Towards a Common Regional History of Our Nation Building Strategies

Traveling Directors, Musicians

Visegrad Grant Project 2020–2022

• Visegrad Fund
During the 19th and 20th centuries, the process of nation-building took place, though shifted in time, with similar strategies in the countries of the region. The (musical) theater was one of the central institutions of nation-building; researching its history brings us closer to understanding the complex cultural processes that characterizes this multilingual region. In the framework of a previous Visegrad Grant project (*The Network of the Musical Theatre Companies in the Multilingual East-Central Europe*, Project No. 21720187), the survey of the region's source material from the period 1860–1920 (*Regional Source and Bibliographical Database*) has already been carried out by this research group. Continuing this pioneering work, the recent project focuses on personalities – theater directors, composers, and prominent singers; most of their careers are connected to a number of cities in East-Central Europe. Currently, these biographical studies are only partially or superficially available; moreover, there is no regional overview at all. The main purpose of this project is to make progress in this respect and, as a result of our joint work, to present the regional network that promoted the creation of the nationally oriented music theatrical industry in the very period as the cosmopolitan genre of the opera was acclimatizing in the major multilingual and multi-ethnic cities of East-Central Europe.
The common history of our nation building processes also outlines a region. It may seem evident in cultural life, but within humanities, the attempts to remove historiography out of national boundaries are still at an early stage. It was due to the international character of the music theatrical source materials that their thorough processing has been neglected by the nationally-biased research. Our project is pioneering in a narrow professional sense, too, but we are particularly keen to make our research results available for a wider audience. Our regional network researches, as well as the planned conference on regional historiography, can generate broader interest by drawing direct attention to our common values and tasks.
The past decades in the V4 countries have been defined by national historiography, and national narratives have not included regional connections, nor the acknowledgment of the cultural and ethnic diversity of the region as a whole. Through biographical research on theater directors and musicians we can shed light on international cultural transfers as well as the regional network that implemented nation-building strategies. We wish to release our results on multiple levels and in different forms, targeting various types of audiences. Research results are primarily summarized in a biographical database (which will be accessible on the project’s website), studies will be published in the series Olmützer Studien, and lectures will be held, among others, at an international conference to be organized by our group (Budapest, May 27–28, 2022) on regional (music)historiography. Wider audiences will be addressed by lecture recitals (Budapest, Bratislava, Olmütz, Krakow) featuring the region’s repertoire. As far as the education is concerned, our results will be presented in the form of university lectures.
Members of the research team are university professors, full-time researchers, and young research assistants from prominent research facilities and universities. Hungarian, Slovakian, and Czech team members started their joint work 2017-2018 with the Visegrad Grant project *The Network of the Musical Theatre Companies in the Multilingual East-Central Europe* (Project No. 21720187). Our Polish partner joined our research team in 2020.

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Selected Publications

Czech Republic

Lenka Křupková: *Studie ze života a díla Vítězslava Nováka* [Studies from the Life and Work of Vítězslav Novák] (Olomouc, Palacký University, 2006).

Lenka Křupková: “Beethoven und deutschsprachige Stadt Olmütz”, in: Helmut Loos (Hg.) und Klaus-Peter Koch (Red.): *Beethoven-Rezeption in Mittel- und Osteuropa* (Leipzig, Gudrun Schröder Verlag, 2015), 107–123.

Jiří Kopecký: *Opery Zdeňka Fibicha z devadesátých let 19. století* [Zdeněk Fibich’s Operas from 1890s] (Olomouc, Palacký University, 2008).


Hungary


Poland


Slovakia


Artysta jako nowy bohater w XIX wieku

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For further details and upcoming dates see the project website: