 23.5.2023.

¹⁷ Narrator, male (1951), bagpiper, 25.5.2023.

come from. They only play instruments tuned in E^b major.¹⁸ This makes their performances somewhat stereotypical, especially in long concerts. Therefore, the ensemble performance alternates with solo performances, duets and small ensemble pieces, whose role is to show virtuosity or to present the repertoire of specific regions and variations written by various authors. Very often, the audiences are invited to join in the singing.

The interviews as well as public presentations by the BUDUS also show the members' relationship to their region and its past, a relationship which they live through bagpipe music: *"I can feel I'm connected to the landscape, to nature and to my ancestors. I am a South Bohemian"*,¹⁹ *"This is where my grandfather was born, where my father was born, where I was born; and this is also where this type of music belongs."*²⁰

Sustainability and continuity recurred as a leitmotif throughout the research. Sustainability and continuity are related to the establishment of the BUDUS, to its activities, and they were also present in the reflections of BUDUS members. Music schools and folklore ensembles based in South Bohemia are reporting that young people are still interested in the bagpipe. It is, therefore, not surprising that my respondents were fairly optimistic about the future: *"Do I worry about the future? No. I actually have to reject some of my potential pupils, as I'm no longer young"*,²¹ *"I think the future lies in children's folklore ensembles that have good management. That is where the new generation is growing up. I feel I'm part of that mission."*²²

The open communication I had with BUDUS members revealed that they are aware of the transformations of the social context in which they perform their music. They are able to feel – and give an unbiased formulation of – the seeming contradiction between sustainability (in the sense of passing conserved artefacts down generations) and natural development, continuity and accessibility. Their attitude can be summarized in three key points: (1) local and regional patriotism and openness; (2) sense of responsibility; and (3) tolerance – an emphasis on good interpersonal relationships and an understanding for a diversity of approaches to, and motivations for, cultivating bagpipe music.

Conclusion

Reflection on the formal and ideological innovation in the cultivation of bagpipe music in South Bohemia brings us back to the theme of the festival. With its musical production and, in fact, its very existence, the BUDUS Bagpipe Association responds to the

¹⁸ Czech bagpipes tuned in E^b are composed of a melody pipe with *bb*, *d*¹, *eb*¹, *f*¹, *g*¹, *ab*¹, *bb*¹, *c*², and a drone pipe with E^b.

¹⁹ Narrator, female (1974), bagpiper, 15.2.2023.

²⁰ Narrator, male (1968), bagpiper, 23.5.2023.

²¹ Narrator Miroslav Stecher (1946), bagpiper; bagpipe manufacturer, 25.5.2023.

²² Narrator, female (1958), bagpiper; bagpipe manufacturer, 15.2.2023.

impulses of the International Bagpipe Festival in Strakonice. Here, in the 1950s and 1960s, the organizers commissioned an opportunity for bagpipers to play together on the festival stage which continued informally behind the scenes. These attractive stage elements and subsequent spontaneous options are still present at the festival today. At the same time, in interviews, members of the association partially define themselves against the festival with justified criticism of its massiveness, commercialization, and distorted or insufficient presentation of local musical traditions alongside spectacular performances by foreign participants. V. Hafstein (2018: 134) aptly speaks in this context about the festivalization of cultural heritage, which can become “the first step towards its alienation from the source community.”

The Czech bagpipe tradition is reflected in the modern urban music festival in the full range of manifestations, in a single line (since 1967) the legacy of more than fifty years of development. It is a great entertainment and educational institution of its kind. Simultaneously, the festival is a contemporary platform for presenting conservative and new approaches to the processing (or reinvention?) of bagpipe music folklore. Many of the presentations are commissioned by the festival, or its terms motivate amateur music and dance groups to prepare new programmes. The festival is an opportunity to bring together a regional and international community of musicians and an equally diverse audience from Strakonice, the town of Švanda the Bagpiper, from all over the Czech Republic and Europe. Last but not least, the festival gives an opportunity and impulse to speak out against some of its aspects, as the story of the BUDUS bagpipe association shows. In any case, the International Bagpipe Festival in Strakonice is an excellent research environment and an object of compelling observation and reflection, far from exhausted by this text.

Acknowledgements

The study was carried out in the framework of the RVO: 68378076 (Institute of Ethnology of the Czech Academy of Sciences). It was produced with the support of the Grant Agency of the Czech Republic. It was created within the project Folklore Revival in Post-Socialist Countries: Politics, Memory, Heritization and Sustainability GA 22-31474K.

References

- Bennett, Andy, Jodie Taylor, and Ian Woodward, eds. 2014. *The Festivalization of Culture*. London: Routledge.
- Bithell, Caroline and Hill, Juniper, eds. 2014. *The Oxford Handbook of Music Revival*. New York: Oxford University Press. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199765034.001.0001>.

- Cwach, Michael. 2012. *The Pukl and Chodsko: Aspects of Linkage between a Bagpipe and an Ethnographic Region*. Canterbury: University of Canterbury. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.26021/4669>.
- Falassi, Alessandro, ed. 1987. *Time Out of Time: Essays on the Festival*. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press.
- Formánek, Josef. 1894. Dudy ve službě písni národní. *Dalibor* 16 (22–23): 165–168.
- Getz, Donald. 1990. *Festivals, Special Events, and Tourism*. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold.
- Gibson, Chris and Connell, John. 2012. *Music Festivals and Regional Development in Australia*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Hafstein, Valdimar Tr. 2018. Intangible Heritage as a Festival; or, Folklorization Revisited. *Journal of American Folklore* 131: 127–149. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5406/jamerfolk.131.520.0127>.
- Kockel, Ullrich, Cristina Clopot, Baiba Tjarve, and Máiréad Nic Craith, eds. 2020. *Heritage and Festivals in Europe. Performing Identities*. New York, London: Routledge. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429202964>.
- Mair, Judith, ed. 2019. *The Routledge Handbook of Festivals*. New York, London: Routledge.
- Markl, Jaroslav. 1962. *Česká dudácká hudba. Partitury Ludvíka Kuby*. Praha: Orbis.
- Markl, Jaroslav. 1974. *Dechová hudba a český hudební folklor*. Praha: ÚKVVČ.
- Markl, Jaroslav. 1979. Mezinárodní festival dudáků – Strakonice 1978. *Český lid* 66: 170–171.
- McKay, George. 2000. *Glastonbury: A Very English Fair*. London: Gollancz.
- Muktupāvels, Valdis. 2020. The Role of Historical and Ethnographical Sources in the Bagpipe Revival in the Baltics. *Traditiones* 49 (2): 7–29. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3986/Traditio2020490201>.
- Picard, David and Robinson, Mike, eds. 2006. *Festivals, Tourism and Social Change: Remaking Worlds*. Clevedon, UK: Channel View Publications. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21832/9781845410490>.
- Pilík, Dušan, ed. 2009. *Almanach Prácheňského souboru 1949–2009*. Strakonice: Prácheňský soubor.
- Režný, Josef. 2004. *Po stopách dudáků na Prácheňsku*. Strakonice: Muzeum středního Pootaví.
- Režný, Josef. 2012. *5000 let s dudami*. Strakonice: Městské kulturní středisko ve Strakonících.
- Režný, Josef and Irena Veselá. 2002. *Mezinárodní dudácké festivaly Strakonice*. Strakonice: Město Strakonice.
- Stavělová, Daniela, 2023. Hidden in Folklore: The Past and Present of the Revival Movement in Post-Socialist Countries. *Traditiones* 52 (2): 21–46. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3986/Traditio2023520202>.
- Stavělová, Daniela and Theresa Jill Buckland, eds. 2018. *Folklore Revival Movements in Europe post 1950. Shifting Contexts and Perspectives*. Praha: Institute of Ethnology of the Czech Academy of Sciences.
- Stavělová, Daniela et al. 2021. *Tíha a beztíže folkloru. Folklorní hnutí druhé poloviny 20. století v českých zemích*. Praha: Academia.
- Tyllner, Lubomír, ed. 2001. *Dudy a dudácká muzika 1909*. Audio CD. Praha: Etnologický ústav AV ČR.
- Vejvoda, Zdeněk. 2000. Josef Režný. In *Od folkloru k folklorismu. Slovník folklorního hnutí v Čechách*, ed. Alena Vondrušková, 39–40. Strážnice: Ústav lidové kultury.
- Vejvoda, Zdeněk. 2015. Hudební nástroje a nástrojové sestavy lidové hudby. In *Plzeňsko v lidové písni, vol. 2*, eds. Zdeněk Vejvoda, Marta Ultychová, and Jiří Traxler, 11–32. Praha: Etnologický ústav AV ČR.

- Vejvoda, Zdeněk (interviewer). 2022. Interview with Irena Novotná, 2. 11. 2022 (audio recording). Audio Archive of the Department of Ethnomusicology – Institute of Ethnology Ethnology of the Czech Academy of Sciences.
- Zíbrt, Čeněk. 1910. Staročestí dudáci ve vojenské hudbě a dnešní dudáci u vojska skotského. *Český lid* 19 (8): 373–379.
- Zíbrt, Čeněk. 1917. *Hrály dudy. Dějiny starodávné selské muziky české*. Praha: Československá akciová tiskárna v Praze.

Mednarodni festival dud v Strakoniceh in preoblikovanje odnosa do regionalnega dudarskega izročila

V čeških ljudskih pravljicah je že od 18. stoletja priljubljen lik »dudar Švanda iz Strakonice«, ki s svojim od hudiča uročenim inštrumentom nadzoruje poslušalce in plesalce. Zgodba o njem je bila umetniško uporabljena na različne načine (v igri, operi, likovni umetnosti) in je imela pomembno vlogo pri »ponovnem rojstvu« dud kot češkega kulturnega in nacionalnega simbola. Zaradi tega je mesto Strakonice na južnem Češkem pridobilo nacionalni sloves in splošno pozitivno zaznano simbolno povezavo z dudanjem Švanda in igranjem na dudu. K temu je prispevala folklorna dejavnost v drugi polovici 20. stoletja, ki jo je podpiral komunistični režim. Njena glavna osebnost v regiji je bil Josef Režný (1924–2012), glasbenik, skladatelj, koreograf in zbiralec folklorne. Leta 1949 je ustanovil še danes dejavno folklorno skupino Prácheň in bil tudi pobudnik mednarodnega festivala dud, ki je bil prvič organiziran septembra 1967. Po letu 1989 je festival prerasel v ugledno evropsko prireditev. Poleg glasbeno-plesne folklorne in njenega prepletanja z umetnostjo je prišlo z uporabo različnih vrst dud do žanrske širitve v zabavno glasbo. Štiridnevno festivalsko dogajanje s proračunom 210.000 EUR organizira mesto Strakonice, udeleži pa se ga povprečno 900 nastopajočih in 30.000 obiskovalcev.

Vzporedno z delovanjem glasbenih in plesnih skupin, ki delujejo pod okriljem češke folklorne dejavnosti, smo od začetka 21. stoletja priče procesom, ki jih spodbuja želja za odkrivanje in prevrednotenje odnosa do izročila igranja na dudu. Leta 2010 je deset amaterskih glasbenikov ustanovilo Budjejsko dudarsko združenje (Budějcké dudácké sdružení, skrajšano BUDUS). Trenutno je vanj iz vseh etnografskih pokrajin južne Češke včlanjenih 19 glasbenikov (12 moških in sedem žensk), ki igrajo na dudu. Člani so študenti, osebe srednjih let in starejši; po poklicu so učitelji, tehniki, podjetniki, ekonomisti, kmetje in delavci. Redno se enkrat mesečno srečujejo v restavraciji v Čeških Budjeovicah. So odprto društvo. Poleg družabnega pogovora je glavna vsebina njihovega večera skupno,

delno nadzorovano glasbeno ustvarjanje. BUDUS javno nastopa na podeželskih in mestnih folklornih festivalih. Skupno igranje se izmenjuje s solističnimi nastopi, dueti ali manjšimi zasedbami, ki so osredinjene na virtuozno igranje ali na predstavitve repertoarja posamičnih območij.

Odprta komunikacija s člani društva BUDUS je jasno pokazala zavest o spremembah družbenega konteksta, v katerem izvajajo svojo glasbo. Njihov pristop je mogoče povzeti v več točkah: 1. lokalni in regionalni patriotizem, 2. zavedanje odgovornosti in 3. strpnost – s poudarkom na dobrih medčloveških odnosih in razumevanju različnih pristopov.

BUDUS se odziva na spodbude Mednarodnega festivala dud v Strakoniceh, kjer se je ponudila priložnost za skupen nastop (več deset) godcev na festivalskem odru, ki se je neformalno nadaljeval v zakulisju. Hkrati pa člani društva delno nasprotujejo festivalu s kritiko njegove množičnosti, komercializacije in izkrivljene ali nezadostne predstavitve domačega glasbenega izročila ob spektakularnih nastopih tujih udeležencev.

Češko izročilo igranja na dude se na sodobnem mestnem glasbenem festivalu izraža v nizu izvedb, ki so (od leta 1967) dediščina več kot petdesetletnega razvoja. Festival je svojevrstna zabavna in izobraževalna institucija. Hkrati je sodobno prizorišče za predstavitve konservativnih in novih pristopov k interpretaciji dudarskega glasbenega izročila. Je priložnost za srečanje regionalne in mednarodne skupnosti glasbenikov ter prav tako raznovrstnim občinstvom iz Strakonic, mesta dudarja Švande, iz celotne Češke in Evrope. Navsezadnje daje festival priložnost in spodbudo, da se opredelimo do nekaterih njegovih vidikov, kakor kaže zgodba dudarskega društva BUDUS.